PRIESTCRAFT

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A STUDY IN UNNECESSARY FICTIONS

BY

HUGH E. M. STUTFIELD

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMAN MISCHIEF-MAKER"

"*Numquid Deus indiget vestro mendacio, ut pro illo loquamini dolos?*" (*Doth God need your lie, that ye speak deceitfully for Him?*)

Job xiii, 7, Vulgate Edition of Sixtus V.

LONDON

"THE NATIONAL REVIEW" OFFICE

43 DUKE STREET, ST. JAMES'S, S.W. 1

1921

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PROLOGUE AND REPLY

THE main thesis of the author's previous work is sufficiently indicated by its title. Written—like the present book—from a purely unsectarian standpoint, it describes the Roman Church as a disintegrating force in public and private life, a sower of disunion in the home, the community, and international affairs; and in the concluding chapters attention was called to the pernicious teaching of the Church's official mouthpieces in the sphere of ethics. Much has happened in the short interval which has elapsed since *The Roman Mischief-Maker* was published, and the course of events has only served to establish the conclusions at which the writer arrived. The book was naturally subjected to a searching fire of hostile criticism. The writer was freely accused of wholesale inaccuracy, but, with the exception of a bare half-dozen trivial blunders—which are all corrected in the new edition—his statements have been shown to be historically and otherwise verifiable. So far from having anything to retract, he has a good deal to add to what he originally wrote; indeed, the Latin Church has obligingly supplied corroboration of his leading contention by steadily pursuing her traditional policy of fomenting social and political discord. "A waspish sect," as Father Tyrrell aptly called her, for ever setting humanity by the ears, she is still at work irritating old sores and creating new ones.

This country remains, as before, the principal target of ecclesiastical rancour; and, if Anglophobia is once more abroad in the world, we have clericalism

largely to thank for it. Our enemies are steadily exacerbating public opinion against us, poisoning the wells of international accord everywhere to our hurt; and the Roman Church is taking a leading hand in the game. Not only in Ireland, but in America, Australia, and elsewhere Catholic priests and laymen have been busy supporting the Sinn Fein rebellion, freely using their spiritual prerogatives in order to promote sedition, teaching the schoolchildren to hate us, and otherwise striving to bring England into odium and disrepute. The Roman hierarchy, including the Pope—as we learn from Dr. Mannix, Archbishop of Melbourne,[1] and others—offered their sympathy and help to the mischief-making Anglophobe prelates. "Send me some priests at all costs," Roger Casement telegraphed when preparing his Irish raid, and repeated the request several times. He knew well that they would be his most ardent and effective auxiliaries. The hierarchy of Belgium—of all countries in the world—also ably seconded the efforts of their Irish brethren to make this country appear hateful in the world's eyes. Christ told us to love our enemies, but His Papist followers to-day tell us that "hatred of the English" is "a holy passion."

"I should not be at all surprised," said Disraeli in 1873, "if the visor of Home Rule should fall off some day, and you beheld a very different countenance." The visor *has* fallen off, and the countenance it discloses is not good to look upon. Its lineaments are those of the ogre of racial and sectarian hatred, inflamed in considerable measure by priestly malevolence claiming immunity for the Church from the processes of law. Once more, in short—to borrow Lord Acton's rendering of a classic phrase—we espy "the Fiend skulking behind the Crucifix."

Two years ago a distinguished Irish Romanist,

[1] See the *Daily Telegraph*, June 14, 1921.

Mr. Shane Leslie, told us that our chief adversaries in the United States, the men most opposed to an Anglo-American entente, "are, firstly, the Irish; and, secondly, the Catholics"—thereby showing that, as I have always contended, the antagonism shown by Roman Catholics to Great Britain is religious as well as political. Mr. Leslie further warned English Roman Catholics that they might "have the unhappiness of seeing their fellow Catholics in America carrying out a successful and bitter warfare against our country, which generations will not alleviate." Subsequent events have amply proved the accuracy of his forecast. There is now in America a compact body of some 12,000,000 Papists, of whom the large majority have been trying—with the priests, as *The Times* (April 1, 1921) informs us, taking an increasing share in the agitation—to embroil us with the United States in disputes which might possibly have very serious consequences. Excepting the Irish, they have no cause of quarrel with us, unless it be the religious one.[1] Rome and England have been at odds for centuries; and the principal battlefield of their age-long feud would now appear to be America, with Ireland as the ostensible ground of quarrel. Colonel Archer Shee is reported to have said that the Church to which he belonged was one of the principal offenders in the raging propaganda going on in the United States against this country.[2]

These views are shared by not a few thoughtful citizens of the United States. To take a single example, Dr. Leighton Parks, an eminent episcopalian of extremely tolerant views (he has even gone so far as to advise members of his Church to leave it and enter the Roman communion, because he thought it suited them better), lately preached a

[1] To be a Roman Catholic is a necessary qualification for admission to the Anglophobe Irish-American societies.

[2] See debate in the House of Commons, March 18, 1921.

series of remarkable sermons in New York. In these sermons, which have been published, he states that the Roman Catholic hierarchy in America, partly on account of an ancient grudge, and partly because England is the great Protestant Power in Europe, desires nothing more than to bring about war between Great Britain and the United States, and he points out very clearly the danger of the situation. He also shows, by quotation from Roman Catholic utterances, that the aim of the hierarchy is to retain, in the Catholic immigrants to America, their language and the racial atmosphere in which they have hitherto lived—in other words, to prevent assimilation; and he foretells the doom of Republican democracy in the United States, if the Church has her way.[1] As I have pointed out elsewhere (*The Roman Mischief-Maker, new* edition, pp. 62–65), the contention of English Roman Catholics that all these things are nothing more than matters of local politics, and that it is unfair to blame the religion, is wholly untenable.

Concerning Ireland, and the state of things which prevails there as I write, it is unnecessary to enlarge upon what is known to everybody. Terrorism, always Rome's favourite weapon, has been employed on a scale which has seldom been paralleled, and appeal was made to all that is worst in human nature. Murder must always be the foulest of crimes, and in Ireland murder is of the most detestable kind. The Sinn Fein Roman Catholics call it war, but Sinn Fein is not a belligerent power; and, if it were, there is a clear distinction between murder and military operations. Political idealism, even though it be of a loftier and less extravagant type than that professed by Sinn Fein, does not justify the slaughter of inoffensive citizens like Sir Arthur Vicars or Canon Finlay, the brutal "execution" of Mrs. Lindsay, or the dragging of sick persons and cripples from their beds

[1] See the *New York Times*, March 23, 1921.

and shooting them in cold blood by the roadside. Such atrocious crimes are the acts of savages, not of warriors; and the spirit of hatred which expresses itself in outrage of this kind has been sedulously fanned by ecclesiastics, who erroneously supposed that they were serving the interests of their Church. Ireland has shown herself to be a sink of moral depravity, and must now be added to Rome's long list of ethical failures.[1] Lack of religious instruction cannot be pleaded as an excuse, because very few countries, if any, in the world have so many clerics per head of population as Ireland has: there are eleven times as many priests and prelates as in Belgium, seven times as many as in Germany or Austria.

The Irish disease is a moral canker, and, as such, is mentally and spiritually degrading. In addition to actual crime the whole island is honeycombed with suspicion, terrorism physical and religious, falsity, superstition, backstairs intrigue, eavesdropping, spying, scheme and counter-scheme—everything, in short, that the true Curialist dearly loves and the Roman system teaches and fosters. "Ireland has saved her soul!" exclaims that eminent Catholic divine, Canon W. Barry, D.D.[2] I can only repeat once more that Romanist methods of saving your soul are very odd ones. Irish bishops have created, as Lord Denbigh said, "a sort of false conscience" in the Irish mind; and his fellow-Catholic peer, Lord Acton, described Ireland as "a country where religion does not work ultimately in favour of morality." Both these observations were anticipated in some measure by the poet Cowper, who tells us in his *Expostulation* that

> When nations are to perish in their sins,
> 'Tis in the Church the leprosy begins.

"Where," asked that clerical stalwart, Lord Hugh Cecil, in *The Times* of February 14, 1921, "is the

[1] See Appendix II. [2] *The Catholic Times*, December 6, 1919.

Christian influence of the Church in Ireland?" No answer comes from the episcopal strategists who disguise politics under the mask of religion, because there is no answer to give. Lord Hugh wonders, too —we are all wondering—whether the authorities of the Roman Church realize how fearfully such phenomena as Irish crime weigh against the reputation of their Church. Roman Catholicism has continually blessed the man who is willing to act as professional murderer on her behalf, and cursed him who is unwilling; and for a long time neither the Vatican nor the Irish hierarchy gave any effective sign, but bestowed upon these abominable outrages the condonation of silence, threadbare platitudes, or vague expressions of regret; while the younger priests deliberately encouraged the criminals. No attempt was made to define the moral limits of "patriotic" murder, arson, and other outrage; but, when at length the bishops saw that the monster which they had helped to create was likely to devour them, they advised the people to desist from their rebellious activity—not because it violated morality or Canon Law, but chiefly "because there is no chance of success!" Nor, be it observed, has the Church ever made any collective official effort to check crime: such action as was taken proceeded from individual bishops, and then usually in a very half-hearted fashion.

The usual controversial red-herring is being drawn across the trail of the argument by those Roman Catholic and other critics who seek to confine public attention to the reprisals. They slur over the foul deeds that provoked the retaliatory measures which we all deplore, lay the stress of their invective upon the minor criminals, and ask our sympathy for the poor Sinn Fein lambs harried by ravening Anglo-Saxon wolves. Conversion is the aim of all practising Roman Catholics. Why do they not begin by

converting their Irish co-religionists to a sense of sin, and to a recognition of the simple fact that the Sixth Commandment is still in force? Certain Anglican bishops have also been helping to make the moral confusion worse confounded by indiscreet denunciations of the Government, and a well-known clergyman made a happy comment on their ill-timed interference. Alluding to the day of prayer for Ireland ordained by the Church, he said to his congregation, "Yes, pray by all means—especially for the bishops." They told us that it is absolutely unlawful to overcome, or attempt to overcome, wrong by further and equally indefensible wrong; but how often, I would ask, is this principle acted upon during warlike operations? Wrongful action by the Germans was continually met by us with reprisals in kind. Poison gas is an odious and illegitimate weapon; yet, when the enemy used it against our men, the "indefensible wrong" ceased to be indefensible, and we were forced to follow suit. Who, except a few fanatics, blames the Allies? Who would not blame them had they betrayed our long-suffering soldiers by acting otherwise than they did?

Nor should Englishmen forget that the Irish hierarchy, in taking sides against the Government, acted in their spiritual and official capacity. Their case is that they were merely pronouncing judgment on an issue of right *v.* wrong; and we must remember that in Ireland the people's religion is inextricably intertwined with the national sentiment. Gathered together in Council, acting *as a Church*, and claiming, therefore, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the bishops decided, "not as politicians, but as interpreters of Divine Law," that the people ought to resist British law; and they invoked the blessing of God, and the intercession of the Madonna, for their holy undertaking. They also (the Holy Ghost presumably again assisting) directed "their clergy to

announce meetings" for the prosecution of what their British co-religionists, like most other people, regarded as a political campaign. The sanctified politics of these infallible prelates were further reinforced by the spiritual thunders of the clergy, who told the people that it was their duty to rebel, and that, if any man opposed the "patriotic" view of the national faction-fight, he should be murdered in this world and receive hell-fire in the next.

I say "infallible prelates" advisedly, because Irish bishops are on occasion, like the Pope, infallible beings. You might never guess it intuitively, but Father Peter Finlay, S.J., their principal spokesman and Erin's ablest theologian, assures us that it is so. When the bishops are gathered together in Council "they teach infallibly" within the province of revealed faith and morals. Moreover, when single bishops "so preach, dispersed, they are infallible as though gathered into Council." [1] They share in the fullness of Apostolic authority, and "must follow out the moral law to its further consequences" (including, it would appear, incitement to rebellion) "applied to the practical conduct of life, and define its limits." The Quebec episcopate, to take a single example, makes a similar claim to infallibility.

Later on a strange thing happened, as they say in the story-books. Two English (and presumably infallible) Cardinals had the audacity to impugn the consistency of the Divine mind and guidance, and to grieve their Irish brethren, by taking a view precisely contrary to that of the Dublin hierarchy. Cardinal Bourne ordered to be read in all churches on Sunday, February 13, 1921, a Lental Pastoral by himself, and a letter by his predecessor, Cardinal Manning, expressly condemning that which the Irish

[1] See *Studies*, July 1918. The authority of Father Finlay cannot be disputed, and his works are continually on sale in Westminster Cathedral.

bishops declared to be lawful and expedient. Cardinal Manning said that to rise against the Empire of Great Britain "is to resist the ordinance of God"; that "all conspiracy, whether against the Church or the State severally, is sin"; and that "apostasy and rebellion are each and severally mortal sin against God"—the last being a quotation from a pronouncement of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, surely quite as infallible an authority as the Irish episcopate.

Here we find the Roman Catholic hierarchy divided against itself by a conflict of dogmatic opinion upon a clearly defined and vital moral issue. An authoritative decision by the highest court of ethics known to the Church was surely called for, but the Vatican remained silent. Once more we witnessed how the Roman Church habitually shuffles in her dealings with fundamental moral issues. Her accredited moral theologians palter with the truth, and shuffle in their *dicta* upon ordinary questions of right and wrong. She shuffled all through the Great War, and abdicated the lofty functions of spiritual leadership which she had assumed; and she is shuffling now in her attitude towards rebellion and murder in Ireland. Neutrality in the everlasting war between good and evil is impossible for a great religious organization, and some day Rome will pay dearly for its attitude of toleration towards the wicked doctrine that dastardly crime is a legitimate form of warfare. Never has the farce of Papal pretension been laid so bare, or the credit of the Church sunk so low. We are all aware that secular moral standards are higher nowadays than those of ecclesiastics;[1] but the "slump" in Rome's ethical stock is attaining proportions that are positively alarming.

[1] "To-day our best prophets and preachers are laymen" (*Outspoken Essays*, by Dean Inge, p. 19).

"It almost makes me ashamed of the word Catholic," said that fine Englishman and patriot, Lord Denbigh, in his just indignation when the Irish bishops opposed conscription. Surely, in view of all that has happened since, as well as before, those brave words were uttered, the sentiments they convey might well be emphasized, and the word "almost" finally deleted! Lord Denbigh, at any rate, is under no illusions as to the responsibility of his religion for the betrayal of humanity's cause and its attitude of cynical indifference to rebellion and crime; and I know of many Roman Catholics who think with him. The world is aware that there is no love lost between the "white," or patriotic British, Catholics and their Irish brethren; but it is permissible to point out to the Whites that their position is a very anomalous one, so long as they remain members and upholders of an organization which is anything but white. The dual allegiance to England and to an Anglophobe clerical corporation places them, to borrow the phrase of an indignant Australian Catholic, "in somewhat of a cleft stick"; and we cannot wonder that disgust at their Church's conduct is now being freely expressed by many a wavering disciple of a slowly dying creed. Cardinal Newman told us in his *Apologia* (p. 47) that he renounced his brother because he "caused divisions," and pointed out that in doing so he was only following St. Paul's instructions. Why do not English Catholics apply this principle now, and renounce a Church which is still the great Divider of men and nations? They are serving two antagonistic masters, a thing which Christ declares to be impossible.

It is quite useless to pretend that Roman Catholic hostility to England is merely the expression of a disappointed people's political anger. The Belgian bishops, headed by Cardinal Mercier—and they, surely, of all people, have no political quarrel with England

—have lately taken the opportunity to vent their spleen against us, and to acknowledge the services their country has received at our hands by a strange requital. No wise man expects gratitude in this world, and he thinks himself fortunate if he receives it; but we hardly looked for this treatment from Cardinal Mercier. His letter intervening on behalf of the Sinn Feiners, coupled with the opening of a subscription for them, elicited warm protests from the Belgian Press, which recognized the indecency of the episcopal attack upon their country's trusted friend and ally.

Turning to the domestic sphere, the marriage question continues to be a bone of contention between the civil and spiritual powers. In the eyes of extreme Churchmen the religious significance of marriage is the paramount factor, while the vast majority of educated people now regard wedlock as being primarily and fundamentally a matter of civic and social status: hence the perpetual clash of Church and State, and the fight between them for supremacy in the decision of matrimonial questions. In the Province of Quebec the episcopate claims that the Church is above the law. There are dual laws, two standards of law, in Quebec; and hitherto the foreign laws made in Italy have usually prevailed, at least so far as marriage is concerned. A recent decision, however, of the Privy Council would seem to controvert the ecclesiastical principle that Canon Law is socially and civilly supreme. A French-Canadian couple, married in 1904, grew tired of one another and a separation was desired. An obliging priest discovered that the parties were fourth cousins, and that, by thirteenth-century Canon Law, the marriage was therefore invalid. A dispensation could have been obtained for the modest sum of seven dollars, but this formality had been omitted. The bishop of the diocese declared the marriage null and void, and

two superior courts of Quebec decided that, as the ecclesiastical court has spoken on the religious question, the civil court could only follow suit as to the civil contract. Appeal was made to the Privy Council in 1914; and in 1921—eleven years after the case opened—the Court, after long and careful deliberation, reached the astounding conclusion that British civil law in the twentieth century overrides, in a British Dominion, Italian Canon Law of 1215; and the marriage was declared to be "valid and subsisting." [1]

Here, at home, the outrageous *Ne Temere* Decree is still in force, and the Church insists upon the parties to a mixed marriage signing the insolent Marriage Form to which I have on various occasions drawn attention. This remarkable document, as I explain in the Appendix, has no authorization either in the *Ne Temere* Decree or in the Trent (*Tametsi*) Decree of 1564, of which the *Ne Temere* is a modern revival.[2] The Decree impugns the moral basis on which our social system rests, and, taken together with the newly-invented marriage form, is a mediæval impertinence which should be no longer tolerated.[3] Nor is this by any means, as some people think, a mere academic question; on the contrary, it is an occasion of much trouble, and sometimes of considerable suffering. The unfortunate heretic who refuses to embrace the Catholic faith along with the lady of his choice may, if he is a man of courage and

[1] See *The Times* Law Report, February 12, 1921.

[2] See *The Roman Mischief-Maker*, ch. viii.

[3] New Zealand apparently does not think that a foreign Church has a right to describe decent married women as harlots or concubines, and their children as bastards. The Parliament, by a majority of 44 to 25, has passed a law to the effect that a fine of £100, or one year's imprisonment, shall be imposed on any person who alleges, or implies, that lawfully married people are not truly and sufficiently married, or that the children are illegitimate. The Catholic Archbishop and bishops say they will "resist and defy such a law, and encourage both priests and people to disobey."

probity, find himself in a quandary. I hear many sad stories of engagements broken off, marriages postponed for years, and lives blighted temporarily or permanently, owing to these miserable religious differences. The mixed marriage is a mistake, we are told. Perhaps it is, as things are now; but this is only because orthodoxy and an autocratic Church have introduced unnecessary complications, accompanied by the levying of a species of blackmail in the shape of "dispensations." [1]

As regards the humiliating marriage form,[2] non-Catholics should refuse to sign it against their conscience under any circumstances whatever. In such a matter there should be no compromise. The Protestant man who, disbelieving wholly in the Roman religion, submits to the terms imposed by its priests is guilty of conduct which may fairly be termed despicable. He is paltering with the truth as he sees it, and shirking his responsibilities as husband and father. By signing away, at the orders of an alien priesthood, his right to have a voice in the bringing up of his children, and entrusting their moral and mental tuition to an obscurantist Church, he is proving himself false to the duty he owes to them and to the community—that of giving his family the best education possible. There are men —all honour to them—who have had the manliness to resist the Church's dictation, and refuse to abdicate their functions as head of the household. They recognize, like Lovelace, that even happiness may be bought too dear, when the price paid is the loss of self-respect; and decline, in the face of all importunities, to sign the form.

[1] In Austria the marriage laws just now are even more mixed than the marriages. The Catholics, headed by a reactionary Cardinal (whose name, by the way, is Piffl), have been inducing the courts to declare null and void marriages contracted under a law which is still in force!

[2] See Appendix I.

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, shall adore;
I could not love thee, Dear, so much,
Loved I not Honour more.

But such men, unfortunately, are in a minority: a much larger number are more easy-going, submit, and demean themselves in the way that I have described.

The mischief wrought by the Roman Church in the family circle was described at greater length in my previous work, and I will not pursue the subject further here. This book has a wider scope, and enters upon a more extensive survey, than its predecessor. It is an inquiry into the origin and validity of Roman pretension to authoritative jurisdiction in the religious sphere, and it demonstrates how extremely shaky are the foundations upon which the whole Papal system rests. A plea is further entered for a more liberal outlook upon transcendental matters, and for a less rigid attitude towards religious belief in general. Above all, it is maintained that candour should be preferred to conventional piety, and that the central aim of a genuinely religious man should be the attainment of truth, rather than the promotion of a Church's interests.

Lord Morley, in his Essay upon Diderot, remarks that the immediate force of speculative literature hangs on practical opportuneness; and his book depicts a movement in the intellectual world of the eighteenth century somewhat similar to that which confronts us to-day. Sectarian, philosophic and religious disputation then filled the air; and, as in these times, men were becoming animated by the scientific and social, to the exclusion of the purely religious, idea. Discussion about the truth of Church doctrine turned sharply into political agitation against her misdeeds and the mischief wrought by her in the social order. Something of the same kind, though happily

of a less threatening quality, would appear to be in progress amongst us in England to-day; and the times would now again seem to be ripe for one of those periodical stock-takings of religious theory and belief which have in the past exerted so profound an influence on the march of human events. People are probably just as religious—in the larger sense of the word—as they used to be; indeed, their minds are occupied with the deeper problems of life to an extent which would have seemed impossible a few years ago, but, as happened in the eighteenth century, metaphysical speculation concerning religious questions is now taking a severely practical turn. Theological questions are widely discussed, not merely, as of old, in undertones and from the purely theoretical standpoint, but openly and fearlessly, and with what may be termed utilitarian aims. What used to be an intellectual movement is becoming in large measure a social and political one. Men nowadays require a creed with a pragmatic sanction; they want to feel sure that it will *work*, and it can be shown very clearly that some of our most assertive creeds do not work.

Much of the prevailing indifference to religion, of which we hear so much, is little more than disgust at the perversities and hypocrisies of that purely opportunist clericalism which is miscalled religion. The lack of true spiritual leadership displayed by the Latin Church, in particular, has profoundly impressed the minds of men, and lowered all forms of religion in their estimation. At present they are as sheep without a shepherd; their souls have no permanent abiding-place. One man finds his spiritual home in Germany; another discerns it from afar in the New Jerusalem. The old landmarks are obscured, and we are seeking new ones whereby we may find our bearings. Even good Roman Catholics are beginning to adopt an apologetic attitude in regard to their

Church. Their professions of faith are often tempered by such qualifying remarks as: "Oh, but I'm very *broad*, you know"; "We haven't got to believe all *that*"; "I'm afraid I'm not a very good Roman Catholic"; "There's nothing else to be." They even tell us sometimes that what we say about their Church is quite true, but that they love her all the same.

I submit that the best remedies for this prevailing mental disquiet are truth and candour. "Let us be honest," said Canon Barnes in his famous Cardiff sermon: "a religion that is not based on truth is vain." It ought not to be necessary for an able English clergyman to give us such advice, or to repeat such a truism; but, unfortunately, it sometimes is necessary. Let us henceforth face our difficulties boldly, stop beating about the bush in vital matters, use plain intelligible language when dealing with religious questions, avoid subterfuges and what Rome calls "necessary fictions," and the esoteric jargon of the schools. Mendacity for "edifying" purposes is quite superfluous: we need not, as Father Tyrrell said, "soil our souls for the salvation of souls." Belief is good, if our belief is in things that are worth believing; make-believe never saved any man. Above all, people must be made to feel, what they do not feel now, that they are being dealt with squarely by the ecclesiastics: they want to know the truth, whatever it may be, and to follow wheresoever it may lead them. They are not interested in dialectical subtleties which only experts can understand, but seek a definite creed with a moral basis and a social sanction, which shall be a guide to life and conduct. The Roman Church offers herself to mankind as such a guide, and speaks with that loud voice of authority which always commands a following. My object is to show that she is but a blind guide falsely professing an accurate knowledge of

the territory we have to explore, and that a guide of this description is worse than no guide at all.

In the sphere of education, above all, we shall have to recast our ideas and adapt them to the changed conditions of our time, and to the new knowledge which mankind has now acquired. It was Plato's opinion that we should teach our children by means of fables, both true and false, and that we ought to begin with the false.[1] This appears to have been the system adopted hitherto by our School Boards and teachers of religion, and in my opinion it is by no means a good one. Plato also thought that we ought to exercise a supervision over the authors of fables, selecting their good productions and rejecting the bad; and it is not at all certain that our educational authorities have selected the best fables. He pointed out, moreover, that "a child cannot discriminate between what is allegory and what is not," and that we ought not to tell the children "offensive stories" derogatory to the character of the gods. This is excellent advice, and we shall be wise to follow it, and to abandon the practice of making the children's minds the battleground or the plaything of sects. A reviewer in the *Spectator* describes the religious teaching given in schools of *every* grade as "lamentable and scandalous"—lamentable, because it brings religion into contempt; scandalous, because of its effects on those who receive it. The teachers complain bitterly that they are compelled to dole out to the children, as scientific fact and historical truth, what we now know to be folk-lore and primitive legend. As the children grow up, they become indignant when they find out that they have been humbugged and have to unlearn much of what they have been taught; and the reaction is apt to be great and lasting. There are, we understand from Mr. Augustine Birrell

[1] *Republic*, II, 377.

(*Obiter Dicta*, I, 199), certain sentimental sceptics who "fall to weeping as they remember that they have now no lies to tell their children"; but it is very doubtful if the children, when they learn to think for themselves, will greatly regret the cause of their parents' tears.

It is a noteworthy feature of our time that, coexistent with the revival of speculative inquiry, there is a strange and world-wide recrudescence of sectarianism. The old particularisms—racial, political and religious—instead of lessening, are deepening in intensity; the rancour of fanaticism has been added to the quarrels between nations and classes to an extent which could hardly have been anticipated. Recent events in Ireland have dispelled the illusion that the Irish difficulty is not, historically and fundamentally, a religious one. The warfare in the bloodstained streets of Derry and other towns was sectarian warfare: it was "a war of creeds," "a religious civil war with the hate of three hundred years behind it," as Sir Hamar Greenwood and the newspaper correspondents told us. Mr. Devlin said in the House of Commons, quite truly, that it was the religious question which had been for the last thirty years the real obstacle to any settlement of the Irish trouble. Eliminate the religious factor, relieve Ulstermen from the dread of Rome rule and the prospect of having their children educated as Papists by an obscurantist priesthood; ensure the Catholics of the North against bullying and maltreatment by Orange bigots, and the political differences might eventually be smoothed over: the main problem, as clear-sighted men see, is a Church problem: what disturbs the Irish clerics is the prospect of Irish social and political life being laicized.

In the Antipodes the denominational broil, though less disastrous, is hardly less acute than in Ireland. Letters and newspapers received by the

writer depict an extraordinary state of things. An Australian lady, returning to her home after a long absence, wrote to a friend of mine that it was like being back in the Middle Ages, owing to the perpetual religious contention. There are patriotic men among the Australian Papists, but the strife between the latter and the Protestants is mainly a struggle between loyalists and disloyalists. In the absence of Dr. Mannix, his mantle fell upon Bishop Phelan and other anti-British clerics, and the Union Jack was publicly insulted in the streets of Melbourne. In a shower of newspaper protests there were many from indignant Romanists. One of these regretfully admitted that " Catholicism in this country is synonymous with disloyalty to the British Throne and Empire " ; and he added very wisely, " There is enough mud in the world without clergymen stirring up more." [1] These men in cassock or cowl who disfigure the gospel of peace by preaching hatred are still, as of old, the worst sedition-mongers and fomenters of strife which our earth holds ; and the leading ecclesiastics in the Commonwealth openly avow their aim of converting Australia to Romanism, and making it " another Ireland." A Victoria correspondent also tells me that the Sinn Fein Romanists in Australia hold the Labour Party in a cleft stick. Its organization has been captured by the well-disciplined ranks of Irish Catholics, and in consequence it is becoming discredited throughout the Commonwealth as a disloyal party. Meanwhile, the higher Roman authorities, as though of set purpose, keep staffing the country with rabid Anglophobe Irish priests, to the exclusion of English and French ones.

In New Zealand they are at loggerheads over the scandalous *Ne Temere* Decree. Here, in England, we discuss calmly in the newspapers the Fall of Man,

[1] *Melbourne Argus*, March 22, 1921.

original sin and other interesting topics; but underneath the placid surface there is, as I well know, intense religious bitterness. In France the war of cleric and anti-cleric has subsided for the moment, but the most competent observers of the situation anticipate a renewal of priestly claims and cabals, and, as the inevitable result, a revival of anti-clerical agitation. In the United States the numerous sects and creeds are squabbling for all they are worth, and the Romanists (as English Catholics admit) are busy stirring up hatred against England. In Canada the old, and essentially denominational, fight over the schools and language questions proceeds apace, as it still does in Ireland and Australia. In Palestine and other Eastern countries the religious issue is a continual thorn in our side. Even Bolshevism, Professor Bertrand Russell tells us, is an intolerant fighting creed, a religion rather than a polity—just as A.E. says that Irish nationalism is now "felt less as a political movement than as a spiritual force"—a superstition, one might say, a faith, a sacrament. People long resident in South American countries tell me that dogmatic religion is coming to be regarded as a nuisance: the spiritual tyranny exerted out there by the priests, and their shameless bloodsucking, are causing the laity to rise in revolt against their exactions. Similar conditions are reported from many parts of Spain and Mexico. In Eastern Europe the particularist spirit, largely infiltrated as in Ireland with sectarianism, is in the ascendant, and the result has been a sanguinary chaos. The Poles persecute the Jews, Greeks and Protestants; the Orthodox Roumanians are accused of harrying the Galician Roman Catholics; and the Bolshevists suppress all creeds, except their own, with an impartial thoroughness. The menace to this country of the "Jewish Peril" is probably exaggerated, but it cannot be denied that the exclu-

siveness and caste-spirit, which Judaism shares in common with Romanism, form a distinct bar to national and civic unity.

Some theologians, as we know, regard this condition of perpetual religious embroilment with comparative equanimity. Dissension and exclusiveness are, in their view, merely signs of healthy vigour in the denominational world, which would pine and wither away if it desisted from squabbling and from its persistent and praiseworthy efforts to "eliminate all rivals." The ordinary layman views the situation with less complacency. Without claiming any special supernatural enlightenment, he does not regard intolerance as a necessary development of Synoptic teaching, or as in any way desirable. He takes leave to doubt whether a never-ending cat-and-dog fight, even though inspired by religious fervour, is the ideal, or even the normal, religious human state. Efforts are therefore being made to close the breaches and to heal the feuds between the Churches; and it is hoped that the gulf which divides the Protestant bodies will not prove to be unbridgeable. The Orthodox, or Greek Church, as I understand, does not display an intransigent attitude or reject all efforts at compromise. When, however, Rome is approached on the subject, the peacemakers are met by a very different spirit. Roman Catholicism, they are told, is a dogmatic religion and cannot meet newcomers on terms of spiritual equality. All attempts at a reconciliation are countered by a haughty *non possumus*. The Vatican wolf will lie down with the Protestant lamb—but only on condition that the lamb shall be inside him.

I think, therefore, there can be little doubt on whose shoulders the main responsibility for the strife should be laid; but many people fail to discriminate between the rival denominations. "A plague on both your houses!" they impatiently

exclaim as they see the results of religious fanaticism in Ireland. They regard it as a hideous and wholly unnecessary squabble between rival bigots in a land that above all things needs peace, an unseemly "brawl in the household of death"; and consider that both parties are equally to blame. But this, I submit, is unjust. The Ulstermen have their failings, like other people; but, before we judge them harshly or critically, we should try to understand how we should feel if we were in their place. They see the Church in Ireland throwing sops to the Bolshevik Cerberus, and a triangular alliance of rebels, Papists, clerics and murderous anarchists, trying to crush them and to destroy the British connection to which they are so deeply attached. Their bigotry is less the offspring of religion than of a great and not wholly unreasonable fear of Rome—just as the persecuting fervour of the Elizabethan Protestants was the result of the terror inspired by the Inquisition, the St. Bartholomew massacre, the butcheries of Alva's soldiery in the Netherlands, and the bigoted fury of Pius V against England. How far the Latin Church is still at heart a persecuting Church is a matter upon which opinions differ. Doctrinally, at any rate, she is as much so as ever. She still claims the right to impose her religious opinions upon recalcitrants by means of the stake, the gibbet and the lash; and these amiable views have recently been published and commended by a high ecclesiastical authority, in a book which obtained strong Pontifical approbation only a few years ago.

The sectarian spirit is thus seen to be a continuing world-nuisance and a serious obstacle to good will amongst mankind. The great institutional corporations—especially the Latin Church, which represents a polity rather than a creed—are fighting, not only for their faith, but for place and power and the other appurtenances of temporal dominion. But the

lesser combatants in the vast denominational battle-field—what are the grounds of their quarrel? If only—a very large "if," I admit—we could get them to see that the strife, in its theological aspect, is largely over words and names rather than things, shadows more than realities, and that matters involved in the utmost obscurity are not worth the bitterness and estrangement they cause, peace would be one step nearer. Every day that passes brings into clearer relief how utterly meaningless and unreal are the barriers which religious dogmatism set up between us.

People are continually warning us against class-consciousness as a disastrous factor of social severance: let us extend the scope of their admonitions, and be on our guard against creed-consciousness. Creeds, we learn from the Dean of St. Paul's, are documents which only represent the opinions of a majority at a meeting; and we ought not to make a "fetish" of them.[1] To some of us this is not altogether news, but it is well to have it confirmed on such high ecclesiastical authority. "We are weary of debating societies," said Bishop Gore some years ago, but the Œcumenical Councils of the Roman Church, which frame religious dogma, are simply theological debating societies. After prolonged, and perhaps very heated, discussion—sometimes suggestive of an Irish night in the House of Commons—the bell rings (so to speak) for the House to divide, and the result of the division-list goes forth to the world as the fiat of the Holy Spirit. Religious truth arrived at in this fashion is "simply the opinion that has survived," and it is really quite unnecessary for people to fight and kill one another about it. A little clear and courageous thinking on these and similar matters would do a world of good.

The two enemies of civilization, Dr. Inge tells

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 134.

us,[1] are the Bolshevik and the Ultramontane. These are the wise words of a very able man; and it is noticeable how the two extremes would seem to be meeting when Lenin, a sort of Communist Pope, gives himself the infallible airs of an earthly divinity, and makes the same mess of things that his brethren in Rome have always made; and when the Irish hierarchy allies itself with the forces of anarchy and Bolshevism. Bolshevism is in theory the negation of authority, but Romanism in its present form acts as a more subtle corrosive of the authoritarian principle by bringing it into general contempt; and we must not, in our perhaps rather exaggerated terror of the one, allow ourselves to be beguiled by the other. It is not the slightest use preaching Roman orthodoxy in order that Bolshevism may abate, or that coal-miners may rest content with insufficient wages: the malcontents pay no more heed to authority of this kind than they give to oriental liturgies, mass-chantings, or to the "turnings of the rotatory calabash." We moderate people, no less than the Church, stand for the principle of authority, but the authority we champion is that of the State in State affairs—including such things as marriage and education. We hold that education is the business of the community as a whole, not the speciality of any religious organization. We further say that clerical instructors of youth who abuse their privileges by teaching their pupils sedition—and expect loyalists to pay for it—and all other ecclesiastics who use their religion to foment social and political unrest, ought not to be allowed an immunity from the processes of law which is denied to the rebellious layman. The world sadly needs discipline just now—sane, ordered discipline—not that of Popes, Bolshevik or Ultramontane.

Experience shows that autocracy and dogmatism

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 31.

in religion always mean general discord, and one way of securing the peace we all desire is to cut out the roots of sectarian strife. If in the process we have to deliver hard blows, as well as to receive them, it cannot be helped. The cry of "intolerance," as was only to be expected, has been freely raised by Roman Catholics during the present controversy in order to divert public attention from the main points at issue; but I must repeat once more that my action in this matter is in no way inspired by denominational motives. I have not the slightest wish (to borrow the words of the *Month*) to "condemn or penalize any form of religious belief which is compatible with social order," or to interfere with any man's opinions upon transcendental matters—as such. What he thinks about the *Filioque* clause, whether he believes in *homoousion* or *homoiousion*, is no more concern of mine than whether he takes tea instead of coffee at breakfast, or prefers jam to marmalade. When, however, he uses his religious opinions to pump up artificially public and private enmities, and to turn human life—as the Church often does, domestically, in the family circle, and, politically, in countries like Ireland and Australia—into a bear-garden, the matter assumes a different complexion; and the religious action of Roman Catholics during recent years has not always been compatible with social order.

"Faith may well be left alone," says the genial author of *Obiter Dicta* (I, 113); and Tennyson bids us not confuse, "by shadowed hint" or otherwise, the life that leads melodious days. So long as the days of faith remain melodious, we shall be delighted to follow this excellent advice; but, when the melody gives place to a succession of jangling discords that jar upon the nerves, we are compelled to stop our ears and make our feeble protest. As to letting Faith well alone, I must point out that a condition precedent to our doing so is that Faith shall leave

us alone; and this is just what she never will do. If Faith attacks or vilifies me and mine, my friends and their belongings, plots against my country, and otherwise behaves as no lady should behave, I cannot reasonably be expected to take it all lying down. When Faith stops bespattering honest women's reputations—hurting them in their two tenderest spots, their honour and their offspring—making mischief all round, and generally disturbing public and domestic harmony, it will be time enough to talk about leaving her alone and to refrain from interrupting her Quietistic peace.

The *Month*, in the course of a lengthy attack upon the present writer (February, 1920), laments that "the Devil, spurred by his sleepless hate, continues his bitter yet futile war against God in His creatures"; and Canon William Barry, D.D., tells me that my previous book was "an outrage upon Catholic faith and feeling." If this be so, I can only repeat that I am sorry; but the fault is not mine, and many of his co-religionists freely admit that we non-Catholics have just cause of complaint against the Church. The quarrel is not of our seeking; and the counter-attack is generally recognized as a natural and legitimate method of defence. I know that Roman Catholics are very sensitive on the subject of their religion, and I have no wish to wound unnecessarily anybody's feelings; but what Romanists apparently have yet to learn is that other people have feelings besides themselves, and that the mannerless and anti-social conduct of their Church is bitterly resented by those who are subjected to her affronts. They feel that thay have been wounded in the house of one who asserts that she is our friend, but adopts very singular methods of demonstrating her friendship. *Not one* of my numerous critics has yet found a single word to say—either in print, writing, or speech—in defence of the notorious *Ne*

Temere Decree. When I ask them for their views about it they invariably shirk the question. I can only conclude that there is no answer ; that, in their heart of hearts, they know it to be indefensible, an offence against decency and the comities of social and civic intercourse. It is plainly now the province of the layman to give the Church that instruction, in manners no less than in morals, of which she is so sorely in need.

The notion that a Church has the right to flout the laws, to regulate thought and to direct opinion, in the country where she has taken up her abode, still persists in many quarters ; but it will have to be overcome. Grave problems confront us, and the Papal system is a hindrance rather than a help to their solution. Lord Morley reminds us in his *Diderot and the Encyclopædists*, and, from a desire to be fair, perhaps rather over-emphasizes the point, that the Latin Church served a great purpose in her time. In her early days she not only offered herself as a guide to human relations, but supplied the world with a theory of life and an intellectual system ; and endeavoured, not wholly without success, to be a mother to mankind. Ideas which to us may appear as mere foolishness and childish, or even grovelling superstition, were often in reality scientific effort in embryo, a first essay in mental development, a groping of the uninformed intellect after truth ; and they are, as such, no less deserving of our respect than the researches of to-day. But the old conditions have now passed, never to return ; and, however much we may sympathize with the dog who cannot recognize that he has had his day, we suggest that the time has now arrived for Roman ecclesiasticism to display a more liberal spirit of accommodation to modern ideas and the new order in the world.

One last word by way of introduction to my survey of Romanist doctrine and history. Certain

critical friends, whose opinions I respect, have told me that I take these matters with undue seriousness. "What does it matter?" they ask, when I complain of priestly insult and mischief-making: the whole thing in their eyes is too foolish to be worth noticing. I do not altogether agree with them, because the power of folly to make trouble in the world is still very great; but I am quite prepared to admit that Romanism is, in many of its aspects, a sort of *opéra bouffe* religion, with a burlesque hagiology, a dogmatic system that in places savours of comedy, and a moral theology which sometimes borders upon highly improper pantomime. Indeed, I have long suspected certain eminent Catholic divines of intellectual clowning. Nor can I disguise from myself the fact that my friends' plea for lighter treatment of the questions at issue is backed by some highly respectable authority. Pascal, an intensely religious man, points out with perfect truth that the counterfeits of Christianity are deserving of contempt and repugnance. "Be assured, my Fathers," says he, "that it is a very different thing to jest at religion, and to ridicule those who profane it by their perversions"; and he quotes sundry learned authors to the same effect. Grave divines and reverend Fathers, as will be shown later on, justify the use of satire in its keenest form as a useful and legitimate corrective of dogmatic error or religious absurdity.

In our day that ardent Roman Catholic propagandist, Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whose orthodoxy is vouched for in a brilliant book of his own writing, is a firm believer in what he terms "a divine frivolity." He declares that "seriousness is irreligious," and "the fashion of all false religions." [1] Serious methods, we gather from his writings, are for wicked people, and the serious subject is the proper matter for the professional joker to flesh his wit upon. With these

[1] *The Uses of Diversity*, p. 1; and see *Heretics*, p. 216.

warnings and high examples before me, and for fear lest Mr. Chesterton should charge me with irreligion, I will endeavour in the following pages not to be more serious than circumstances appear to warrant.

In conclusion, I desire once more to express my great indebtedness to numerous valued correspondents in all parts of the world, who, though complete strangers to me, have of their own accord continued to give me much helpful advice, as well as a mass of interesting information.

PRIESTCRAFT

CHAPTER I

THE SALUTARY NATURE OF FALSEHOODS

"Wrap not yourselves round in the associations of years past; nor determine that to be truth which you wish to be so, nor make an idol of cherished anticipations" (CARDINAL NEWMAN'S *Essay on Development*, final page).

"The condition of the creature seems to be untruthfulness" (*The Creator and the Creature*, by FATHER FABER, second edition, p. 308).

"Qui cherche la vérité trouvera Dieu."

SOME wise man has said that if he were offered the choice of possessing absolute truth, or the desire of it, he would choose the desire of it. The spirit of truthfulness, even more than truth itself, should be our aim. Both truth and truthfulness, according to Tyrrell, are late social developments; but many a man has spoken out valiantly on their behalf in ages when their worth was but dimly discerned by the multitude. "Nothing," said Erigena, "is to be desired except the joy that comes from truth; nothing is to be shunned except its absence"; but Erigena was not in favour with a Church which has always preached and practised "economy" of the truth. In my previous book I set down in black and white the extraordinary theories on this subject propounded by the Church's accredited masters of ethical doctrine, and the half-hearted efforts of Catholic apologists to explain away this teaching have been a complete failure.

Even in our day there are people outside the Roman communion who appear to favour Catholic ideas and methods; and the unrestricted pursuit of truth is regarded with marked disfavour by men who can hardly be described as reactionaries. "Truth-hunting," we gather from the versatile Mr. Augustine Birrell (*Obiter Dicta*, i) is a reprehensible pastime indulged in by persons who possess weak convictions, paralysed intellects and lax opinions, and who are sadly lacking in humour. Reticence upon, and a wisely tempered indifference to, speculative questions form, Mr. Birrell thinks, a valuable prescription to rid the intellect of cloudy vapours: the restless habit of the inquiring mind has a bad effect upon human conduct. Worse still, this habit is, in the eyes of many excellent people (of whom, if I mistake not, Mr. Birrell is one), decidedly "bad form." That *l'irréligion est canaille* is stated to have been the opinion of no less an authority than Joseph Le Maistre: fine taste and the sense of gentility should deter all well-bred persons from "controversy," and from prying into recondite matters of belief.

Carlyle thought that the talent of lying in a way that cannot be laid hold of was "a dreadful trick to learn!" but his remark about the salutary nature of falsehoods was a sarcasm, not only on the Jesuit Order, but on all the governing classes in his time. In their eyes religion was chiefly serviceable as police-constable, and their successors in our day would appear to take the same view: all that they demand of such hierarchies as those of Ireland and Quebec is that they shall help to keep the people quiet. If Imposture is an aid to the police, by all means let her be enrolled in the force. The statesmen agree with the Churches that truth is a dangerous medicine, which should only be administered to the common herd in homœopathic doses, and by experi-

enced practitioners: like the French cynic, they are of opinion that, if God did not exist, we should have to invent Him. Authority still tries to placate Labour by promising that it will be recompensed hereafter for its sufferings here below; but Labour says that it prefers to take the cash and let the credit go, and plumps for an *un*economic wage.

From the days of Plato onwards highly educated people have always considered that unlimited truth is deleterious to the folk whom they describe as the lower orders: "we must teach the people a fable," as the Greek philosopher said. The Decay of Lying was a grief to the cultured soul of Oscar Wilde, who also affected, along with the æsthetic pose, a more than clerical obscurantism. For these reasons he deprecated the faithful representation of the thing as it is in Nature. He deplored the curious crudities, the monotony, and the absolutely unfinished condition of Nature, who had good intentions, of course, but, as Aristotle said, could not carry them out. Nothing was more evident to him than that Nature (like the Roman Church) hates Mind. Thinking, he said (again following the Roman tradition), is the most unhealthy thing in the world; and our splendid British physique—which Mr. Lloyd George, by the way, stoutly denies—is entirely due to our national stupidity. What he pleaded for is Lying as a fine art, an art with a technique of its own, its craft-mysteries, and deliberate artistic methods; and if he had only studied Roman moral theology, he would have found all these things developed to the highest pitch of perfection. The only consolation he ever derived from the story that George Washington never told a lie, was that the whole thing is a myth. The imaginative man, the true liar, with his frank, fearless statements and his superb irresponsibility, has a healthy, natural disdain of proof of any kind: what we should all aim at (what the

truly orthodox person aims at) is "a cultivated blindness."

The substance, if not the tone, of these remarks, with their mingled obscurantism and disdain of truth, is curiously reminiscential of official Catholic theology and certain Papal Encyclicals. Pius X and St. Alphonsus Liguori together could hardly have bettered them. Art and dogmatic religion have much in common, and it would almost seem that Wilde had imbibed the teachings of casuistry in the matter of truthfulness, just as the superficial stage-artistry of Rome, added to what a clever person calls its "pseudo-romanticism," undoubtedly appealed to his shallow and rather hard æstheticism. Be that as it may, certain it is that he ended his days a true believer: he died in Paris in November 1900, "fortified by the sacraments of the Catholic Church." [1]

Roman Catholic orthodoxy, like æstheticism, thinks that truth of representation is not always desirable. In the eye of the Curia conviction stands second to obedience, genuine belief to formal assent. Humanity thirsts after illusions; popular religion craves emotionalism and mystery; and Rome takes care to cater for these wants in a liberal manner, and without any undue subserviency to scientific or historical fact. The reign of sham throughout the Church may be, to us, a source of regret and a stumbling-block of offence; but as a Roman prelate, correctly interpreting the mind of his superiors, remarked to one of our countrymen, "You English make too much of truth."

In Fogazzaro's great novel, *The Saint*, there is a striking scene between Benedetto, the idealist priest-hero of the story, and the Pope, where the former indulges in some very plain speaking. He tells His Holiness that there are four evil spirits

[1] *The Times*, November 30, 1920.

assailing the life of the Church. First and foremost of these is " the spirit of falsehood. It has assumed the shape of an angel of light, and many shepherds, many teachers in the Church, many pious and virtuous ones among the faithful, listen devoutly to the spirit of falsehood, believing they listen to an angel. Christ said, ' I am the truth.' But many in the Church, even good and pious souls, divide the Truth in their hearts, have no reverence for that Truth which they do not call ' religious,' fearing that truth will destroy truth ; they oppose God to God, prefer darkness to light, and thus also do they train men. They call themselves the ' faithful,' and do not understand how weak, how cowardly is their faith, how foreign to them is the spirit of the apostle, which probes all things."

The aged Pontiff, overborne by the cares of his high office and his impotence to deal with the crying evils that beset the Church, listens awhile in silence and sorrowful acquiescence. Finally, in a few brief and deeply moving words, he sets forth the difficulties of his position, implores Benedetto to pray for him, and gives the priest his blessing. The Saint departs, only to fall a victim later on to the obscurantist villainy of the Curia.

" Thus also do they train men." We need not have recourse to Protestant controversialists for confirmation of this statement : Catholic writers of the highest repute supply it in abundance. " Lying is only a venial sin," says that amiable and most prolific writer, Father Faber, in *The Creator and the Creature*, p. 307 ; and the exceeding veniality of a venial sin is amply demonstrated by the Father. A little " holy water, other sacramentals, the sign of the Cross," and hey presto ! " the guilt of these sins falls from us like a withered leaf from an autumnal tree." Lord Acton was under no illusions as to the quality of the teaching supplied by his

Church. In a letter to Mr. Gladstone he says that Ultramontanism (which has controlled Roman policy and doctrine for the last seventy years) "not only promotes, it inculcates, distinct mendacity and deceitfulness." [1] Tyrrell explains at length in his *Autobiography* (ii, 496) and elsewhere, how in the Roman pulpit, confessional, seminaries and other places of education, emphasis is laid on "the venial character of the sin of lying and casuistical minimizing of the duty of veracity." This being so, that Roman Catholic schoolmaster would appear to have been within his rights who refused to punish a boy for falsehood, remarking that the lad was only "acting on the teaching and example he was given." [2] St. Alphonsus Liguori, Rome's accredited moralist and chief exponent of ethical doctrine, says that a man who swears to a thing, but does not mean what he swears, or makes a contract without intending to bind himself, is not bound by the oath or the contract! Other astounding examples of official Roman Catholic teaching on lying and prevarication are given in *The Roman Mischief-Maker*, chapters xiv, xv, and Appendix.

Centuries ago Irish sages described their bishops as preaching doctrine more crooked than their croziers; and in these later days Dr. O'Dwyer, late Bishop of Limerick, told a Royal Commission that the clergy who came out of Maynooth were deficient in "a something which cultivates a right sense of honour and of right judgment with regard to the affairs of life"; and, as "Pat" remarks in his book, *The Sorrows of Ireland*, it is no wonder that the national character gets "a little twisted" in consequence of the shocking education the people receive. It would be easy to multiply similar examples of

[1] *Letters to Mary Gladstone*, lv.

[2] See *The Church Quarterly*, vol. xxviii, p. 51, where the author states on the authority of another Romanist, that the veracity of Catholic schoolboys leaves much to be desired.

first-class Catholic opinion on this subject. When shining lights of the Church like Pascal, Lord Acton, Tyrrell, Fogazzaro, and many other men of outstanding intellect and diverse gifts and temperaments, all pounce upon shiftiness and mendacity as the crowning vices of Roman Catholicism; when their judgment is confirmed by that of the world at large, and throughout many centuries, it is idle to ascribe it to Protestant calumny or what the *Tablet* calls "moribund religious prejudice." Even Newman, before he found salvation in Catholicism, spoke of "the notorious insincerity and frauds of the Church of Rome," its "deceitful deeds and lying wonders," with much more to the same effect. It is true that he subsequently abased himself and made a meal of the words; but *litera scripta manet*, the writings remain on record.

To the direct teaching of deceitfulness, in word and deed, must be added the controversial chicanery, the misquotation of opponents which, in the case of certain authors, has become "a byword"; the lack of candour and straightforwardness that involves religious disputation in a web of unreality; and the perversion, in many cases wilful, of historical fact. The Church idealizes the past, but dishonours it by her striking absence of the historical sense. Pious frauds, "necessary fictions" and impostures of various kinds, text-twistings, "canonized" but indefensible interpretations, the habit of making statements on matters of science and history which they know to be untenable—"word-jugglings, suppressions and amplifications," as Tyrrell says—all out of respect for the exigencies of supposed edification, are openly defended and practised by Catholic clerics and laymen. "You must have a prop of some sort," as a candid friend, who leans on the crutch of Romanism, remarked to me the other day; but the props of clerical autocracy are usually of a somewhat

decrepit nature. The Church's boasted "triumph over history," her undoubted success in imposing manipulated facts upon the faithful,[1] are but a Pyrrhic victory. If a merchant were as unscrupulous in his business transactions as many pious folk are in their dealings with religion, he would be given a very bad time.

All this breeds that "profound inward scepticism," together with the absence of anything that deserves the name of intellectual conviction, which Tyrrell and other observant Catholics have noted and deplored amongst their co-religionists. Roman Catholic critics tell me that the charge of lax teaching in the matter of truth is an old one; but the question is not whether it is old, but whether it is just. It is indeed many centuries old, but it still persists because it never has been refuted, and never can be. Nor can we wonder that all this scientific tergiversation and pernicious moralizing have, in the common estimation of mankind, reacted most injuriously on the characters of those who receive them. There are, as we all know, thousands of Catholics who are the soul of honour in public and private life; but the Church's teaching has undoubtedly left its mark pretty deeply upon Romanists in the mass. The deplorable campaign of lying and calumny which they are conducting against England all over the world—in America and Australia particularly—shows how they have profited by their instructions.

A very brief reflection on the inherent nature of this teaching will convince us that it could hardly

[1] Newman was consulted in the 'sixties by a friend who wanted to found a Catholic Historical Review. "Nothing would be better," replied the future Cardinal, "than a Historical Review for Catholics—but who would bear it? Unless one doctored all one's facts, one would be thought a bad Catholic." (See the *Month*, January 1903, and also the *Hibbert Journal*, January 1921, where Mr. Belloc's latest essay in writing "history" from the Papal standpoint is reviewed. It appears to be that author's view that if an opinion is modern, it is "therefore part of a decline.")

have different results. When religion and reason are partitioned off in separate compartments of the mind, the scepticism of indifference soon follows. Far more deadly than deliberate lying is the spirit of falsity that breeds lies. "Trickery and fraud," said St. Thomas Aquinas, "are equivalent to a lie." In my opinion they are worse: a good downright lie is preferable to a lie that pretends it is not a lie. Truth is not valued by the Church for its own sake, but only when it serves her purposes. We are told that the assertions of ecclesiastical dogma do not constitute a demand for genuine belief, but are simply a matter of ecclesiastical discipline. The principle of orthodoxy laid down by St. Ignatius Loyola is clerically sound: if the Church says that black is white, the good churchman must say so too. "Why do you not accept what I tell you?" asks Rome: "no one asks you to believe it." [1] The non-Catholic naïvely inquires if such-and-such a doctrine is true. "What an absurd question!" the good Roman Catholic in effect replies. "Mother Church says we are to believe it, and that ought to satisfy any reasonable being."

The faith of the Church is an Asian mystery. Her clergy let their vivid imaginations run riot while expounding religious dogma to the faithful; and many of the latter are probably aware that, as Abbé Houtin caustically observed, we must not expect too much sincerity from Roman Catholic priests. Tyrrell (*Mediævalism*, p. 98) doubts whether half of those within the Church's visible body are true Catholics in conviction and heart: it would seem probable that among educated Romanists the proportion is considerably smaller, and not a few of them confess their backslidings in this matter. "Few," say the Italian authors of that stinging protest

[1] For instances of this, see *Studies in Modernism*, by the Rev. Alfred Fawkes, p. 369.

against Curialism and its methods, *Quello que Vogliamo*—" Few have remained faithful to religious traditions, and this minority is showing signs of dissolution." Religion, for them, is but " a cold observance of traditional formulas and precepts. The men are reduced to a handful; the women go on slowly diminishing, and the young are becoming ever more refractory to religious training."

Such people do lip-service to truth, but what they really believe is always a riddle, and one which they are themselves apparently unable to solve. The unsearchable nature of the clerical mind has often been commented on by clerics, and the mental make-up of the enlightened laity, at least where religion is concerned, is no less inscrutable. I often wonder how many of them believe—what they are told they must believe—those weird pronouncements of pastoral wisdom, the *Providentissimus Deus* and *Pascendi* Encyclicals, or those strange " infallible " utterances of the Holy Spirit, the Trent and Vatican Decrees? Not one Catholic in a hundred, I would freely wager, has ever heard of the Encyclicals in question, much less have they a knowledge of their contents. How many of the Roman ecclesiastics (it is often asked) who took the anti-Modernist oath prescribed by Pius X, did so with a clear conscience? The religious practice of the laity is often, as Mr. Belloc recently pointed out, a matter of " social routine," although intermixed with a great deal of very real faith. A large number permit themselves to be driven through life in the blinkers of the Church's " miraculous *magisterium*," which is populously supposed to form an infallible corrective to the wanderings of mind or eyes to left or right. Righteousness, for the good Curialist, consists in implicitly obeying and believing in an external teacher, rather than the promptings of conscience. The hopeless inconsistency of the

teachers does not distress him in the least; nor will it do so, I suppose, until he begins to think for himself and compare notes about religion with his fellow men. At present he is ready to "mingle with the acquiescent multitude, that will swear to any words, contradict any history, betray any inherited trust, so long as they are covered by the dome of St. Peter's."[1] "Every hesitation will yield before this unanswerable argument: 'God wills and commands it, because the Pope wills and commands it.'" So wrote a clerical admirer in a letter to that estimable Pontiff, Pius X; and His Holiness expressed his "satisfaction with it as dictated by that spirit of intelligent piety which indicates a true Catholic and an exemplary priest."[2]

"Superstition and false miracles are at once preached, assented to, and laughed at" by Roman Catholics in countries where the Roman faith prevails; and Newman (*Anglican Difficulties*, p. 268) admits this to be a correct statement of the case. Fanaticism and fraud have ever been characteristic of Romanism. In olden times the sincerity of fanaticism predominated: as this gradually wanes, the spirit of inherent falsity waxes. The facing-both-ways attitude towards mediævalism and modern thought is fatal to intellectual candour. Carlyle tells us in his *Jesuitism* that a man's "religion" consists, "not of the many things he is in doubt of and tries to believe, but of the few he is assured of, and has no need of effort for believing. Ask yourselves, what are the eternal covenants which you can believe, and dare not for your life's sake but go and observe? These are your Bible, *your* God's word such as it may be: these you will continually struggle to obey." To those of us who hold it a more serious offence to trifle with the truth than to trifle with

[1] *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, by Dr. James Martineau.
[2] *Mediævalism*, fourth impression, by Father Tyrrell, p. 212.

man-made dogmas or religious observances, or the supposed attributes of a tribal Jehovah, the levity and cynicism displayed by many Catholics towards those transcendental matters which to them are vital is little short of astounding. Truth-worship, or truth-hunting if you prefer the phrase, is a more profitable exercise than a mere sentimental indulgence in religious practices of Pagan origin and more than doubtful efficacy. The truth shall make you free—a most disastrous result from the standpoint of the Roman cleric. Truthfulness is the child of freedom : despotism, spiritual despotism above all, is fatal to it.

Unbelief is preferable to half-belief. Remember that, as Plato said, the lie of the soul is much worse than the spoken lie ; a grudging assent to discredited dogmas is itself discreditable. Do not pin your faith to the doctrine that you are serving God by pretending to believe what you know to be untrue : abandon the notion that religious opinions, intrinsically absurd, but erroneously supposed to be politically serviceable, cannot be surrendered without danger ; or that certain classes of humanity require to be instructed in moonshine. No man's conscience really needs the wire-netting of " protective methods " in its pursuit of truth in any shape.

The fact is that doubt becomes a duty when the material for reasonable certitude is lacking ; the uncertainty of Yes must not be allowed to override the clear probability of No. The worst of all humbugs is the humbug of pretended or nominal religion, and that subordination of veracity to the exigencies of so-called piety which has made shipwreck of the characters of so many otherwise well-meaning men. Theirs is an apostasy from honest opinion : mental fraud and insincerity are apt to become, in such a case, a daily custom, a necessity of existence. " Life," as is admirably said by the Rev. Alfred

Fawkes, who was himself a Roman Catholic for many years, but left the Church when intimate experience brought home to him her true character—"Life is lived out in bad faith, because men are too indolent or too self-interested to break away from the bondage of habit and circumstance: a false sentiment of loyalty to the past, and to engagements entered into in ignorance of their real nature, ensures a nominal allegiance to a creed which has ceased to command belief or respect. It is an allegiance as destitute of honour as of reality; if there is in the world such a thing as atheism, as infidelity, it is here." [1]

Remembering these wise words, let us cease to believe in the salutary nature of falsehoods, or in any amalgam of truth and untruth, whereof the false ring betrays the baseness of the metal in its composition, but face fearlessly the problems that confront us. To shirk inconvenient questions is the act of a moral poltroon: nobody can hope to save his soul by fouling it with imposture. Let us have faith only in what is credible and deserving of belief. The sort of faith that is only half-faith and a compromise with conscience, that results in universal strife and bitterness, mutual distrust and suspicion and ill-will—such as we are now witnessing in Ireland—is a rotten thing. "He who doubts and searches not," says Pascal, "is a grievous wrongdoer." The men who repress truth and stifle conviction from motives of expediency, run imposture as a trade or an instrument of government, are guilty of both moral and intellectual improbity. God does *not* need our lie, neither does man.

[1] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 155.

CHAPTER II

THOU ART PETER

"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."—MATTHEW xvi. 18.

ON the great Basilica of St. Peter's in Rome, on the cathedral at Westminster, and many other Roman Catholic churches is inscribed the following sentence: —TU ES PETRUS ET SUPER HANC PETRAM ÆDIFICABO ECCLESIAM MEAM. These fateful words, which have formed the basis of an empire and changed the course of the world's history, are commonly supposed to have been addressed to St. Peter by Christ, in the presence of His disciples, on a notable occasion. People are not told in so many words that Jesus addressed the illiterate and Aramaic-speaking peasants, who formed his usual audience, in the Greek language; but the impression given to the ordinary reader, and usually entertained by him, is that Christ added the name "Peter" to that of "Simon"—Simon was "surnamed Peter," we are told in Mark iii. 16—in order to secure the implications contained in the Greek word "petra" (a rock). The whole point of the phrase, as was often explained to us at school, lies in the alliterative *jeu de mots*, or play upon the Greek words "Petrus" and "petra": Catholic pupils are sometimes told in their schools what a "wonderful" thing it was that Simon was called Peter. In Hebrew,[1] or any other language but

[1] Why no Hebrew Gospel has been preserved still remains a mystery: if such documents ever existed, there may have been reasons for their loss or destruction.

Greek or French, the sentence is wholly lacking in vigour and poignancy. Roman Catholics might learn from their theological books (if they ever read such things) that the Church supposes Christ to have said, "Thou art Kīphā (Aramaic for a rock, or stone), and on this Kīphā I will build my church," etc. This is pretty much as though a man should say in the English of to-day, "You are Mr. Rock, and on this rock I will build the church I am going to erect" —which sounds neither apt nor impressive. Taken out of its Greek setting, the story is the reverse of satisfactory;[1] and, from a dispassionate point of view, the incident, taken as a whole, cannot be regarded as historical or even founded on fact.

In the first place, there is no reason whatever to suppose that Christ ever intended or desired to found what we term a "church." Such an institution, in the opinion of liberal theologians and independent critics, was not in accordance with the spirit of the time: as the Dean of St. Paul's tells us (*Outspoken Essays*, p. 249), institutional Christianity is something alien to the Gospel itself. The Dean further says, in an article on the divorce question, that "it is by no means certain what Christ really said"; and that most scholars have now come to the conclusion that certain passages are "spurious." It is hardly necessary to point out that our doubts concerning the authenticity of the records cannot be confined to a few isolated texts; and we may be pretty certain that Matt. xvi. 16–18 must be

[1] Compare the version of the incident given in John i. 42, the only other Gospel that records it. Here we are told that Andrew found his brother Simon and introduced him to Jesus (at a date much earlier than that recorded by St. Matthew, and apparently for the first time) "and when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." The story thus told is very insipid compared with the crisp and vivid narrative in the First Gospel. Observe, too, that no mention is made of Christ's intention to found a Church upon the newly named apostle.

included amongst the spurious interpolations. The word "church" only occurs in one other place in the Gospels, Matt. xviii. 17, a passage which may safely be regarded as a late addition—"a piece of ancient Christian law put into the mouth of Jesus," as Mr. Montefiore says in his *Synoptic Gospels*, ii, 681. Christ certainly did not anticipate a Church lasting 2,000 years, because He warned His hearers to expect the end of the world during their lifetime; and the early Christians neglected their social duties, and lived in a perpetual scare, owing to their belief in the immediacy of the Kingdom. They acted only for to-day, because they imagined there was going to be no to-morrow.[1] Jesus was a layman-prophet, not a priest: priests, with their formalism, ritual, and other paraphernalia of worship, were intensely repugnant to Him. He fiercely attacked the Jewish hierarchy; and they, with a sure instinct, marked Him out as a dangerous enemy. Gambetta's onslaught on clericalism was but a feeble echo of His stern denunciation of ecclesiasticism and its ways; and the formalism of the Jewish Doctors was simplicity itself in comparison with the tawdry display and complex mediæval apparatus of Roman worship. Had Jesus appeared in Rome during the earlier days of the Papacy, He would certainly have shared the fate of Savonarola.

Let me cite some representative opinions. M. Alfred Loisy, foremost among living Biblical scholars, is convinced that Matt. xvi. 17–18 is an interpolation. He points out, amongst other things, that the words "*my* church" are highly suspicious[2]: in the Synoptic Gospels, at any rate, Christ is never represented as speaking of "my" Kingdom. He preached the Kingdom that was to come shortly, and nothing else: there is no evidence or sign of church-building.

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 29; Rom. xii. 11; 1 Pet. iv. 7.
[2] *Les Évangiles Synoptiques*, ii. 11.

Mr. C. G. Montefiore, author of *The Synoptic Gospels*, and a very clear-headed and serenely impartial critic, quotes a number of authorities and agrees with M. Loisy. From verse 17 we gather that Peter had some *special* inward divine revelation that Jesus was the Son of God; but we learn from Matt. xiv. 33 that the other disciples had already recognized the fact. In verse 19 the powers of binding and loosing are given to Peter, together with the keys of Heaven—apparently as a peculiar prerogative; in xviii. 18 *all* the apostles are granted these powers. The whole passage seems at variance with Mark ix. 35 and x. 44, where the apostles are told that he who wishes to be first among them shall be last. To the unbiassed observer it all seems part of "the editorial process which produced the First Gospel" at the hands of some unknown "churchly disciplinarian." Let me also cite, as an example of intelligent lay opinion, the *dictum* of that well-known interpreter of æsthetic, and occasionally of religious dogma, Mr. George Moore. Mr. Moore's success as a novelist has obscured, in the eyes of an undiscerning public, his merits as a theologian; but these are in reality by no means inconsiderable. It seems worth recording that Mr. Moore (*Salve*, p. 362) roundly proclaims that Matt. xvi. 18 is a "fake, reeking-of-Bishop"; and he is convinced that the policeman round the corner would not fail to recognize the deception which has been practised upon him.

That Jesus ever contemplated such an institution as the modern Papacy, with its elaborate externalism and stage-machinery—a vast temporal power resting on bayonets (foreign or otherwise)—is, to put it mildly, highly improbable, and certain of His alleged successors would hardly have been to His taste. He would presumably have favoured the Grand Lama of Tibet as His Vicar, rather than the Borgia-

monster, Alexander VI. As the Rev. Alfred Fawkes says (*Studies in Modernism*, p. 317): "Given the circumstances of speaker and period, such an institution (as the Papacy) is unthinkable. . . . Matt. xvi. 18 presents us with the reflection of a later generation on Christ's teaching rather than with His own words." Remember, also, that Jesus never dreamed that His teachings would be adopted by the world at large, still less that they would ever sway the destinies of vast empires. Dr. Gore, late Bishop of Oxford, remarks in his work, *Roman Catholic Claims*, that this is "one of those passages which want *interpreting*" (the italics are his). I submit that the simplest and most probable explanation of the matter is that the two verses are an interpolation or invention by some later bishop, probably of the second century, who was engaged in founding a church and adapted his narrative to the exigencies of propagandism. Lord Acton says (*North British Review*, October 1869) that all the Church Fathers, eighteen in number, "explain the prayer of Christ for Peter, without reference to the Pope. Not one of them believes that the Papacy is the rock on which He built His Church"; and every Roman Catholic priest is bound by oath to follow the Fathers.

In view of these and other kindred facts, theologians now argue that the word "ecclesia" should be rendered "congregation"; it meant, they say, the "little flock" or community of Christian disciples and converts. But this, to borrow a phrase of Dr. Jowett's, "will never, never do." You can build a church upon a rock: men do not speak of "building" a little flock or community—least of all upon such an arid foundation as a rock, where the little flock would certainly starve. All these forced interpretations are simply the expedients of theologians in distress: the man who wrote the passage in question—whoever he was—wrote it with a distinct

purpose in his mind. It is stated that he probably knew Hebrew; but he wrote in Greek and said "ecclesia," and he meant "church" (Spanish "iglesia," French "église") as we understand the word—that is to say, either a place of worship, or an organized society built up into a corporate whole,[1] a divine house or temple constructed with co-ordinate parts and by divine aid, such as the Papacy professes to be; and the Roman ecclesiastics have freely used the word in this sense, and with all its advantageous implications, for over eighteen hundred years.

Nor is the notion that Simon was called Peter, in order to secure the implications contained in the word "petra,"[2] by any means the only belief in connection with the apostle that will have to be abandoned. Apart from the question whether Matt. xvi. 18 is genuine or not, Catholics have to prove their oft-repeated assertion that Peter was invested with a general primacy over the other apostles. Their whole case rests upon this assumption. The primacy they have to establish is not that of a mere *primus inter pares*, a spokesman or personal leader among equals, but a primacy of authority. They must show that the leadership bestowed upon him was the leadership of a regularly constituted ecclesiastical corporation, a primacy which, to quote a Catholic writer, is "the generally accepted basis of Papal authority inherent in the See of Peter." The bulk of the evidence is all against this contention. At the Council of Jerusalem James got up, after Peter had spoken, and gave his "sentence." "I decide" (*ego krino*), he said,

[1] Liddell and Scott show that the word was then used in this sense. Εκκλησία, says the Lexicon, signifies in N.T. and Ecclesiastical Greek, "the Church, either the body or the place."

[2] According to St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 4) the original spiritual *petra*, or Rock, was Christ: the Petrine Rock was probably a strategical or political invention of a considerably later date.

on what is to be done; and the course of action upon which he "decided" was carried into effect (Acts xv., and see *Roman Catholic Claims*, by Bishop Gore, p. 79). We learn, too, from Acts viii. 14 that Peter was "sent" by the twelve into Samaria, was censured for his conduct there, and defended himself deferentially, but successfully (Acts xi. 2–18). There was evidently much dissension among the disciples as to who should be greatest. To take one example, we find from Matt. xx. 21 that Zebedee's wife, anxious, like so many modern ladies, about the social status of her family, sought preferment for her two sons, James and John. Backed by them (Mark x. 37), she asks, to the great disgust of the other ten, that they shall sit on either side of Christ in His Kingdom, and is rebuked by Jesus. This is a delightfully human touch, showing, first, that human nature is pretty much the same in all ages; and, secondly, that Peter's primacy was not recognized generally—at any rate, not by one important laywoman. That St. Paul had not the slightest idea of subjecting himself to Peter's overlordship is very clear from the bitter tone of his Epistle to the Galatians, and by other passages in the New Testament.[1] Peter claimed (Acts xv. 7) that God had appointed him to be apostle to the Gentiles, but Paul (Gal. ii.) withstood him to the face, and said that he (Paul) occupied that position. In the words of St. Jerome (quoted in *The Primacy of Peter*, by Francis King) he appears to have "impertinently censured the Prince of the Apostles," yet the alleged Primate never drew sword in his own defence, but remained silent.

[1] Among the numerous passages showing Paul's attitude of independent authority I may draw attention to the following:—Rom. xv. 15–20; 1 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 14–21; vii. 17; xi. 1–2; xvi. 1–4; 2 Cor. xi. 28; xiii. 1, 2, 3, 10; Gal. i. 1; ii. 7, 11–14; 2 Tim. ii. 1–2; Titus i. 5.

Peter had no distinctive qualities of leadership: indeed, Catholics say that he was chosen as leader for that very reason! The extremely humble tone of his own epistles (see 1 Pet. v. 1) is certainly not that of a budding Pontiff; and no mention is made of his successors, probably for the simple reason that the end of all things was believed to be at hand. Lastly, we read in Rev. xxi. 14 that the wall of the heavenly city had twelve foundations, not one only, and each foundation was marked by the name of an apostle—an indication that all the twelve had co-ordinate powers.

Much of the Petrine tradition is now admitted, even by orthodox critics, to be of late and Pagan origin. The *Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited, and largely written, by Anglican clergymen, pronounces the story (found only in Matt. xiv. 28–31) of Peter walking on the water and being rescued by Jesus, to be unhistorical and not founded on fact; and the article "Simon Peter" says that "there are other narratives also which require no detailed proof of their unhistorical character." For instance, the statements in Luke xxiv. 12, that Peter visited the tomb of Jesus and found it empty; the stories of the withered fig-tree; the Transfiguration; the coin in the fish's mouth, and other narratives in which Peter figures, are dealt with in the most unceremonious fashion by the writers of the article.

Other learned authors and scholars go much further. Mr. J. M. Robertson (*Christianity and Mythology*, pp. 378–384) points out the suspicious resemblance between certain Petrine legends and those of an earlier antiquity. The doctrine of the divine rock is found in Mithraism, and Mithra in his monuments bears two keys. Janus, in the Roman myth, bears the keys and the rod: he is *cœlestis janitor aulæ*, the key-bearing god and gatekeeper of the heavenly palace, with power to bind or loose.

Janus, like Peter, has the symbol of a barque on certain coins. Mr. Robertson also traces a connection between the epithet "bifrons," the two-faced image of Janus—Mithra was two-sexed—and the story of Peter's treachery and double-dealing [1]; but this must be regarded at present as merely a more or less probable conjecture.

The whole story of Peter, his doings, his sayings, his life, and his death, are involved in the utmost obscurity. He appears to have been—unlike the priests of the Church whereof he was the corner-stone—a married man, and his wife went with him on his travels, as we learn from 1 Cor. ix. 5, where St. Paul also claims the right to be accompanied by a lady. He is said to have been crucified upside down; and one learned divine sees in this a proof of Papal infallibility. The Papacy, as we gather from Tyrrell's *Mediævalism* (p. 90), is an inverted pyramid in the eyes of certain ecclesiastics: it is a topsy-turvy erection which stands on its head, so to speak; and "the Pope, as the head, now bears the whole Church," and is therefore infallible. That very learned man, Marsilius of Padua, greatly annoyed Clement VI by arguing, in his *Defensor Pacis*, that Peter had no pre-eminence over the other apostles, that it is doubtful if he was ever Bishop of Rome, or even came to Rome at all; and we know very little more about the matter than Marsilius knew. Catholic tradition states that Peter was Bishop of Rome from A.D. 43 until he was executed in A.D. 68 or, as some say, a few years later; but there is not a word in the New Testament to confirm this statement. Such evidence as can be collected from the Acts and the Epistles goes to show that he was

[1] Mr. Chesterton, an ardent Roman Catholic, rather oddly describes St. Peter as "a shuffler, a snob, a coward"; and says that this was the reason why Christ selected him, a weak man, as the corner-stone of His indestructible Church (*Heretics*, p. 67).

not in Rome during the period mentioned. Peter himself says nothing about Rome or his bishopric; and St. Paul, writing to the Romans (about A.D. 58) sends greetings to twenty-seven persons in the town by name, but does not mention Peter. Acts xii. shows that Peter was in Jerusalem at the time; and twelve years later Paul states that Peter was at the Jerusalem Council (see also 2 Tim. iv. 11). The story of Peter's Roman bishopric did not start until many years later, when the leading ecclesiastics were busy creating their Papal Church.

Theologians and scholars are at hopeless variance over the whole question: the critics are still busy over their researches, and each new day that dawns only serves to increase the fog in which the whole matter is enveloped. Tradition, on which the Church mainly relies, is, as I shall show presently, nothing more than a collection of ancient rumours or, as we should say, gossip; an appeal to the unverified sayings of unknown people with more than doubtful qualifications for instructing the world on such vital subjects. Nay more, many of these stories have the freshness of youth upon their faces, and were plainly manufactured to serve the ends of the ecclesiastics. Taking the Petrine tradition as a whole, it would seem that the Church has chosen a rather flimsy foundation upon which to rear her vast superstructure of spiritual and temporal absolutism.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL FRAUD OF THE PAPACY

"O ye men of little faith, of low minds, of miserable hearts, have not your cunning devices become the scandal of souls?" (PÈRE GRATRY).

"Ecclesiastical historians are ingenious and unscrupulous" (*Outspoken Essays*, by DEAN INGE, p. 200).

THE modern Papacy is represented by the Church as having sprung from the brain of Christ—not exactly as Minerva sprang from the brain of Jove, ready armed and equipped for the fray—but as the nucleus of an organization that was divinely destined to dominate the world, not merely spiritually, but with bayonets and material means. The *Pascendi* Encyclical of Pius X, in 1907, makes the astonishing claim that the Roman Church, with the Papacy, its sacraments, institutions and dogmas, was, in its entirety, the immediate creation of Christ when on earth. The Church, in the words of Tyrrell, asserts that she was "created instantaneously as an absolute monarchy, with its Pope, bishops, priests, deacons, dogmas, sacraments, institutions, by the *Fiat* of the historical Christ. Like the Adam of Genesis, it sprang from the dust full-formed and mature in mind and body." She "must be accepted by her members in the shape in which she has been organized by her Divine Founder." All her present doctrines were there from the first. Nay more, it would appear that the wise men of ancient Palestine were conversant with them centuries before Christ was born. "The Hebrew patriarchs," said that modern prophet

of mediævalism, Pius X, "were familiar with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, and found consolation in the thought of Mary in the solemn moments of their life." [1]

"The Church," said a mediæval chronicler, "is dearer to God than Heaven is." It may truly be said that she bulks much more largely in the eyes of many good Roman Catholics to-day than God Himself. Yet the Papacy, as we shall see, employed for the alleged divine purpose, not only the most brutal force, but also the grossest fraud—weapons which a God-appointed and God-directed institution could hardly be expected to use. The inherent right of the Church to employ force in imposing her authority on recalcitrants was asserted in the most unqualified terms by a long succession of Pontiffs and other ecclesiastical dignitaries down to the days of Pius IX; and imposture proved a hardly less effective instrument for the attainment of her ends.

Lord Acton states roundly that "the passage from the Catholicism of the Fathers to that of the modern Popes was accomplished by wilful falsehood; and the whole structure of traditions, laws, and doctrines that support the theory of infallibility, and the practical despotism of the Popes, stands on a basis of fraud." [2] The sting of these words lies in their absolute truth: and the accomplishments, no less than the creed, of their distinguished author add to them a peculiar force and piquancy. Had Lord Acton been an ordinary priest or layman of the Latin Church, he would certainly have been deprived of the sacraments and excommunicated;

[1] Quoted by Dean Inge in *Outspoken Essays*, p. 143.

[2] The *North British Review*, October 1869, p. 130. For other authorities see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*; Bryce's *Holy Roman Empire*; Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims*; Tyrrell's *Mediævalism*; Acton's works; McCabe's *Crises in the History of the Papacy*, and *The Popes and their Church*—the latter an admirable sketch of the Papacy and its methods.

but the Church, who, despite her professions to the contrary, is always a great respecter of persons, thought it was wiser not to try conclusions with a British lord and eminent man of letters. He expected excommunication every day as the natural result of his acidulated criticism, but it never came. Why he remained a member of an ecclesiastical corporation on which he lavished his unrivalled powers of vituperation must always remain a mystery. A connoisseur in priestcraft, with a keen appreciation of the Curia and its unpleasant ways, he combined with profound scholarship a fervid detestation of Roman clericalism which would have done credit to any Protestant hot-gospeller. In one respect Lord Acton showed himself a good Roman Catholic: he was a great hater.

The actual Roman Church, as we now know it, a great ecclesiastical society with formal doctrines, ritual, institutions and discipline, did not begin until about A.D. 200; and, whatever ecclesiastical historians, with their suspicious materials and highly unscrupulous use of them, may say, the transition from primitive Christianity to a Cæsarian episcopate resting on material force was effected as Lord Acton and many other chroniclers have indicated. There was no supreme Pontiff, or any general desire for one, in the ardent band of disciples who formed the sprouting religious organization. In the early days every great bishop called himself "Pope," or "Papa," in token of his paternal care for his flock. But the natural, and very human, desire to "boss" was not long in manifesting itself. About A.D. 190 the Roman Bishop Victor *commanded* the churches of Asia Minor to celebrate Easter on the same day as the Romans did; but he was severely snubbed and requested not to interfere.[1] An eminent Catholic

[1] *Eusebius*, v, 34, quoted in *The Popes and their Church*, by Joseph McCabe, p. 7.

controversialist, quoted by Mr. McCabe, tells us all about the command, but of course says nothing about the snub. Thirty years later we find Tertullian sneering at the bishop who called himself "supreme Pontiff" and "Bishop of Bishops." In A.D. 252 there started a notable conflict between the African Church and Rome. Pope Cornelius of Rome tried to interfere in African affairs; but St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, sternly rebuked him, and emphatically asserted the independent authority of each bishop in his own diocese. In his admired treatise, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, he affirmed the unity and power of the Church as represented in the episcopal office, of which every bishop enjoyed an equal and undivided portion. The Roman Church, in short, had assumed the form of a coalition, a great federative republic.[1] Later on the quarrel was renewed between the Africans, St. Cyprian and St. Firmilian, and the Roman Pope Stephen, who threatened the Carthaginian prelates with excommunication. Their reply to these "tyrannical threats" was couched in the most defiant and contemptuous terms. Firmilian boldly told the Pope that he was the "true schismatic," and the Roman Bishop's claim to jurisdiction in Africa was flatly repudiated. Afterwards during the fifth century the independent attitude of Bishop Cyprian earned the commendation of the great St. Augustine himself. In A.D. 416 Innocent I excommunicated Pelagius as a heretic; but his successor, Pope Zosimus, attempted to reverse the decision, thereby showing how two infallible Pontiffs can give two absolutely contradictory verdicts upon a question of doctrine in the short space of two years. By way of justifying his interference Zosimus quoted as Canons of the Nicæan Council two Canons of the much less authoritative Western Council of Sardica, hoping that the African Bishops would not discover

[1] Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, xv, 194.

the fraud. They were too clever for him, however, and told him to mind his own business: he was forced to recant, and the bishops said they trusted they would hear "no more of his pompousness." He still persisted, but was met with further outspoken repudiation of his right to meddle.[1]

The year A.D. 313 was the date of that great turning-point in history, the Charter of Liberty for Christians, followed by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. From now onwards it was comparatively plain sailing for the nascent Church. Christianity, no longer, as in former days, the creed of a despised and insignificant sect, became the established religion of the Empire, the road to royal favour, the path to promotion, and the hall-mark of respectability. The oppressed devotees emerged from their catacombs and other hiding-places; the Pope had a palace, his bishops shared in the general amelioration of the Christian lot; and the persecuted gradually became the persecutors. The royal residence was removed from Rome to Byzantium, and in A.D. 381 the Greek Bishops held a grand Council at Constantinople, and laid it down authoritatively that their Bishop was equal in rank to the Bishop of old Rome. When the Roman Pope tried to interfere in Eastern affairs he only got snubbed for his pains. In the fourth century Canon VI of the great Council of Nicæa lays it down that the Bishop of Rome had merely the same authority *in his own region* as had the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch in their regions.[2] In the succeeding century Leo the Great tried to impose his authority on the Greeks (using, like Zosimus, falsified Canons for the purpose) and met the same fate as his predecessor: the Eastern Bishops

[1] Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 110; McCabe's *The Popes and their Church*, p. 22; *The Seat of Authority*, by Dr. James Martineau, p. 143.

[2] *The Popes and their Church*, and *Crises in the History of the Papacy*, by J. McCabe.

sharply reiterated their assertions of complete equality and independence. Late in life, after he had quitted Rome in disgust (as so many good Roman Catholics have done since), St. Jerome said that the authority of Rome was but the authority of a single bishop. In the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great was profuse in his denunciations of the idea that any bishop had any right to assume "the blasphemous title" of "Œcumenical Bishop." It was a sign of "the coming of anti-Christ," he protested; and he stigmatized as pregnant with Satanic arrogance the claim to be regarded as "universal Bishop." As to Papal infallibility, Pope Honorius I was denounced in a General Council as a teacher of shockingly heretical doctrine; and for many centuries each Pope on his succession solemnly condemned among formal heretics one of his infallible predecessors! So recently as in the nineteenth century the authoritative *Controversial Catechism* of Keenan declared the doctrine of infallibility to be "a Protestant invention," and said that it was no article of the Catholic faith.[1] It will be seen, therefore, that when Pius IX, in the face of Döllinger, Newman and the best Catholic opinion of the day, stated that his declaration, in 1870, to the effect that Papal infallibility was a "dogma divinely revealed," and that he was "faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the first beginnings of the Christian faith," he stated what was only the opinion of a faction, not a dogma. In plain words, he stated what was utterly and palpably false.[2] There is no *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus* here—no notion of a Roman Catholic belief held always, everywhere, and by everybody[3]—because probably the large majority of the Church were opposed to the new doctrine.

[1] *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 116. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.
[3] The famous Catholic test of orthodoxy in religious doctrine.

After the fifth and sixth centuries the claim of Roman hegemony grew steadily, if intermittently, until the Papal authority finally became established on a firm basis. The Vandal invasions, beginning in the fifth century, had shattered the African Churches; and Eastern Christendom, in the fourth century, had been "torn into shreds, and spattered with blood, by the fierce struggle of Arians and Trinitarians." Geographically, and to some extent historically, Rome held a favourable position for advancing its assertion of paramountcy. It boasted traditions to which the other Churches could make no claim, and, although lacking in the learning of the rival Churches, the Roman See had, on the whole, preserved a stricter orthodoxy than its competitors. No pains were spared in the task of cementing the foundations of the rising ecclesiastical edifice. Force and diplomacy, fraud and forgery, fabrication of documents, and every other available weapon were pressed into the service of the Church. Ingenious theories, with no real historical basis, plausible doctrines resting on no truth, falsified quotations, were used with telling effect; and appeals were continually made to documents which the Popes and other ecclesiastics well knew to be forgeries. Religious knowledge, says Lord Acton (*Lectures on Modern History*, p. 78), suffered from "an excess of fiction and falsification. . . . Whenever a school was lacking in proofs for its opinions it straightway forged them." At every point the student of tradition "was confronted by imaginary canons and constitutions of the Apostles," Acts, Decretals, etc., "all of them composed for the purpose of deceiving." The whole system of fraud, forgery, fabrication and interpolation is ruthlessly exposed by the great Roman Catholic historian; yet men of education and probity still remain, or profess to remain, unmoved in their convictions by the tainted record of their Church.

These records are to be found in the works of historians whose credit is unassailable, and whose assertions have never been disproved. The famous Acts of St. Sylvester and a Constitution of St. Sylvester, both notorious and extravagant forgeries, appeared in a more finished form as that wonderful "Donation of Constantine," a deed of gift fabricated in the Papal Chancellory during the reign of Pope Hadrian I. Lord Bryce, most careful and dispassionate of historians, describes[1] the Donation as an "extraordinary forgery," a "portentous fabrication," "most stupendous of all the mediæval forgeries"; but for seven centuries it commanded the almost unquestioning belief of mankind. It tells how Constantine the Great, cured of his leprosy by St. Sylvester's prayers, "bestowed on the Pope and his successors the sovereignty over Italy and the countries of the West," with a series of Imperial dignities for the Roman Pontiff and his clergy. Nor did it forget to provide for the pomp and pageantry which the Papacy so dearly loves. The Pope was to wear the diadem, the collar, the purple cloak, to carry the sceptre, and to be attended by a body of chamberlains; and the clergy were to ride on white horses and receive the honours and immunities of the Senate and patricians.

The fraud was discovered in 1439 by Laurentius Valla, an audacious official in the Pope's household, who risked his life in the pursuit of truth. He also exposed a number of other forgeries embedded in the Canon Law, that "inexhaustible armoury of the Churchman." Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pius II—that Papal wag who thought that chastity was only meant for exceptional men (of whom he did not pretend to be one) and wrote of his *amours* in the vein of a Parisian comic journalist—regarded the Donation affair, demonstrating the Church's imposture, as an excellent joke.

[1] *The Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 43, 99, etc.

There was also a curious "Donation" of the Frankish monarch, Pippin the Short, which was accompanied by all sorts of obscure hanky-panky: the trickery practised upon recalcitrant bishops by Pope Zosimus and Leo the Great has already been described. In the ninth century was perpetrated another "gross forgery" (as Lord Bryce terms it), hardly less celebrated than the Donation, known as the Pseudo-Isidorian Decretals. These consisted of an immense body of forged and garbled documents, supposed to be the work of early Popes, some of them shamelessly ante-dated, but ultimately considered to be valid because they had passed into authorized collections. They converted a claim, or pretension, to vast temporal power into a principle falsely stated to have been accepted in early times, thus giving "the growing claims of the Papacy an altogether fallacious appearance of antiquity." Some few Roman Catholic writers still have the audacity to maintain their genuineness, but the large majority have now abandoned the pretence, "with the result that the fabric of Papal authority has been almost totally deprived of its historical and literary basis in the early centuries." [1]

An alleged Decree of Pope Benedict VIII (1018), forbidding the German Prince to style himself Emperor, without the Pontiff's permission, is described by Lord Bryce (*Holy Roman Empire*, p. 193) as "an impudent forgery"; but Hadrian IV did not scruple to use it with telling effect, and it passed into an unquestioned belief. There was another patent falsification of historical fact in the thirteenth century, when Innocent III declared that the Apostolic See had taken the Empire away from the Greeks and given it to the Frankish monarch Charlemagne, thus establishing Papal supremacy over the Imperial Crown (*Holy Roman Empire*, p. 215).

[1] *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. xvi.

Fraud was piled on fraud, forgery on forgery. Martyrs, saints, relics, miracles, shrines, legends and canons were manufactured by the dozen. There was a regular factory of imposture carried on by eminent bishops who were close friends and assistants of Popes. Prominent among these episcopal forgers, cited by Mr. McCabe, are the names of bishops—Bishop Bonito, Bishop Anselm, and Cardinal Deusdedit. I could fill volumes with a recitation of these " pious " frauds, but my readers would weary of the sickening tale. Yet good Churchmen state, and apparently believe, that all these impostures affect not the vessel and the treasure of the Catholic Faith. In spite of it all the Church remains " the treasure-house of all the *truth* and grace which is the legacy of Jesus Christ to His redeemed ! " Let him believe it who can. If the Church can lie and deceive like this in mundane affairs, and in scientific and historical matters, how can we be sure that she is not deceiving us about religion ?

By these and similar means the Pontifical power grew and prospered. Able Popes, like Gregory the Great and Hildebrand, laid deep and broad the foundations of ecclesiastical absolutism, until in the thirteenth century the Imperial power could not even maintain itself on an equal footing with the Papacy. Popes and emperors were continually at loggerheads, now one side, now the other obtaining the mastery. There was a cross-current of antagonistic claims ; kings claimed to be Popes, Popes claimed to be kings ; but ecclesiasticism came out on top.

The high-water mark of Papal pretension was reached at the jubilee of A.D. 1300, when that unmitigated scoundrel and libertine, Boniface VIII, seated on the throne of Constantine, arrayed with the sword and crown and sceptre, shouted aloud to the assembled pilgrims, " I am Cæsar—I am Emperor ! "

By his Bull *Unam Sanctam* he claimed absolute power over all secular sovereigns in every matter: a terrestrial divinity, he imposed his will on all and sundry. Indeed, the spiritual power of the Papacy was itself, as Lord Bryce shows, the offspring of Rome's temporal dominion. The Papacy "evoked the phantom of her parent, used it, obeyed it, rebelled and overthrew it, in its old age once more drew it to her bosom, till in its downfall she heard the knell of the old order and saw the end of her temporal power approaching." [1]

That blessed word "Development" covers, as we shall see later on, many strange transformations which the Latin Church underwent in her long history; but to some people a man like Boniface VIII seems a strange Vicar of the pomp-detesting anti-cleric, the prophet-layman, Christ. We wonder, too, whether the gentle Jesus was the guiding spirit of the Church when she set up the Spanish Inquisition and kindled its "blazing pyres." Did the Holy Ghost, who is said to guide the Cardinals in their selection, really choose Alexander VI, commonly reputed to be about the biggest blackguard the world has ever known—or those admitted scamps, the boy-Pope Benedict IX and John XII—as His mouthpieces on earth for the messages He delivered to mankind concerning *moral* issues? Bishop Gore tells us in his *Roman Catholic Claims* that St Peter Damian (author, by the way, of *The Book of Gomorrah*, which gives, as its title indicates, an appalling picture of clerical and monastic vice, and was cordially approved by Pope Leo IX) called the great Hildebrand his "Sanctus Satanas"; and the expression, as the Bishop aptly observes, in whatever sense originally used, has a very striking application to the Papacy as a whole.

It is a long step, as M. Loisy observes in *L'Évangile*

[1] *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 416.

et l'Église, from Leo XIII to Trajan, from bishops to proconsuls, from monks to legionaries, from Jesuits to the Prætorian Guard; but the intervening events and developments form a continuous chain. Whether we attribute the process to supernatural guidance or to political instinct, the fact remains that a marvellous transformation was effected, and the ancient Roman parentage of the Church's later constitution became increasingly apparent. The memories and traditions of the Roman Empire, in the words of M. Loisy, "conditioned, so to speak, the action of the Church." Her power insensibly declined, but her pretensions have never abated: the same old spirit reigns in the Curia and its henchmen. John XXII had the same ideas as Boniface VIII. He was bound by no law except the Divine. He stood "higher than the angels, and might receive the same sort of adoration as is rendered to the Blessed Virgin and the Saints." [1] Leo XIII, 600 years later, was an exceptionally enlightened Pope; but the teaching of his *Inscrutabile* and *Immortale Dei* Encyclicals was similar to that of the *Unam Sanctam* Bull [2]: the Papacy had not abated one jot of the old claim to civil sovereignty as a necessity of spiritual hegemony. The evolution of theocracy is a logical development: the tyrant's plea, necessity, governs every transformation. The Papal hierarchy is inheritor, not merely (as it claims) from Christ and Peter, but from the Roman Cæsars; and the Irish bishops of to-day, flaunting their pretensions in the face of lay government, are but faithfully pursuing the traditional policy of their Church.

[1] *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 222.
[2] *Studies in Modernism*, by the Rev. Alfred Fawkes, p. 92.

CHAPTER IV

C'EST POUR LES FEMMES

"Swarming legions of lies . . . all-permeating mendacity. . . . The worst of a Catholic Church is, that everything in it is a lie" (FATHER GEORGE TYRRELL).

"Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio."

SOME years ago a friend of the writer's formed one of a party which was being conducted round a foreign church and the adjoining buildings by a French priest. In the course of their tour they were shown several ecclesiastical relics of the usual type, and one of the visitors commented upon the very large number of pieces of the true cross, and similar "genuine" mementoes which he had witnessed elsewhere in the course of his travels. The priest merely smiled benignly and ejaculated: "Parfaitement, Monsieur!" At the close of the inspection the visitor repeated his observation with greater emphasis, and the priest replied, with the same bland smile; "Parfaitement, Monsieur; c'est pour les femmes!"

The priest's remark with its cool effrontery and its underlying cynicism has a twofold significance. It illustrates, first, the traditional attitude of Rome to woman, whom it regards as the weaker and inferior vessel, but, at the same time, as a distinctly dangerous creature in various ways. The Church, following the example of numerous savage races, has always considered woman to be spiritually infectious, and thoroughly insanitary both from a moral and hygienic standpoint. The "churching"

of women, the orders for their "purification" after childbirth, are a modern remnant of those primitive notions of taboo, described by Sir J. G. Frazer and others, which represent a dangerous supernatural influence as attaching to the normal functions of motherhood. The Roman Catholic matron who has just done her duty to the State by adding to its population is, as Mr. McCabe points out, "tainted": she must stand where penitents once stood, and must not mingle with respectable folk. Not until the peril of spiritual contamination has been removed by purificatory rites is she free to resume her place in decent society. At the Council of Auxerre, in 578, the bishops forbade women, on account of their "impurity," to take the sacrament in their hands as men did.[1] This curious attitude of mediæval ecclesiasticism towards the gentler sex is very far from being extinct in these times. Michelet tells us in his *Priests, Women, and Families,* how the preachers of his day represented woman as either saint or harlot: the intermediate states of wifehood and motherhood were habitually overlooked. We all know that of late years a certain number of Catholic suffragist societies have been founded, and that the modern ideas which are slowly penetrating the tissues of the Romanist body include certain feminist theories; but the official mind of the Church remains substantially that of her earlier pundits. St. Jerome, who mixed freely with the ladies, and therefore ought to know, thought that woman was the *janua diaboli* and the root of all evil. St. Augustine, a very gay spark in his youth, wondered in later life why she was created at all. St. Chrysostom and other holy men describe her as "a malicious evil beast," "a viper clothed with a shining skin," "a laboratory of devils," and the road that leads to sin. That marriage was at

[1] *The Churches and Modern Thought,* by P. Vivian, p. 284.

best not far removed from fornication was Tertullian's view, and virginity in both sexes was regarded by ecclesiastics in theory (but by no means always in practice) as the ideal state and the road to salvation. Nor are these notions by any means extinct among the modern priesthood, as women in Roman Catholic countries have good reason to know. The theologians have fixed the number of Deadly Sins as seven; but "Irish priests in practice," says the Catholic Mr. Ryan,[1] have "made courtship an eighth," and the statement is confirmed by many Irish women of the humbler classes.

In the second place, the priest's observation affords us yet another illustration of the Church's contempt for truth and truthfulness, and the rather unscrupulous levity with which many educated Catholics regard the vast mass of fraud and imposture to which the Church lends her great authority. When Tyrrell remarked that "the worst of a Catholic Church is that everything in it is a lie," he may have been indulging in humorous exaggeration; but the exaggeration undoubtedly contains a large core of truth. The history of the Church, her hagiology, her lists of martyrs and relics and miracles, form a record of mingled imposture and credulity to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in the world's literature. The plea of the educated Catholic, that "we are not obliged to believe all *that*," is not a valid one in the mouth of an honest and genuine Churchman, because the Church to which he pins his faith has always lived and traded upon the supermiraculous. Without the help of the unseen and the marvellous faith is impossible to most religious people: take them away, and infidelity ensues. Signs and wonders are the mainstay of Romanism; its attractiveness, in the words of Dr. Inge, depends "almost wholly on its frank admission of the

[1] *The Pope's Green Island*, p. 79.

miraculous as a matter of daily occurrence." Above all, the sage advice of the French priest must be followed, and the tastes of the ladies consulted. Pious souls require a number of adventitious aids to devotion; and woman—that is to say, woman as official Rome has always regarded her—must be provided with a liberal diet of them, or she will not believe. Hence the reckless manufacture of miracles, relics, shrines, charms, mascots, and all the other paraphernalia of superstition which brings so much grist to the clerical mill. The priests, and a good many people who are neither priests nor Roman Catholics, but thorough-going sceptics, think that it is wise to encourage absurd religious belief in their womenfolk, and to let them pass it on to their children. Good form and law and order demand this bowing down in the house of Rimmon. Hence the enormous preponderance of women in church congregations; and the Roman ecclesiastics spare no pains in their congenial task of making as smooth as possible the "feminine sheepwalk" to the Papacy. How far the brainy, self-reliant woman of to-day will relish this estimate of her intelligence and capacity remains to be seen.

Let me cite a few of the "necessary fictions" served up to those indefatigable seekers after signs whose waning faith in an ageing creed might languish if it were not supplied with appropriate nutriment. That wonderful saint, pietist, and moral theologian, St. Alphonsus Liguori, as might be expected, is well to the fore amongst the ecclesiastical caterers to credulity. In his well-known and widely read work, *The Glories of Mary*, he tells some very remarkable stories, of which the following is a fair sample. A certain religious author, bearing the suggestive name of Bernardine de Busto (or de Bustis, as Newman calls him), relates that a bird was taught by its devout owner to say, "Hail Mary." An irreligious

hawk one day had the temerity to attack this pious and talented fowl, and was on the point of seizing it. "Hail Mary," ejaculated the bird; and the hawk instantly fell dead. "God intended to show thereby, that if even an irrational creature was preserved by calling on Mary, how much more would those who are prompt in calling on her when assaulted by devils be delivered from them." In the comic hagiology of the Roman Church St. Christina Mirabilis of Liège occupies a prominent place. She was a member of that early ecclesiastical Air Force, whose "stunts" or "levitations" (as the *Month* prefers to call them) have lately been dilated upon in the Roman Catholic Press. She got her "wings" at an early age, and was always using them: "the difficulty was to keep her on the ground. She was continually flying up to the tops of lonely towers and trees, there to enjoy a rapture with the angels, and to roost with the birds." When her relatives wished to take and secure her, they had to employ a man to hunt her like a bird. After a long run he eventually brought her down, "in a very unsportsmanlike manner, by a stroke with his bludgeon, which broke her shin."[1] On *terra firma* Christina was subject to ecstasies, during which her limbs lost their rigidity, and she was contracted into spherical form, and "rolled up like a hedgehog."

"The miraculous element in Christianity," says Dr. Inge in his *Outspoken Essays*, "seems to float between earth and heaven, no longer essentially connected with either"; and he explains that "when the heavy-headed dogmatist requires a categorical assent to the literal truth of the miraculous," a tension between faith and reason cannot be avoided. To avoid this tension the Church is now less exacting in her claims upon the believer's assent. The dead hand of dogmatic authority, heavy enough when

[1] *Hours with the Mystics*, by R. A. Vaughan, ii, 221.

occasion demands, can be lifted whenever it suits Rome's purpose; but we cannot forget that for many centuries the heavy-handed dogmatist enforced under the direst penalties—and his successors would do the same now, if they dared—belief in the most extraordinary propositions. It must also be remembered that the periods when these beliefs obtained the fullest acceptance were, and are still, regarded by the Church as the periods of fullest enlightenment; and, further, that it is a fundamental principle of Romanism that faith in the supernatural must be "cultivated to its utmost limits."

Newman freely admitted (*Essays on Miracles*, p. 239) that the ecclesiastical miracles are false in the mass, and also that all miracle stories are "prejudiced" by this knowledge; yet he tells us with charming candour (*Apology*, p. 299) that facts of this description—that is to say, miracles—"are the kind of facts proper to ecclesiastical history," and he elsewhere reminds us that Roman Catholics only like their history when it is doctored to suit their taste. "Matter is susceptible of grace," says the Cardinal, and we gather from him that it is in the power of grace to petrify an unlawfully dressed fowl, or exorcise a demoniac camel,[1] even though these specific performances may not actually have taken place.

Of other miracles and wonder-working relics which the priests have concocted *pour les femmes*, I can only briefly speak. A notable relic, and one extremely popular with the faithful, is the Holy Coat alleged to have been worn by Christ during His ministry upon earth. I understand that there are no less than twenty-one of these coats now being exhibited to Papists as the coat worn by the Saviour Himself. One of the most celebrated is at Trèves, and Newman (*Apology*, p. 353) says that

[1] See *Philomythus*, by Dr. E. A. Abbott, pp. 7, 132.

"we Catholics pay religious honour to relics, if so be, on the probability"; and he asks, with an injured air, why the country people should not "come up in joyous companies, singing and piping, to see the Holy Coat at Trèves?" The "probability" in this particular case appears to be that Christ—who (Luke ix. 3) told His disciples not to have two coats apiece—Himself had a wardrobe of at least twenty-one coats,[1] and that all these garments are still in existence for the piping and singing peasants of our time to come and inspect with the veneration they doubtless merit.

Even when the spuriousness of a relic is fully demonstrated the miracles connected with it are still recounted. There was a remarkable saint near Naples, whose bones effected many marvellous cures. On inspection by an osteologist the bones proved to be those of an elderly he-goat; but I believe the legend of the miracles still persists. It is on imposture of this sort—apocryphal Holy Coats, bones of sanctified he-goats, and the like—that the power of the Roman Catholic priesthood is very largely based.[2] Nor must we forget that miracles, relics, apparitions, and the like, form the stock-in-trade of the Church, just as much as curios form the stock-in-trade of the curio-dealer. The

[1] Dr. Abbott, a very learned and distinguished Anglican divine, suggests (*Philomythus*, p. 236) that we should begin our "devotion" (the word is Newman's) to the Holy Coat as follows:—"O Holy Coat, if thou art a Holy Coat—for the *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities* says there are twenty-one Holy Coats," etc.

[2] The following are specimens of "genuine" Roman Catholic relics:—genuine tail of Balaam's ass; pats of butter and a small cheese made of the Virgin's milk (in a Viennese inventory, for the use of pilgrims to Rome—see *Shall We Join the Church of Rome? by a Disillusioned Convert*, formerly editor of the R.C. *Universe*); phials of the Virgin's milk (displayed in the recently burned cathedral of Santiago, in Spain, and elsewhere); the navel-cord of her Son; manna rained from heaven; blossoms from Aaron's rod; genuine tail of the ass ridden by Christ into Jerusalem; some of the actual fat dropped by St. Lawrence, while he was being roasted on the gridiron; hair of the Virgin; blood, bones, beard, teeth of the Apostles, etc., etc.

Church is run "like a shop," as a Catholic bishop complained—Tyrrell says the same thing in other words—and draws much profit out of popular ignorance. Obscurantism thus becomes a species of fiscal policy, a method of levying taxation which has been adopted by the priesthoods of all ages with unvarying success. Freaks of Nature, and other phenomena susceptible of easy explanation, are pressed into the Church's service, and are represented by the clerics as being due to supernatural interference with the ordinary course of physical processes. Chalybeate springs are said to be red with the blood of saints and martyrs, and a rich harvest of gain is reaped from them, and other natural curiosities. The Holy Thorn of Glastonbury, a species of thorn which blossoms twice at Christmas, and which, as the guide-book informs us, is supplied by nurserymen of the town at small cost, was a highly profitable miracle in its day. Thousands of pilgrims flocked to see it, and one day, when the blossoms were late in appearing, the people refused to go to church. Among the many charming legends which cluster round the "island-valley of Avilion," on which Glastonbury stands, is one that tells how

> Arimathæan Joseph, the good Saint, journeying brought
> To Glastonbury

the Chalice of the Last Supper, which he buried, and from the spot there issues a spring of water impregnated with iron which effected many wonderful cures. In the ground hard by he planted his staff, which forthwith sprouted and blossomed, and grew into the Holy Thorn.

Oscar Wilde, in the course of his efforts to counteract our "monstrous worship of facts," has some pertinent remarks upon the "morbid and unhealthy faculty of truth-telling." "There is," he says, "such a thing as robbing a story of its reality

by trying to make it too true." That is just what Rome is always doing with its picturesque legends and fascinating, but quite unnecessary, fictions. Nothing, for example, could be more charming and poetical than the story of St. Joseph of Arimathæa. But Rome at once proceeds to mar this delightful legend, to rob it of its essential beauty and attractiveness, first, by pretending that it actually happened, and, secondly, by using it as a means of " bleeding " the faithful. The Church, by her deliberate efforts to edify by means of falsification, becomes at times more deplorably dull and tedious than the most persistent truth-hunter could possibly be. She creates a sort of realism of the non-existent which is wholly inferior to the matter-of-fact realism of our modern writers. No tamer or more insipid reading exists than the descriptions given by the later Roman Catholic saints of their erotic ecstasies and mystical " experiences." The experiences are all of the same kind ; the language is trite and commonplace, the ideas and images coarse and material : in a word, the whole thing is not merely cheap, but intensely vulgar. Beside such noble works as the *Imitatio Christi*, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, or Pascal's *Pensées*, they cut a very poor figure indeed. The lowest depths are reached by the pattern saint of the Jesuits, Alphonsus Liguori.

Striking examples of this intellectual *banalité* are to be found by the dozen in the literature of Mariolatry. Mary-worship was unknown to primitive tradition, but now the Virgin occupies the central and most commanding position in Rome's canonical Olympus. There are a dozen churches dedicated to Mary for every one that is dedicated to any member of the Trinity. The cult of Mary was introduced in later days as a popular devotion for " ignorant people "—*pour les femmes*, in short. She is easier of approach and more placable than the

Trinity. Her intercession is more readily obtained; and Liguori represents Christ as saying to her: "Oh, Mother, I never denied thee anything; he (a youth who had renounced his God) is forgiven, since thou askest it." Mary, in short, is made so much of, both in heaven and on earth, that we may readily forgive her any trifling exhibitions of that "pride and self-assertion" with which, I regret to say, St. Chrysostom charges her. She is always represented, in modern times at any rate, as being on terms of easy familiarity with her adorers. The excellent Father Faber, for instance, spoke of her as "Dearest Mamma," and the puerilities of Liguori's work, *The Glories of Mary*, baffle description. The moral character of her votaries appears to have a comparatively negligible influence in obtaining her mediatory favours. The most hardened offender may hope to achieve absolution for his worst sins by a pretty speech to Mary, for she is described as liking "pretty speeches and little coaxing ways." Also, as we are assured by Liguori, "at the command of Mary all obey, even God." Accordingly we find the Catholic atmosphere redolent with graceful little tendernesses and the commonplace gallantries of the drawing-room. The celestial powers are wooed with the ordinary endearments of mundane courtship; and the mythical Queen of Heaven is addressed by the faithful with "wheedling prayers," and described by the Church as "ever-virgin," when, as Dean Inge reminds us, the Gospels state that she had a large family of four sons and more than one daughter.[1]

Nor must it be supposed that the compliments are on all one side. St. Teresa, although a great

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 122; and see also Matt. i. 25. It should be observed that Christ's attitude towards His Mother was not of the sentimental kind adopted by Roman Catholics. He addressed her somewhat sternly on more than one occasion, and said, "Touch Me not," and "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

favourite of heaven, passed through many inward vicissitudes, and had occasion sometimes to complain of the celestial Bridegroom's alternate tendernesses and desertions. One day, however, during one of His frequent visits to her, He made her a charming little speech. "If I had not created heaven," He said, "I would create it for your sake alone." [1] Other saintly ladies appear to have found the attentions of the divine Lover a trifle overpowering at times. The Venerable Anna Maria Taigi, who was also the recipient of many favours at His hands, expostulated with a freedom which is quite unusual in such cases. "Her ecstasies were so frequent that she had to complain thus lovingly to her Divine Spouse. 'Leave me alone,' she said, with sublime and holy freedom. 'Go away, dear Lord, and leave me to my work; I am the mother of a family. Do go away.' But all in vain . . . she had to yield herself a fettered captive to the resistless charms of divine love." [2] There are also saints who describe (*pour les femmes*, of course) a good deal of kissing in the course of these transcendental flirtations; but on such a delicate subject prudence bids me forbear.

This sort of thing, we are told, is for the benefit, not only of the ladies, but also of those weak and credulous persons who are ever the objects of the Church's special solicitude. The vice of Romanism is that it lays man in the dust, and keeps him there. Everything that is weak or contemptible in human nature is systematically fostered and exploited by the Church for profit to herself. For that reason she always displays a great tenderness for the "rotter," which is admirable enough in its way; but its main defect is that it is essentially the reverse

[1] *Coelum nisi creâssem, ob te solam crearem.* See *Hours with the Mystics*, by R. A. Vaughan, pp. 11, 162.

[2] *Life of the Venerable Anna Maria Taigi*, translated from the French by A. V. Smith Sligo, and published by Messrs. Washbourne of Paternoster Row, pp. 88–89.

of curative in method or intention. Instead of bracing its victims up and striving to make men of them, Rome fogs their wits and further benumbs their attenuated faculties. They are taught that their spiritual safety lies in making themselves the puppets of the ghostly counsellor who "winds them up" at his own sweet will, and generally does his best to render them automata. The saintly figure that fills so many Roman Catholic niches and image-shops is usually indeterminate in quality, half idol and half doll. The Roman "director," the confessor who is also spiritual guide and general instructor, was in former days, at any rate, bidden to pay particular attention to valetudinarian devotees of feeble health and character (*Director valde attendat ad personas languidæ valetudinis, Hours with the Mystics*, ii, 153). The modern spirit has, of course, greatly modified these tendencies, but they are still constantly at work, and with results that are sometimes disastrous.

The following is a quite recent and highly illustrative specimen of the Church's attempt to import the miraculous or supernatural element into events or phenomena which admit of easy explanation by natural causes. In July 1918 the Allied armies commanded by Marshal Foch found themselves in a position to retrieve the disaster of the previous March, when our troops, heavily outnumbered by the Germans, had to make a calamitous retreat. Foch, now possessing a superiority of some 250,000 bayonets [1] and an enormous preponderance of guns and other material, attacked the enemy; and from that day forward victory was always on the side of the Allies. Providence once more showed itself on the side of the big battalions [2]; but the priests

[1] See General Pershing's Report, quoted in the *Daily Mail* of February 6, 1919, where it is stated that the Allied strength "made a crushing Allied victory cert in."

[2] This philosophy appears to be embodied in the *Book of Judges*, i. 19. "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the

told the faithful, and many good Romanists still believe, that there was a special divine intervention on behalf of the *Entente*, because its troops were commanded by a pious votary of the true faith. The victory, in other words, was not due to the number of men and cannon which the victors had assembled, but to the fact that a general who went to Kirk had been replaced by one who went to Mass. Nor is any explanation given of the fact that the much greater "miracle of the Marne" was performed by generals who were not specially orthodox.

Such are the "necessary fictions" by which valetudinarian piety is braced up, and enfeebled faith restored. A public avid of the marvellous must have its appetite continually satisfied with a plentiful supply of manufactured wonders. The Church, as we are often told, "adapts the Gospel" to the needs of the people she addresses, of whom the large majority are apparently assumed by her to be gulls. Strong meat is for strong men: the childish mind must be nourished on intellectual pap. "Reserve" and "economy" of the truth must be exercised by her in dispensing it to the uninstructed multitude. She remains unshaken and unshakeable in her conviction that Catholic faith is a weakling who requires very careful nursing, and that mendacious buffoonery is an indispensable prop of ecclesiastical authority and prestige. *C'est pour les femmes.* And we must also bear in mind that, along with the gulling of others, there goes hand in hand the delusion of self. Manning's prayer to God for guidance, "lest I go down to the pit deceiving myself," might be repeated with advantage by many a fervent Romanist of to-day.

inhabitants of the mountain, but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."

CHAPTER V

"ARE YOU A JESUIT?"

That which is crooked cannot be made straight.—ECCLESIASTES i. 15.

THE Jesuits are fond of representing themselves as a very ill-used people, cruelly slandered by a censorious world; and it is a true saying that the Society lives and thrives to a great extent on the easily refuted accusations of indiscreet enemies. Correspondents are continually sending me "Jesuit Oaths," "Monita Secreta," and other apocryphal literature vilifying the Order and charging it with all manner of fantastic iniquity, some of which cannot legitimately be laid to its account. Of late years the Jesuits, especially in England, have been getting increasingly jealous of their reputations. Pascal's immortal *Letters* are denounced as wicked and baseless libels; and the man who asperses the Society in speech or in print, even though his strictures be perfectly justified, is apt nowadays to be called severely to account.

In January 1920 the following colloquy took place in a court of law between Mr. Justice Darling and a witness who was said to have played an unworthy trick. His Lordship: "Are you a Jesuit?" The witness: "No, my Lord." His Lordship: "You surprise me." The Order at once rose on its hind legs. The Secretary of the Catholic Union of Great Britain sent to the Judge a warm letter of protest, which was backed up by articles and correspondence in the Romanist Press. The Judge replied, and in a second letter the

Secretary referred to the "baseless calumnies" of Pascal and others against the Society, and asserted that they had been refuted times without number; but he did not inform us when, where, or by whom these refutations have been made. Pascal, like other writers, made one or two mistakes of which his adversaries have made full use, but his main charges have been endorsed by sundry Pontiffs, many eminent Roman Catholics, and finally by the civilized world at large.

Another statement made by the Secretary raises a historical point of considerable interest. He says that Clement XIV, when he suppressed the Order in 1773, did so "reluctantly, yielding to the political passions of the times." Now, there is no conclusive evidence to show that the Pope acted with reluctance when he acceded to the very reasonable request of the Roman Catholic Bourbon princes. Clement was a man of high character and intelligence, and he knew perfectly well that the moral doctrines of the Jesuits were detestable, that they were political stormy petrels who caused, as he expressed it, "dangerous seditions, tumults, discords, scandals" in the Church as well as in the State, and that these dissensions "stirred up the faithful to every rage of faction, hatreds and enmities." His predecessor, Julius II, had an equally bad opinion of them, and Innocent X unhesitatingly condemned many of their doctrines. Catholics maintain that Clement XIV was cowed by the Powers, and that he sought peace at any price, including that of his own conscience; but the stern and decisive measures which he adopted, and the vigorous language of his Brief, *Dominus Ac Redemptor*, form in themselves a sufficient refutation of this contention. The Pope by his Brief extinguished and abolished for ever the Society, its houses and colleges and schools; and the General

of the Society was thrown into prison, where he died. Nor does the language used by the Pope show any sign of hesitation or reluctance. He pointed out that the practices and precepts of the Order were freely stigmatized as not only inimical to public order and tranquillity, but also as scandalous and repugnant to good morals (*scandalosas, optimæque morum disciplinæ manifeste noxias*—see *Bullarium Romanum*, vol. iv, p. 613) and to the orthodox Catholic Faith. For these and other pressing reasons he felt constrained to take very severe measures.[1] He used many other strong expressions, and stated roundly that he was persuaded of the necessity of suppressing the Order because there "remained no other remedy to so great evils."

The line of argument adopted by the *Tablet* (February 21, 1920) in defence of the Jesuits is that their moral doctrine cannot be bad in the eyes of the Church, because she has consistently given it her approval. This is precisely the point which I have long been maintaining in the face of much strenuous assertion to the contrary. The *Tablet* points out, with perfect truth, how widely Jesuit textbooks of moral theology have been adopted in seminaries and other centres of Catholic learning. "There is probably," the journal states, "no professor of this subject throughout the Catholic world who would not speak with respect of" Father Gury and other Jesuit authorities. The Church, continues the *Tablet*, holds Pascal's indictment to be "in substance not-proven, for she has, both directly and indirectly, sanctioned anew the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, and she has, through innumerable imprimaturs, approved again and again, and

[1] I possess a Papal medal struck in commemoration of the great event. It bears the effigy of Clement XIV, and on the obverse are the words, *Salus generis humani. Jesuitarum Societ. deleta, MDCCLXXIII.* This hardly indicates regret or reluctance on the Pope's part.

in the most formal terms, those same manuals of moral teaching which are the avowed object of hostile attack."

Exactly. This, as I say, has been my contention throughout. Yet many of my opponents, unable to controvert what I have said as to the highly undesirable character of Papal moral theology, have taken refuge in a somewhat specious plea. Catholics, aided by certain Anglicans, say that in quoting from Liguori and Gury I am raking up what they contemptuously style "old stuff"—that is to say, the out-of-date doctrines of ancient or discredited authors. I have shown in my former book (chapter xv) that the lucubrations of St. Alphonsus Liguori, so far from being out of date, are still the authorized and acknowledged teachings of the Roman Church; and the above citations from the *Tablet* would seem to make further comment on this matter superfluous.

With regard to Liguori, who is admitted to be the "Prince of moral theologians" and the Church's approved prophet in the moral sphere, I may mention that he was not actually a member of the Jesuit Order. He is, however, correctly described as the *Geisteserbe*, and also (as the witty author of *Scintillæ Juris* [1] may be interested to learn) as the "darling of the Jesuits." He codified the teaching of the casuists, which has been adopted by the Jesuits in bulk; and they were also largely instrumental in obtaining his canonization. Moreover, they induced Pius IX to make him one of the nineteen great Doctors of the Church, and heaped on his head every possible honour. His works are the literary embodiment of the Order's ideas and principles, and he may therefore fairly be deemed the representative exponent of Jesuit moral

[1] *Scintillæ Juris and Meditations in the Tea-room*, by Sir Charles J. Darling.

doctrine. What that doctrine is I have set forth in my previous volume, with special reference to equivocation and other methods of perverting the truth. The Jesuits, like other priests, claim the right to bind and to loose, but they practically abdicated the former right while freely exercising the latter; and, in their dread of what they call "rigorism," they have beyond all question encouraged the most pernicious laxity.[1]

Even though the truth-hunter be the undesirable person that Mr. Birrell appears to think he is, we cannot disguise from ourselves the fact that the habit of unveracity is dogged by a twofold Nemesis. Nobody believes the man who is addicted to it, and he gradually loses the power of believing anybody else: it has been well said that this last is the true punishment of the liar. When a community (such as Rome, to take one conspicuous

[1] I append a few doctrinal gems from the divines upon whose treatises Liguori's monumental *Theologia Moralis* is based. Escobar, one of the greatest Jesuits, was great on the veniality of "short sins." He saw no particular harm, for instance, in a priest's laying aside his clerical vestments to visit a house of ill-fame, but says that he must not stay longer than one hour! If he exceeds that time, he sins mortally! The same moralist thinks that a priest, found guilty of unnameable offences, ought if contrite, to be allowed to retain his benefices and dignities.

Persons addicted to strong language will be interested to learn that the great Diana, Examiner of Bishops to three successive Popes, says that a man may blaspheme freely, and without grievous offence, before five people: if there are six, or more, listeners he will be guilty of mortal sin. Both Diana and Escobar thought it hard lines that a priest should be excommunicated merely because he laid aside his habit *ut furetur occulte* (in order to pilfer secretly), *ut eat incognitus ad lupanar, vel fornicetur*. Numerous other examples are to be found in Pascal's *Letters*, and see Archdeacon Sinclair's *Charges*, p. 420.

Strange morals, perhaps, for men who claimed semi-divine attributes; but I must add that this is "old stuff"—in the sense that it has not, like Liguori's doctrine, received the Church's official endorsement in these days. By the way, I quoted in my former book Liguori's statement that it is not a grievous offence for a son to steal a moderate amount from a rich parent (see *Theologia Moralis*, iii. 543). I now learn that the amount that may be so stolen varies with the rate of exchange: that is to say, if it was excusable for the son before the war to steal £5 from his father, he might now presumably help himself to a larger number of "Bradburys."

example) is wrapped in a general atmosphere of suspicion and distrust, we may be quite sure that the individual members of that community have given some cause for it. In Jesuit institutions, as we know from the works of many credible authors, there exists a regularized system of spying, informing, eavesdropping, censoring correspondence (in and out) and other inquisitorial tactics in the interests of government. We read in Tyrrell's autobiography of dormitories patrolled by slippered clerics, and similar unpleasant methods. Tale-telling is obligatory on schoolboys. The "vigilance methods" enforced by the *Pascendi* Encyclical (of Jesuit origin), whereby unfortunate priests and bishops, suspected of Modernist tendencies, are habitually watched by secret spies and informed against, have often been described.

Such a system can hardly fail to leave its traces upon the characters of those who are subjected to it. The secret informer who reports to the Rector on the sayings and doings of the laity, the Rector who reports to the Provincial, etc., create, as Tyrrell says, a profound mutual mistrust and a feeling of insecurity and isolation. The Jesuits, in consequence, are themselves rendered untrustworthy, and, as that sanest and most "truth-hunting" of critics, Sainte-Beuve, remarks, "par habitude, par éducation et discipline sont essentiellement sujets à manquer de bonne foi et de droiture." They are essentially "politicians," with a keen eye to their interests in this world no less than the world to come. Sainte-Beuve gives us a picture of the fashionable Jesuit "director" in his apostrophe to Rapin: "Vous êtes trop mondain, trop répandu; vous dînez trop souvent en ville, mon Révérend Père." [1] It would not be difficult to find, in England and other countries, parallels to the type here described.

[1] *Port Royal*, i, 484, quoted in *Studies in Modernism*, by the Rev. A. Fawkes, p. 400.

Tyrrell tells us in eloquent words (*Autobiography*, ii, 488) how he looked back with terror to "the black wood" of Jesuitism, "in which for so many years I was lost, and from which God in His mercy has brought me forth to the light of liberty."[1] In the outer world he found, as so many others are finding now, that the air is freer and purer—no longer, as before, "laden with sin and the suspicion of sin."

Another matter over which Protestant writers are continually finding themselves at loggerheads with Catholics is the oft-quoted maxim of the Order, "The end justifies the means." The Jesuits say that they have no such maxim, and the points in the controversy are briefly as follows. It is not denied that Jesuit authors of the highest repute have used words which in themselves seem to justify the Protestant contention, but Roman Catholics argue that the context in some cases shows that the means which are declared lawful are only means which in themselves are good or "indifferent," that is to say, neither good nor bad. Busenbaum, one of Liguori's chief mentors, a divine whose works were said, in 1845, to have already gone through over two hundred editions, says that "*Cum finis est licitus, etiam media sunt licita*" (when the end is lawful, the means are also lawful)—a rather meaningless platitude if the means are harmless. A modern writer says, by way of analogy, that if it is lawful to go on a railway journey, it is also lawful to take a ticket for the purpose. People do not need to be told this, and we must credit Busenbaum and his brother-theologians with some more serious meaning than is contained in this rather fatuous truism. Busenbaum does not say that all means are lawful;

[1] To show the Order's iron regimentation, we are told that by a Rule of the Society Jesuit lay-brothers "are not to learn to read or write, nor shall anyone teach them"; although, as Tyrrell says (*Autobiography*, ii, 495), numbers of them put the priests to shame in many ways.

a prisoner, for instance, must not kill his gaoler in order to effect his escape. Laymann, another high authority, follows Busenbaum. Wagemann, a learned Professor of Morals, goes considerably further. He says plainly in his index, "*Finis determinat probitatem actus*" (the end determines the rectitude of an action), which implies that the lawfulness of a means is derived, not merely from its intrinsic quality, but also in some measure from the fact that it is a means to a lawful end; but in the body of his work he reduces this rather startling proposition to more modest proportions. Fathers Voit, Liberatore, Gury and others use language and give illustrations which seem to support the Protestant case: Liberatore, for example, says that "from the obligation to attain an end arises the right to procure the means needful and useful for obtaining the same." Lastly, the great Liguori himself says that certain actions (of a highly dubious character, by the way) are in themselves lawful, "*because* when the end is permissible the means are also permissible."[1] We may surely infer from this that the good end confers some sort of sanctification on the means, apart from the inherent nature of the latter; otherwise the maxim is a sheer superfluity. Good or indifferent means, such as taking a railway ticket, need no justification: they justify themselves. On the whole, however, the authorities I have cited hardly seem to justify the contention that the Society holds, as a recognized or official maxim, that a man may use evil means to accomplish a good end; but, however much the Jesuits may repudiate the principle, they

[1] *Tales actus per se iis licent, quia cui licitus est finis, etiam licent media.* This passage, embedded in the mire of Liguori's horrible treatise *De Usu Matrimonii*, has never, to the best of my belief, been quoted in this controversy before. Liguori also holds that a "just cause" (the good of the Church is such a cause) forms a sufficient justification for various reprehensible actions.

have consistently acted upon it in practice whenever chance or intrigue has afforded them the opportunity.

A noteworthy feature in the history of the Society is the fact that, apart from the dominant position which it has secured for itself in the Church, it has never achieved any permanent success. Goldwin Smith remarks that "the Jesuit, bearing with him the Encyclical and the Syllabus, his own work," is always a hopeless failure; but his futile efforts have cost the world very dear. Such Jesuits as I have known do not appear to be the Machiavellian geniuses of Protestant imagination, but pleasant-spoken, zealous, fairly hardworking men who are trying to do good in the world according to their rather peculiar lights. They can be heroes, too, as we know; but their heroism—like that of the Jesuit, Father W. Doyle,[1] who died the other day, and who tried to carve the name of Jesus on his breast with a penknife, stood up to his neck in a pond through a cold winter's night, flogged himself mercilessly with a discipline of safety-razor blades—is often sadly misdirected. If they suffer at times from unjust accusations they have their Order and its principles largely to thank. Jesuitism is described in the dictionary as "the arts, principles, and practices of the Jesuits; cunning; deceit; prevarication." Now, this definition cannot be dismissed contemptuously as a mere expression of Protestant spite and bigotry, because the worst enemies of the Order have always been those of its own household: the nastiest things said about the Society are said by Roman Catholics. The word "Jesuitism" denotes a psychological fact, a confirmed trait or idiosyncrasy, a habit of mind, a principle of life and conduct—just as "Puritanism" represents these things

[1] His biography has just been published by Messrs. Longmans. See *The Literary Guide*, July 1920.

along different lines. Both words are now firmly rooted in the English language, and for good reason: they express the mature and *permanent* judgment of the world at large. The judgment, moreover, is a perfectly sound and correct one; and nobody need be afraid of giving expression to it.

As to the future of the Order it would be unwise to speculate. Until it mends its mischief-making ways it will always have enemies, but the principal danger that threatens its existence is still, as in former days, internal rather than external. "Within the Church itself there is a strong and growing feeling that the interests of Catholicism may necessitate a second and final suppression of the Society. Cardinal Manning was wont to say, 'The work of 1773 was the work of God; and there is another 1773 coming.'"[1] Manning was by no means an infallible seer; but the wrath of outraged society, kindled by the continued turbulence of a Jesuit-controlled clerical organization, may some day bring about the fulfilment of the prophecy. This brief sketch of the Order and its principles is necessarily an imperfect one—the reader who desires to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject should consult the monumental work of Döllinger and Reusch; but the foregoing notes, taken in conjunction with what I have written elsewhere, may possibly prove useful to distinguished persons, and others, who find themselves at issue with the Society of Jesus.

[1] See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art, 'The Jesuits."

CHAPTER VI

AN ARBITRARY PATCHWORK

"The question of origins is vital to Catholicism" (*Studies in Modernism*, p. 75).

LESLIE STEPHEN, summarizing Newman's argument in the *Essay on Development* and other works, describes how the Cardinal satirized Protestantism as "an arbitrary patchwork" clumsily stitched together out of alien and discrete materials. I need hardly point out that the taunt levelled by Newman at his old associates in the Anglican Church is a two-edged weapon. The argument conveyed therein may, or may not, be a good one against the faith he had forsaken; it is certainly a much better one against the creed of his adoption. He scoffs at the Protestant religion as eclectic and original: I propose in this and the following chapters to show that Romanism is at least equally eclectic, and at the same time highly unoriginal; that Roman Catholic theology and Papal institutionalism, so far from being the outcome of a special revelation to a favoured few at a certain date, and the "exclusive possession" (as Romanists say) of the Church, are simply manifestations of the ordinary laws of mental and political growth on utilitarian lines.

Mr. Fawkes' remark, quoted above, as to the importance of examining the sources of a religion and testing its claims to originality, will strike some people as being almost a truism. Many ecclesiastics, on the other hand, say that the origins are of little

consequence: they profess themselves wholly unperturbed by the discovery that much of what was supposed to be new, and different from any former religious product, is simply old doctrine revived and refurbished to suit the occasion. It may undoubtedly be true that, as Newman says, the history of a dogma does not necessarily furnish its refutation; but if the doctrine alleged to be "unique and unprecedented" proves to be older than its alleged authors, and derived from alien and earlier sources, we shall have to examine its credentials with greater care. If a system of ecclesiastical institutions, said to have been divinely ordained at a fixed and ascertainable period, turns out to be a gradual compilation of pre-existing Pagan material; if, also, certain dogmas and records, which we supposed to have then been dictated by Heaven, can be shown to have been introduced or invented by ecclesiastics at a later date, and for the purpose of gaining adherents to their Church—we must reconsider our position in the light of our new knowledge. An inquiry into the origins of a religion is like an examination of a house with a view to ascertain whether its foundations are sound or unsound, and the relation of these foundations to the edifice reared upon them can never be otherwise than vital to the safety of the structure. Early Christian writers, such as Maternus Firmicus, Justin Martyr, and Tertullian, were under no illusions concerning these Pagan parallels to Romish beliefs and practices: they did not, like our modern theologians, consider that they were matters of no consequence. On the contrary, they said that devils had invented certain myths in order to rob Christian doctrines of their hold upon men's minds, and to deter the Pagans from embracing Christianity. In like manner Sir J. G. Frazer, in his Preface to *The Golden Bough*, regrets the sad consequences of his researches in

Comparative Mythology, but recognizes that there is no escape from them. He laments his melancholy and thankless task of striking at the ancient foundations of certain religious beliefs, but tells us that sooner or later it was inevitable that "the battery of the comparative method should breach these venerable walls." He also warns us that the battering process is only just commencing.

The intelligent student, who approaches the subject with an impartial mind, will probably agree with Maternus Firmicus and Sir J. G. Frazer that these things *do* matter a great deal. If the knowledge, or part of it, which the Roman Church has communicated to the world as one single, complete, and all-sufficing revelation, was possessed by Plato,[1] Aristotle, and other Pagan sages, her revelation would seem to be largely superfluous: it may be "perfected Platonism," as certain learned ancients regarded it, but it can hardly be described as "unique" or "exclusive." How can she retain that high tone of authority which appertains to the preacher of a new religion, when it is clearly proved that her doctrine, so far from being novel when she first expounded it, was already ancient?

The orthodox Roman Catholic view is that the doctrines and essential institutions of the Church have been always and identically the same. "The whole dogmatic, sacramental and hierarchic system," they contend, "as it now stands, was delivered in detail by Christ to His Apostles and by them to their successors. He proclaimed, not the very words, but the very substance in all detail of the doctrines of Trent and the Vatican. He instituted the Papacy, the episcopate, the seven sacraments."[2] It may

[1] Plato was supposed by the early Christians to have borrowed his Christ-like doctrines from Moses! (See *Christian Mysticism*, by Dean Inge, p. 77–78.)

[2] See *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, by Father G. Tyrrell, p. 30.

possibly appear somewhat of an overstatement to say, as Tyrrell does in his *Mediævalism*, that the Church represents herself as having been created *instantaneously* as an absolute monarchy, with all her present sacraments and institutions, by Christ's decree; but it is, at any rate, an approximately accurate description of the Roman position.

After this alleged instantaneous and all-sufficing revelation, novelty became, in the eyes of the Church, the very definition of heresy; and she has always professed that she could never be guilty of such an atrocity. The authors of the celebrated *Pascendi* Encyclical positively shuddered at the bare notion of their being attracted by innovations. Nearly every non-Catholic, however, and a growing number of Roman Catholics, are well aware that a large mass of novelties *has* been introduced into Church doctrine and observance; so Newman tried to justify them as being, not a corruption, but a legitimate and purely "natural" development, under supernatural guidance, of the primitive faith. He has the hardihood—and the Church to this extent agrees with him—to assert that Rome's glaring departures from Scripture teaching are a mere expansion of Christ's instructions, an organic process which was a true development, and not a mere "incrustation": he even asserts that "the Christian [by which he means, of course, the Roman Catholic] dogmas were in the Church from the time of the Apostles; they were ever in their substance what they are now." He amplified and illustrated his Development theory with his customary ingenuity; but the clever, and highly specious, attempt to "hide the rent in the old garment by way of a new patch" found little favour in Rome, and the "new patch" has since been torn to shreds by many able writers.

Following Newman came M. Loisy, who, writing

in 1902 as a champion of the Church's doctrine, and perhaps her ablest apologist, published his *L'Évangile et l'Église*, which is described as the most important defence of Catholicism since Newman's essay. Personally, I regard it as far excelling that greatly overrated work, if not in eloquence or ingenuity, at any rate in sound scholarship, critical and political insight, and, above all, in the judicial spirit—a spirit, let me add, that was far from being acceptable to the Curia: his "laic tone" shocked and disgusted the professional clerics. M. Loisy makes out the best case possible for Rome; but his attempt to justify the present-day Papacy resolves itself, like Newman's, into a mere explanation of how it came about. It also demonstrates (what most of us already knew) that Catholicism is essentially a syncretic religion—that is to say, a blending of different, and in many respects antagonistic, speculative systems into one. The material for the patchwork was gathered from a heterogeneous mass of pre-existing beliefs in Egypt, India, Chaldea, Persia, and elsewhere. "The living movement," says Dean Inge (*Outspoken Essays*, p. 219), "was towards a syncretism of religious ideas and practices, all of which came from the Eastern provinces and beyond them": the Church absorbed the living syncretistic beliefs, but at the cost of becoming herself a syncretic [1] religion.

An eminent critic has said that the ancient world, in building up the Catholic Church on the foundation of the Gospel, built itself bankrupt; and some such idea must have been present to the minds who reared the existing ecclesiastical structure on new and different foundations. I propose to show in some detail how the transformation to the Romanism

[1] My dictionary informs me that "syncretism" is derived from two Greek words—*syn* (together) and *kretizo*, "to lie and deceive like a Cretan"!

of these times was effected, and the entirely new ecclesiasticism established.

Every good Catholic, as we have seen, regards Romanism as a supernatural growth predetermined by the divine mind and effected during the Christian era under celestial guidance; but Newman every now and then lets the cat out of the bag by admitting that it was a "natural" growth, a thing, that is to say, due to the workings of ordinary human instincts and tendencies. M. Loisy, with (as might be expected) greater frankness and candour than Newman, also allows us to see that the growth of the Church was an "organic" process, in the sense that it was a political development. They both demonstrate the utility, or "necessity," of a highly organized religious society, but, as Leslie Stephen remarks, "every proof of its utility is an explanation of its origin," and affords a strong presumption that the Church is a temple built by human hands, an edifice reared, not according to the designs of a special superintending Providence, but in the interests of a ruling clerical caste and on the same lines as those upon which other empires have been constructed. We ask the Roman Catholic for proof that his Church is a divinely ordered institution: he replies by demonstrating, with admirable cogency, how it grew out of the exigencies of pure policy. He gives us a philosophy of his religion: he does not prove to us that the religion is true. The Church became what it had to become in order not to decline and perish, says M. Loisy (*The Gospel and the Church*, p. 150). In other words, it was not supernatural inspiration, but a very sound instinct of government on human lines which guided the statesmen-theologians who were the architects of the rising temple, with all its appanages of pomp and power.

And what a vivid contrast there is between the old order and the new, between the little missionary

band breaking their bread together at the common meal in token of brotherhood, with simple prayers and exhortations and unobtrusive good works, and the flamboyant pageantry and ostentation of the modern Papacy! Those humble men were very unlike the gaudily clad, and sometimes rather arrogant, ecclesiastics, flaunting their gorgeous symbols and theatrical vestments amid a corresponding *mise-en-scène*: we hardly recognize the unassuming Peter, who practised humility as well as preached it, in a superbly caparisoned Pontiff, housed in a comfortable palace of vast proportions, who enjoys being addressed by his admirers as "A second God upon earth," or as "The Sacrament of Jesus," an "Elect Victim ex-officio nailed to the Cross." [1]

The effort to make the present-day Papacy fit in with the ideas of Christ, to reconcile primitive with later theology, was a desperate undertaking; and it has failed, as it was bound to fail. How far the boasted "immobility" of dogma, institutions, and traditions have been maintained, we have already seen. What we have to remember is that primitive Christianity could only establish itself by accommodating its beliefs and institutions to those of the peoples it was seeking to convert. The Greek spirit could only be conciliated by an intellectual system in accordance with its own; the Roman's genius for law and organization had to be adopted and copied; the Oriental tendency to mysticism was generously supplied. Hellenic philosophy was therefore introduced at a very early stage. The Latin World-State reappeared in the Cæsarian episcopate of Rome; and the sacraments, ritual, liturgies, etc., of various Pagan nations were imported wholesale to serve the purposes of the fast-growing ecclesiastical power. The precise date at which the main importation of Hellenic ideas and religious theory

[1] *Mediævalism*, by G. Tyrrell, 4th impression, p. 212.

took place is still a matter of controversy. In the earliest days of the Christian community the disciples were occupied in making preparations for the Kingdom which did *not* come, as they expected it would, in a few years' time; and we may well believe that their minds were not intent on the building of a Church which should endure in perpetuity. There is a considerable gap, extending over several years, in the literature of the Church after the Apostolic age, and the meagre literature of the period leaves us ignorant how the earlier transitions, from the "little flock" that gathered round Christ to a rigid and sacrosanct clerical organization, were effected. In the early days, when the Church was regarded as a mere stop-gap till the Kingdom came, Apostolic authority sufficed, but official authority and that of tradition were gradually superadded. Before the close of the third century we find "Churchianity," as opposed to Christianity in full swing; and a faith that was akin to a fetish was gradually imposed by the clergy on flocks who were well disposed to receive it. Christianity as instituted by Christ underwent a complete transfiguration; the priest became a magician, and magic and mystery ousted the more spiritual conceptions of religion.

M. Loisy,[1] now no longer a churchman (he was excommunicated twelve years ago), thinks that the transformation was effected by St. Paul, who divorced Christianity from Judaism and saved the new religion from inevitable collapse by turning it into a mystery religion. We may endorse the statement that it was as a mystery religion, largely borrowed from the Greeks, that Christianity conquered the world; but it is improbable that the process of Hellenization and Paganization was so

[1] *Les Mystères Paiens et le Mystère Chrétien*; and see *The Times Literary Supplement*, December 25, 1919.

swift and sudden as M. Loisy would seem to suggest. We have, as I have said, little historical information concerning the Church for many years after Paul's death, but we do know that Hellenism, largely infiltrated with Oriental and Egyptian mysticism, deeply tinged Church doctrine: the Church in the second century used the language and had already imbibed the spirit, as well as the ideas, of the Greeks. The metaphysics of Platonism were introduced to attract the intellectuals, fresh labels being usually attached to the new ideas in order to hide their alien origin. The Alexandrian Jew, Philo, attempted to reconcile Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy, and many of his ideas were incorporated by the Church. The Platonic and Heraclitean theory of the Logos, the Word or Supreme Reason, is made familiar to us in the Fourth Gospel, which was not written—as is commonly supposed, and as is sometimes taught by people who believe the contrary—by the Apostle John, but by some unknown writer, or writers, probably about A.D. 200. God, according to this Gospel, is not merely Creator and Providence (as in the Christian sense), but cosmic principle and Pure Being in the metaphysical sense of Greek philosophy; Christ, as the "corporeal appearance of the Logos," the Word made flesh, replaced the Judaic conception of the Messiah. But this obviously is not the teaching of Jesus: He was no metaphysician, and the doctrine must be regarded as being of later origin. Such ideas are, in fact, little more than meaningless, except in connection with Platonic or neo-Platonic philosophy.

These theories, though admirably suited for the cultured few, were obviously unsuitable for the masses. To please them recourse had to be made to the East, and the Oriental religions, with their quaint myths and rituals, soon became extremely popular with the ignorant laity. "As the East

tires of its superstitions it passes them on to silly Europeans," a writer in the *Saturday Review* caustically observed the other day; and something of the kind happened from time to time in the framing of the Church's creed. A clerical satrapy, essentially Oriental in character, needs Oriental forms and ideas for its maintenance; and what Dr. Inge (*Christian Mysticism*, p. 15) calls "a leaven of Asiatic thought passing through Alexandrian mysticism" permeated the orthodox doctrine. The scraps and tatters of Mithraism were stitched on to the Church's patchwork mantle, and now form a considerable portion of the entire garment. "Preservative" accretions of every variety, and taken from any quarter so long as they served the ecclesiastic's turn, found their way into the established creed: the laity were fed upon a variety of curious foreign myths and fables, and worshipped before all sorts of odd shrines.

The age-long contest between priest and prophet appears to have commenced in very early Post-Apostolic days, and, as usual, the prophet got the worst of it. Prophetic ministry deteriorated as time went on, and sacerdotalism began to raise its head. The principle of episcopal authority was asserted to be necessary in order to combat the numerous heresies, Gnostic and otherwise, which at times threatened the Church's very existence. Officialism waxed as the prophetic gift waned: a graded system of ecclesiastics, with extensive powers that were ever growing, came gradually into existence. A halt was called to innovations; dogma was established and ecclesiastical control enforced upon individual thought in spiritual matters. Definitely Papal notions appear in the writings of St. Ignatius, who was eaten by lions in the Roman amphitheatre about A.D. 110. He was "possessed of a passion to leave behind him an authoritatively organized

Church." [1] He tells his flock that their "bishop presides in the place of God," and that he is to be reverenced as Jesus Christ. Above all, Ignatius perceived the magician's wand of authority that could be waved through the agency of the Eucharist, the eating of a supper which imparts spiritual life to those who receive it at the hands of a divinely ordained priest acting as Christ's representative.

The requisite hierarchy was not long in making its appearance, and it soon "displayed the requisite vigour and adaptiveness. It soon had sacred books of its own which it appended to the older Scriptures. The generalized ideas of official Judaism, the Messianic hope, Hellenistic myth and ritual, ethical and metaphysical ideas that had passed into currency, and in particular the idea of personal salvation in a future life, were all in due proportion assimilated. A new religion had appeared which at length succeeded in imposing itself on the Roman Empire." [2]

The old theocratic dreams of Judaism revived on a wider basis and with more far-reaching ambition. To buttress these new powers and the extravagant claims of the priesthood various means were adopted; and the most ingenious arguments are invented to justify them and to show that they are all part of the original revelation delivered by Christ to the Church. The Church, says M. Loisy (writing in defence of the Papacy), "needed the preservative element of all society—authority." We must not reproach her with developing along the lines dictated by "the necessity of fact accompanied by logical necessity": she had to live, it is contended—which was the plea advanced by the beggar when he stole the rich man's watch. The anti-cleric may retort, with the Austrian cynic, that he does not see the necessity. The exigencies of spiritual despotism as

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, p. 32.
[2] *The Origins of Christianity*, by T. Whittaker, p. 19.

conceived by the more relentless Apocalyptists, the obligation of killing and persecuting heretics, were urged at a very early stage as arguments for the employment of force. Nor did the Church frame her dogma and institutions for the purpose of self-preservation only; she framed them for conquest. Ecclesiastical polity may have its earlier origins in "a healthy desire to survive" (to use the phrase of the Russians when they refused to fight any longer for the *Entente*), but it soon developed a passion for *Weltmacht* as fervid as that of any Prussian.

The transformation of Christianity from a purely Jewish religion to a religion acceptable to the Græco-Roman world and to humanity was effected, as M. Loisy shows, with marvellous rapidity and thoroughness, and this in the face of much conservative resistance. Each step of the doctrine was achieved by some sort of accommodation with those that preceded it. For instance, the Pauline theory of salvation was "indispensable in its time," or Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect without a future. The loans from Hellenic and Oriental wisdom grew larger and larger; and many new theories "entered into the tradition of the teaching Church under condition of adaptation to primitive Christianity." Large portions of Origen's innovating theology were assimilated by her, because they would "make Christianity acceptable to the most cultivated minds"; but she condemned certain of his philosophic hypotheses—not because they were untrue, but because they "were not to her liking" (*The Gospel and the Church*, p. 192). So, progressively, Greek interpretation of Christian dogma "came into being through the spontaneous effort of the faith to define itself, through the natural exigencies of propagandism"; and each step of dogma marked "the introduction of Greek philosophy into Christianity, and a compromise be-

tween this philosophy and Christian tradition." A captious critic might be tempted to inquire how far the exigencies of propagandism can guarantee the truth of the doctrine propagated, and whether truth, transcendental truth in particular, admits of any compromise—but then, we " English make too much of truth." The Pagan nations took religion " as a spiritual medicine " ; each new set of believers was treated with prescriptions suited to their mental constitutions, and " acceptable " to their personal predilections.

The doctrine of Grace, M. Loisy informs us, like the Christological dogma, " is an interpretation of the salvation of the Messiah and of the theology of the heavenly kingdom, and this interpretation was made necessary by the circumstances in which the gospel was perpetuated, and by the problems presented by the conversion of Pagans " (p. 208). It is consoling to learn (p. 210) that " the definitions of the Vatican are to some extent sprung from reality," though probably " theological reflection has not yet spoken its final word on the subject." " Orthodoxy," in short, " seems to follow a kind of politic line " (p. 196) ; and it would also appear, if the statements of theologians are correct, that Heaven accommodates itself in the most obliging manner to the compromises with truth effected by the Curia.

CHAPTER VII

HOW THE PATCHWORK SPREAD

"The creed of the Church, steering between extremes and uniting opposites, was a timid artificial creation, a work of diplomacy" (MOZLEY'S *Theory of Development*).

"Temples, incense, lamps and candles, votive offerings, holy water, asylums, holy days and seasons, processions, blessings on the fields, vestments, tonsure, the ring in marriage, turning to the East, images, and the *Kyrie eleison*, are all of Pagan origin, and sanctified by their adoption into the Church" (NEWMAN'S *Essay on Development*, viii, 373).

"The history of religions is generally a history of decline. . . . Christianity, which began as a republication of the purest prophetic teaching, has suffered the same fate" (*Outspoken Essays*, by DEAN INGE, p. 248).

THE ecclesiastical statesmen who built up the Catholic Church were not slow to perceive that it was not enough to satisfy the intellectual needs of the cultured Pagan world by the introduction of Hellenic philosophy into the new religion; a popular and "pathetic" form of religious practice, as well as theory, was also required to attract the populace and fit in with the prepossessions of the crowd. In this way the religious mythology, dear to the hearts of the "heathen" peasantry, was presented under new labels and slightly altered dress. The incorporations of alien material were not extensive in the early days of the Church, being resisted by the Fathers, but in the third and the fourth centuries there were wholesale infusions of heathen feasts and customs, resulting in rapid, but often temporary conversions. The doctrine of the Trinity, prominent in Oriental faiths, was deduced from scattered texts

(not always genuine: 1 John v. 7 is a glaring example) of the Gospels and the Epistles. The spirit of practical accommodation, of deference to the exigencies of propagandism, was everywhere apparent. The Pagans were sceptics, but the people wanted the definiteness of superstition incorporated in, and expressed as, dogma; and the Church provided them with it. Mariolatry, with its strong emotional appeal, was introduced by degrees in later centuries, and proved instantaneously popular as an adjunct to the adoration of the crucified Jesus, which gradually ousted that of Tammuz, Attys, Adonis, and other favourite divinities of the Pagans. The worship of saints and martyrs, and other subordinate intercessors with the Deity, the cult of shrines and relics, followed in due course; and a pantheon somewhat like that of the old polytheistic mythologies was created. The 25th of December was fixed as the date of Christ's birth to conciliate the Oriental mystics and believers in the ancient religions. There is nothing whatever in Scripture to show that Jesus was born on that particular day, though tradition was always at hand to supply, whenever required, any deficiency of that kind. The winter solstice marked, for the ancient Pagans, the sun's birthday, the time when he began his annual journey round the heavens; the 25th of December was annually celebrated as the great festival of *Sol Invictus* in southern Italy; and similar festivals took place in China, India, Persia, and many other countries.[1]

Even the liturgical and other vestments of the clergy and hierarchy were mainly borrowed from the Pagans. The alb, like its name, is derived from the *tunica alba*, the white tunic of ancient Rome's citizens. The chasuble was originally a cloak worn by the old Græco-Roman world. The amice and

[1] See *The Churches and Modern Thought*, by P. Vivian, p. 390.

pallium, and perhaps the stole, were also of heathen origin.[1] The mitre, or *mitra*, was the head-dress of an Oriental, probably a Persian, impropriety.[2] Incense was freely used by the ancient Persians, Chaldæans, etc. Maimonides states that the Jews employed it to counteract the stench of the slaughtered beasts burning on the sacrificial altars.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Roman Church was, like Saint Paul, "debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians." The principal creditor, especially in the realm of myth and magic, would appear to have been Mithraism, the ancient religion of the Persians. According to Mithraic theology, God, with a view to establish a direct connection with mankind, manifested Himself in a second personality, Mithra, who (like the Egyptian Ra) was a sun-god. He was also a cosmic principle, the Divine Word or Reason, the Mediator between God and men, and the ally of Ormuzd in his conflict with Ahriman, the Persian Satan. The day consecrated to Mithra was Sunday: the date of his nativity was December 25th, and his principal festivals were Christmas and Easter. His religion, rites, and mysteries were very similar to those of the Church. He was born in a cave (Justin Martyr and Origen say that Christ was born in a cave), and his first worshippers were shepherds: he was buried in a rock-tomb and rose from the dead. His sacraments were those of the Roman Church, and the foreheads of his initiates were marked with a mystic mark.[3]

The Roman Catholic argument is, of course, that Mithraism borrowed its religion from the Church; but the Persian faith was centuries older than Christianity, and, as I have already pointed out, early

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica.*

[2] *Picta lupa barbara mitrâ* (the foreign harlot with her painted head-dress: Juvenal, *Satires*, iii, 66).

[3] *Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, p. 333.

Christian writers said that evil spirits had *invented* these tales in order to rob the Christian story of its essential importance. Maternus Firmicus says that the devil resorted *beforehand* to deceptive imitations; Justin Martyr argues that the demons *anticipated* the Christian mysteries, and the same argument has been used by many recent writers. Zoroastrianism, an Anglican clergyman admits, was an "anticipation" of Church doctrine; and we must therefore, he says, presume it to have been God-implanted, a proof of the human longing for a personal God capable of direct communication with man. "To term these beliefs as exclusively Christian is no longer possible." [1] The Church, in short, played "the sedulous ape" in her copious borrowings from Mithraism and other popular creeds, but added and altered wherever policy seemed to dictate such alteration. She materialized whatever was too mystical or obscure for popular apprehension, replaced allegory with literal interpretations, and substituted the concrete for the abstract. "A Mithraist," says Mr. Robertson, "could turn to the Christian worship and find his main rites unimpaired, lightened only of the burden of initiative austerities, stripped of the old obscure mysticism, and with all things turned to the literal and the concrete, in sympathy with the waning of knowledge and philosophy throughout the world."

The first six centuries of the Christian era was a period "of insistent fermentation and of rapid and continuous change"; and the formation of new doctrines and rites, and the further adulteration of the Gospel proceeded apace as the years passed. The Virgin Birth theory was copied from the Egyptian story of Isis and Horus, Chinese beliefs dating from 3500 B.C., from Zoroastrianism, Grecian and Roman mythologies, and other religions too numerous to

[1] *The Churches and Modern Thought*, p. 119.

mention. Various additions were made in the succeeding centuries, and as occasion required, to the doctrines concerning Mary, culminating finally in 1854 with the infallible assertion by Pius IX of her Immaculate Conception—a dogma which St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and St. Thomas Aquinas had denied, although, as we know from Pius X, the Hebrew patriarchs were familiar with it, and found consolation in considering it during the solemn moments of their lives. Again, St. Paul advised priests and bishops to marry one wife, but the Church enforced celibacy—with the disastrous results that have been witnessed for centuries past. Monasticism, a thing wholly alien to the spirit of Christ, was purely Pagan in origin. Its chief representatives in early Christian days were the Neo-Pythagoreans: India and Egypt were the cradles of the system long before the birth of Christianity; but it was left to the Roman Church to develop those repulsive features which made it a destroyer of civic life and domestic virtues, and a hindrance to human development by withdrawing large masses of able-bodied men and women from social life.

In this manner the fashioning of a new-fangled religion, or what Catholics call the adaptation of the Gospel to the changing conditions of humanity, went merrily on under the pretence of continued supernatural guidance and inspiration. Speculation as to the meaning of Christ's words, four or five centuries after they were uttered, is represented to us as what He actually said: and, when Scripture failed, tradition was manufactured. Fresh sops were continually thrown to the heathen Cerberus. The customs and superstitions of primitive civilization, the puerilities of Pagan devotion, were reproduced by the Church in an aggravated form. "It is impossible," Pope Gregory the Great said in a letter to English missionaries, "to expect savage minds

to give up all their customs at once": and the "savages" showed their appreciation of the indulgence by joining the Church in large numbers. Their "natural religion" was, in fact, and as Newman correctly appreciated, the root and foundation of Christianity—or what Romanists call Christianity—at any rate in its later guises. The Church sanctified ferocity, and Christianized savage superstition; and recent events seem to show that we are all more or less savages even at the present day. "It would have been an absolute impossibility to gain proselytes," as M. Loisy remarks, if the Church had acted otherwise than she did: she "had to *find* (my italics) a ritual, or cease to exist." Most Catholics, on the other hand, tell us with the utmost confidence that the Church's rites, mysteries, doctrines, worship, etc., were all instituted by Christ. "The Church never developes into a doctrine of faith anything that was not part of Christ's revelation," says Father E. R. Hull, S.J.; and Tyrrell corroborates in his *Mediævalism*, pp. 115, 137.

The supposed necessities of the budding Church dominated the entire situation. The Jewish religion had stood on the defensive, but Roman Catholicism was out to conquer the world. Doctrines suitable to the needs of the new converts were provided, and the people were told that these things were of celestial origin and expressly "organized" by Christ as the Divine Founder of the Church. A highly artificial æstheticism expressed itself in a gorgeous and elaborate ritual. A vast accumulation of religious invention by interested human beings, accompanied by innovations and deviations of all sorts, talismanic rites and incantations, ousted the primitive simplicity of the Christian faith, and was presented to the world as part of the original revelation. The work of Christ, as Vaughan points out in his *Hours with the Mystics*, p. 114, is thrown into

the background to make room for the Church. The Son of God, as revealed in Scripture, is replaced by a metaphysical Logos which certainly never entered into the head of Christ: the Church is the great Mystagogue and indispensable apportioner of salvation; and the priest, in the exercise of his mediatorial functions, becomes the real Redeemer from sin and its consequences.[1] The old religion practically disappeared, and a new one, which we may call Roman Catholic Christianity, reigned in its stead. "Christianity ceased to be what it was, and became what it was not," says the Rev. Alfred Fawkes.[2] Primitive Christianity "*did perish*" (my italics), he continues, utterly and beyond recognition; and, let me add, it was ecclesiasticism that killed it.

The matrimonial alliance between Greek philosophy and Revelation, the Hellenization of Christian dogma and practice, which began about A.D. 130, was renewed with vigour during the third decade of the following century. Strange and hybrid variations of the primitive creed appeared. Theological dogma started on its wild career of imitative ingenuity: sacraments, absolution, penance, obligatory confession, celibacy, transubstantiation, the theory of a consubstantial Trinity, a Eucharistic theory borrowed from a hundred Pagan sources, were introduced at various dates. "Greek mysteries and Greek civilization, in all the fullness of their development, acted upon the Church, but not Greek mythology nor Polytheism. In the century following, pure Hellenism, with all its creations and acquisitions, is established in the Catholic Church. Here also there were reservations, but they often consisted only in a change of label, the thing being taken just as it

[1] A witty Jesuit of the seventeenth century described himself, quite correctly, as *Pater qui tollit peccata mundi*, the Father who taketh away the sins of the world—by the simple expedient of saying that they are not sins!

[2] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 290.

was, and in the worship of the Saints a Christianity of a lower order was born." The Greek Church (and, in matters of ritual, the Roman Church) collected " the impressions, superstitions, knowledge, and practices of unknown ages; with its solemn rites, its relics, its images, its priests, its monks, and its mysteries, it is connected with the Hellenic worship of the Neo-Platonist epoch, and not with the Church of the first centuries. It appears, not as a Christian creation with a Greek thread, but as a Greek creation with a Christian thread. The Christians of the first century would have fought it as they fought the worship of the Magna Mater or of Zeus Soter. . . . The worship in spirit and in truth is become a worship of signs, formulas, and idols. Jesus Christ gave Himself to be crucified in order to destroy religion of this kind." [1]

The doctrines of Plotinus and other Neo-Platonists, mingled with Gnostic ideas, were freely made use of, and the Neo-Platonic philosophy was " translated into Christian terms, and was made into the spiritual bee-bread on which many generations fed." [2] The Church, that is to say, conquered Paganism, but only by absorbing it.

In the fifth century there appeared the celebrated forgeries known as the writings of the Pseudo-Dionysius, the Areopagite. They profess to be the work of Dionysius, a convert of St. Paul in the Areopagus, and the first Bishop of Athens; but they were really composed towards the close of the fifth century by an anonymous mystery-man—probably a Syrian monk. It is an odd jumble of Brahminical Pantheism, Jewish and semi-Christian allegory, and other mystical religious philosophy. The book, though evidently the work of an able

[1] *The Gospel and the Church*, p. 228, summarizing Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*.

[2] *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, p. 79.

man, was a patent fraud; but that, of course, did not prevent the Church from making ample use of it. It contains a theory of celestial and earthly hierarchies rigorously graded, and with carefully defined privileges and authority, which the Roman ecclesiastics found exceedingly serviceable as a bulwark of priestcraft. The author effects an ingenious correspondence between the orders of Angelic natures in Heaven and the priestly orders on earth; and their functions are made to fit in to a nicety. This theory exactly suited the clerics in their efforts to extend their power, and the work of the "Areopagite" became extremely popular. The Popes and bishops were delighted to learn that their hierarchy was a direct continuation of the heavenly hierarchy by means of a "progression" through the ninefold ranks of the Angelic Beings,[1] and they duly honoured the man who delivered this useful information. Whether the author was a conscious impostor, or not, may possibly be, as Mr. Jones suggests, a subject for argument: what is certain is that his work is not what it purports to be; but it admirably served its purpose in impressing the credulous mob and mystifying the *bourgeois*.

The writings of the Areopagite please learned persons no less than the crowd; and the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas is said to be largely based upon them. There is also an engaging warmth about them; they provide us with a sensuous thrill, an emotional intoxication, such as the true Romanist dearly loves. He furnished the later mystics with ideas, and poets like Tennyson and Spenser with tropes and images, down to the present day. We have in his writings, as Mr. Rufus Jones says, the Christianity of the cloister: we find in them, not the primitive simplicity of apostolic Christianity, but "Neo-Platonic philosophy slightly sprinkled with

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, p. 105.

baptismal water from a Christian font." [1] No longer Christ, but Plato Plotinized, was now the prophet; and doctrine of this kind formed the basis of mystical teachings for many centuries to come.

In the course of time it was found that still further innovations, adaptations, and "developments" were required. The sort of philosophy that was provided by the impostor "Dionysius" and the more extravagant mystics was not sufficient for the Church's need. A formal philosophic system was needed to combine with primitive superstition and mythology, and Greece was again called upon to supply it. Philosophy of some sort, as we know, has always been the Church's *ancilla fidei*; and the handmaid's services were continually requisitioned by the ecclesiastics. Mr. Leslie Stephen (*An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 328) defines a vigorous religion as "a superstition which has enslaved a philosophy," and Romanism has enslaved many philosophies besides incorporating the details of many savage cults. When the Catholic doctrinaire finds that his mysticism, metaphysics, and mythology are landing him in a confusion of Pantheism and other heresies, he calls in some formal system of more rigid intellectualism to clear up the mess; and the Fathers were not slow to perceive that a definitive system of religious theory must be introduced from outside, if their Church was to survive. Her pundits made various efforts, notably in the thirteenth century, to "philosophize superstition" and to forge thereout a weapon of temporal domination. The attempts have never been successful, and never can be. The philosophy wears thin and loses its sanction and vitality in the process, but the superstition endures: the results are seen in the ignorance, tyranny and stagnation of Catholic communities, and also in the perpetual brawling from which so many countries are now suffering.

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, p. 110.

Towards the middle of the thirteenth century the Church rediscovered Aristotle, whose works had been officially banned by Pope Gregory IX and other ecclesiastics, a few decades previously, as the most dangerous foe of mediæval faith. The Church's former *ancilla*, "the old loving nurse of the Church," Platonic philosophy, was dismissed, and the deductive philosopher was raised to the proud position of maid-servant to the Papacy. Theology now became an intellectual religion instead of shadowy mysticism: Aristotelian metaphysics strained through a monkish sieve, and science filtrated through Arabian and Jewish sources, issued in scholasticism under the able leadership of St. Thomas Aquinas. Reason, added to revelation, was the pillar of his system; but the reason he employed was "not individual reason, but the fountain of natural truth whose chief channels are the various systems of heathen philosophies," that of Aristotle in particular.[1] He blended science and religion, and (like Sir Oliver Lodge and others in our day) maintained that the two are not incompatible. His method and system may be roughly defined as Aristotle impregnated with Christianity.

Let us return for a while to earlier days, and trace briefly the origins of the temporal power. In the latter half of the third century the ecclesiastical ship found itself in rough water. A wave of heretical theory and speculation, mainly Gnostic, threatened to engulf her, and the clerical statesmen of the day found it necessary to stop Hellenizing for a while, and to adopt Roman notions of discipline and authority. The grip of the episcopate on the laity was tightened, and a system of hierarchical absolutism gradually founded. What we now term clericalism expressed itself in a dream of world-dominion and an ambition of succeeding to the theocratic powers

[1] *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. "Aquinas."

wielded by the Hebrew hierarchy. The ideal of this new theocracy was authoritative dogma supreme in every sphere of life, and it inherited to the full the Jewish ideas of exclusiveness and intolerance. The doctrine of passive obedience to the episcopal will asserted itself in the fourth century, and, as Hobbes suggested, the real sin against the Holy Ghost became, in the Church's eyes, resistance to her pretensions. Philosophy came into disfavour, as being antagonistic to the claims of the now fast-growing hierocracy. A temporary anti-Hellenist reaction set in[1]; the schools of philosophy were closed, their endowments confiscated, and the Hellenizers proscribed. Private views on religious questions were dubbed "heresy" and "treason against God," and severely persecuted.[2] The temporal power came to be regarded as an indispensable adjunct to priestly authority. Kingly and episcopal dignities supplemented one another in the eyes of both lay and clerical rulers. Popes aspired to become deified emperors, and the emperors strove to invest themselves with the magical properties of the Church. Julius Cæsar, wisest of statesmen, saw clearly enough the terrific powers latent in popular superstition; he staked his whole future on being made Pontifex Maximus,[3] because he recognized that priestly sanction is the sure cement of autocracy. Exactly the same thing happened in ancient Egypt thousands of years before, and in many other countries; superstition is pretty much the same in all places and at all times.

The Church, as we have shown, having embarked on her empire-building enterprise, followed closely the policy and traditions of the dead Roman Empire: the Cæsarian ideal united with the theocratic. A

[1] *The Origins of Christianity*, p. 33.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 49.
[3] Mommsen's *History of Rome*, iv, 186.

progressive centralization, and the "substitution of a graduated hierarchy for popular government, came about as inevitably in the Catholic Church as in the Mediterranean Empire of the Cæsars." [1] The pre-eminence of the bishop in the church and in the community, and the sovereignty of the Pope over the bishops, were defined and established in the course of time and as circumstances required. The task of the Fathers, some of whom were philosophers, others pre-eminently statesmen, was the building up of authority through the agency of permanent and universal dogma; and the influence of the statesmen predominated over that of the philosophers. The Church, as M. Loisy says, "became what it had to become, in order not to decline and perish, dragging the gospel down with it"; and, on the other hand, we may well agree with his statement that the Apostles "little thought that they were bequeathing a master to Cæsar, or even that they had given a supreme Chief to the Church." The idea of the modern Papacy was not present to their minds any more than it was to Christ's. We must regard Rome's imperial airs as simply "the result of a general tendency"; and this tendency is purely political in character.

Meanwhile philosophy, so far from being killed by the interdicts of Roman obscurantists, fortified her position and bided her time; and it was not long before the clerics found that her assistance was essential, if the new faith was not to sink to the level of a purely barbarian superstition. The struggle broke out anew between the intellectuals and the dogmatists, as to whether philosophy should be above popular religion, or *vice versâ*. The philosophic *ancilla*, like the modern parlourmaid, said that she was quite as good as her mistress, and perhaps better; but the Church maintained her

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 138.

supremacy, and for many centuries divine philosophy had to be content with her humble status of maid-of-all-work to dogmatic speculation. The reins of authority were tightened, and reason was put in its place—a pretty low one—by a Church which still tells us that intellect is "at the utmost but tolerated" by her.[1] Anticipating Tennyson, the ecclesiastics said that philosophy might be followed to a certain extent, but not beyond the limits prescribed by Rome, or disaster would inevitably follow.

> Hold thou the good; define it well,
> For fear divine Philosophy
> Should push beyond her mark, and be
> Procuress to the Lords of Hell.

So this Protean institution of the Papacy, this "new" cult made up of old shreds and patches[2]—with its stupendous claims, and *semper eadem* for its motto—grew and prospered. The "little flock," expecting the speedy advent of the Kingdom, and trembling at the doom of extinction which they fancied awaited them a few years hence, expanded into an episcopal monarchy dominating the world and giving itself autocratic airs in the face of earthly potentates. Peter, with his doubtful primacy and timid leadership, "developes" (under divine guidance, of course) into a Pope who is "our God" and "the living Christ"; or a domineering Pius V slaying heretics right and left, or a Boniface VIII who tells us that he is "set above kings and princes by divine pre-eminence of power," and that "we dispose of them as we think fit." The Church, posing as the organ of the Holy Spirit, permanently and con-

[1] *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, by J. H. Newman, v, 112.

[2] Mr. Max Beerbohm recently exhibited a cartoon depicting Mr. Bernard Shaw trying to sell a suit of his old clothes. The buyer objects that the coat is Schopenhauer's, the waistcoat Ibsen's, and the trousers Nietzsche's. "Ah," says Mr. Shaw, "but look at the patches." He does not, so far as I know, represent his wares as "unique and unprecedented," or as his "exclusive possession."

tinuously animated and inspired by divine illumination, carries out her purely political schemes and proclaims her contradictory affirmations under the pretence that they are the working out of the heavenly design as announced by Christ to mankind from the first. Her history is, for good Roman Catholics, simply the record of God's never-ceasing intervention in her behalf. When we inquire what trace or vestige of celestial character there is visible in her purely opportunist developments, we are told that they were essential to her aggrandizement, and forced upon her in her necessary and very human struggle for existence. If ever there was an article of purely mortal manufacture, it is the Roman Church and her creed. "Platonic ideas, Oriental emanations, and Hellenic legend," as Vaughan says, blended in an erudite feebleness with Roman statecraft; and there finally emerged the Papacy, which, whatever it may be, certainly is not Christianity.[1] A "transformation was effected," as M. Loisy (in his orthodox days) admitted; and we eventually arrive, by a process of logical growth, at a priestly bureaucracy armed with secular powers, and using them like any ordinary despot. Yet the bureaucrats, we are given to understand, felt themselves to be "in the same relations with Jesus as the disciples were," and the ministry of the bishops is "not of the political order"—as the Irish bishops also assured us the other day, when they opposed conscription. "Even the Jesuits, founded to defend the Roman Church against Protestant and anti-Papal reform, are not political agents, but preachers of religion and religious educators, whatever may be thought of their methods and their special tendencies"[2]; in fact, the political side of Romanism "is wholly

[1] "There never was but one Christian—and He was a Jew," says the hero of Mr. Thurston's play, *The Wandering Jew*.

[2] *The Gospel and the Church*, p. 173.

external, even accessory," and ecclesiastical authority abstains from repressing the personal activity of conscience.

Such was the view taken by an exceptionally able and learned Roman Catholic: the independent inquirer will form his own opinion as to its correctness. Personally, I think Dr. Inge gets a good deal nearer to the truth in the following pregnant passage. "What the Latin Church preserved," says the Dean, "was not the religion of Christ, which lived on by its inherent indestructibility, but parts of the Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies, distorted and petrified by scholasticism, a vast quantity of purely Pagan superstitions, and the *arcana imperii* of Roman Cæsarism. The normal end of scholasticism is a mummified philosophy of authority, in which there are no problems to solve, but a great many dead pundits to consult." [1]

Meanwhile the Church persists in her assertion that this extraordinary hotch-potch of syncretistic amalgamations is the authentic Gospel which Christ delivered to the world, but no ingenious theories of a "natural development" under a superintending Providence can disguise the fact that a new religion was erected by clerical diplomacy upon the ruins of the old one. Not even "in embryonic form," as the Modernists say, can we find Christ's teaching in the portentous edifice of dogma created by the theologians in the interests of government. Newman, like other contraversialists of his type, used his argument just as far as it suited him, but no further: "development" served his particular purpose for the time, and that was enough. Jowett thought that Newman had the most artificial mind of his generation, and the man who has the patience to wade through the pages of his wearisome Essay will probably deem the judgment a just one. If the Cardinal

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 237.

had known German—or had married—some people think that things might have been different. As it was, the Development theory turned out to be a weapon capable of seriously damaging the people who used it. The eye of the Church, who claims to be the infallible guardian of a nominally fixed and constant doctrine, is concentrated on the past, as the period of fullest enlightenment; but the appeal of Newman's method is to the future. Rome was far from being taken in by his rhetoric and special pleading: the ecclesiastics perceived clearly enough the inevitable consequences of a theory which was obviously susceptible of indefinite extension, and the dangers which lay in its implications. It was recognized that such reasonings, pressed to their logical conclusion, would lead mankind into very undesirable regions. The Cardinal, in short, had conducted his Church on to a slippery slope, and at the foot of the slope lay the abyss of Rationalism.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EUCHARIST

"These different conceptions of the office of the (Pagan) Mysteries cannot be separated historically. They all reappear in the history of the Christian Sacraments" (*Christian Mysticism*, by DEAN INGE, p. 354).

IN the Roman doctrine of the Eucharist we have an illustration of the crude supernaturalism and debased mysticism which, expressing themselves in grossly material and carnal shapes, still disfigure Catholicism. Prominent among the *horribilia secreta*, which form so repulsive a feature of primitive Pagan superstition, was the slaying, and the sacramental eating, of the god or the deified victim who was chosen for the honour of immolation. In these orgies of blood and mystical religion we observe that strange combination of piety and ferocity which has continually disgraced the Roman Church. "Les théologiens sont féroces," as a Catholic prelate justly observed: they always have been ferocious, and, for all I know to the contrary, ferocious they will remain to the end. The Pagan ideas of sacrifice fitted in with the mental prepossessions of the men who created the Papacy, and, as we have shown, they saw that the adaptation of archaic cults was essential to the new religion, if it was to survive and conquer. For this purpose they made their sacraments an almost exact copy of the Pagan mystery-systems and communions, brought old mythology and religious conceptions within the forms of logic, and so, out of heathen material, created a dogma and

hierarchy which should subjugate the world. We certainly cannot endorse M. Loisy's assertion (*The Gospel and the Church*, p. 237) that the Church "has proscribed all the bloody and magical rites of ancient religions."

As Dean Inge says in his *Christian Mysticism* (p. 355), "the idea of mystical union by means of a common meal was familiar to the Greeks." It was also familiar to many other nations long before the Greeks. The earliest sacraments known to history were those celebrated by the ancient Egyptians thousands of years before Christ. Food was offered to the spirit of the dead king, who was also to be King in the Other World; and the priest "uttered a formula that was believed to convert the material food into a substance possessing a spiritual character and fit to form the food of the *ka*, or 'double,' or 'vital power,' of the dead king." [1] At the funeral ceremonies flesh from a slaughtered animal was presented to the mummy's mouth, together with wine or beer, "and the words which the priest pronounced as he presented each were supposed to transform it into the hidden and secret body of Osiris, on which the gods and the spirits and souls of the righteous lived." When this was done the family and kinsmen themselves ate the transformed food, which became to them a means of communion with their ancestors and certain divine beings; and, for a season at least, it made them "divine" also.[2]

I cannot enumerate here the multitudinous savage tribes and primitive people whom we read of as eating the flesh of an animal or man in the belief that it is divine, and with the expectation of sharing thereby in the god's attributes and powers. "When the god is a corn-god, the corn is his proper body;

[1] *The Literature of the Egyptians*, by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, p. 11.
[2] *A History of the Egyptian People*, by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, p. 238.

when he is a vine-god, the juice of the grape is his blood; and so, by eating the bread and drinking the wine, the worshipper partakes of the real body and blood of the god." [1] The corn and wine were the transmuted elements of the vegetation-god's body. Herbert Spencer also tells us how certain savages eat the flesh of their slain enemies, or even that of a dead relation—"roasted or boiled, according as he was thin or fat"—in the hope of acquiring his strength and courage, or other serviceable qualities.[2]

Perhaps the most remarkable parallel to the existing Roman rites is to be found in those of Mithraism, a very much older religion than Christianity. Justin Martyr, after describing the institution of the Lord's Supper, tells us that in the mysteries of Mithra "bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated" [3]; and Tertullian also draws attention to the resemblances in the rites of the two religions. A recently discovered bas-relief, representing a Mithraic communion, is photographed in a book entitled *Les Mystères de Mithra*. On a small tripod is the bread, in the form of wafers, each marked with a cross. The Early Fathers, as I have already indicated, said that the devils, for the destruction of souls, had resorted beforehand to deceptive imitations of Christian rites and emblems. An article in the *Nineteenth Century* for September 1905, said that the Mithraists had "seven sacraments, of which the most important were baptism, confirmation, and a Eucharistic supper, at which the communicants partook of the divine nature of Mithra under the species of bread and wine." [4] There were in antiquity, as Porphyry informs us, "several

[1] *The Golden Bough*, by Sir J. G. Frazer, ii, 366—quoted in *The Churches and Modern Thought*.
[2] See *The Churches and Modern Thought*, by P. Vivian, p. 153.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 392.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 168.

elaborate treatises setting forth the religion of Mithra ; and every one of these has been destroyed by the care of the Church." [1]

The Eucharistic idea was no less familiar to the ancient Greeks and their neighbours. Bread and wine, the products of the corn-goddess (Demeter) and the wine-god (Bacchus, who also changed water into wine), were sacramentally consumed by their worshippers under the idea that they were partaking of the real body and blood of the god. They and other peoples began by devouring the flesh of an animal with the idea that they would gain the qualities it possessed. By swallowing a mole's heart (as recommended by Porphyry) you were enabled to burrow into dark mysteries ; a bit of raw bull made you beefy and strong, and a slice or two of tiger, no doubt, induced a state of ferocity which even a Roman inquisitor might envy. Later on, by a species of higher sacramentalism, they imagined that by " partaking of an animal who was a divine vehicle you could enter spiritually into the divine life that had physically entered you, and so be made one with the god." [2] Like his modern imitators, the primitive communicant consumed the flesh in the hope of ridding himself of evil and impurity, and also of absorbing into himself part of the victim's life, and so renewing the divine life within him. By abstinence and the sacramental feast of raw flesh the Cretan initiates, or mystics, were cleansed and consecrated, and were made one with the god. The notion of cleansing and sanctification by expiatory offering was common to the Church and the heathens, and other resemblances are too numerous to mention. The Orphic mystic who was free and holy (ὁσιώθεις) " marked his divinity by a dreary formalism "—

[1] *Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, Part III.

[2] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, by Miss Jane Harrison, pp. 487, 494, 500.

pretty much as the Roman priest does; and he fasted *after*, as well as before, the Divine Sacrament.[1]

The Roman Church is saturated with the notions of vicarious retribution and satisfaction; and the Mass, as we are often told, is a propitiatory sacrifice. It is termed by the Church "the unbloody sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ"; but it is offered up by a sacrificing priest, and, as the Rev. Alfred Fawkes well says, "an element of the shambles is inseparable from sacrificial worship." It is blood, blood, blood—everywhere and always—sanguinary ideas, symbols and visions, gory emblems and rites: atonement, sanctification, purification, redemption and remission of sins—all must be by blood. When things are going awry, somebody or something has got to be killed before they can be set right. The Greeks, delayed at Aulis by contrary winds, sought counsel of their country's gods, and the chaplains of the fleet decided that poor Iphigenia must have her throat cut in order to appease Heaven. Her unhappy father, Agamemnon, was powerless to avert the catastrophe—the temporal power had to bow the knee to the spiritual even in those days—but he relieved his feelings with some strong language about "the whole priestly spawn"; and his brother, Menelaus, carried his anti-clericalism so far as to say that the only good prophet was a dead prophet.[2] Perhaps when humanity grows more humane, and gets tired of killing, the gods will also lose their taste for blood.

At present, however, as St. Paul (or some other writer) says in Hebrews ix. 22, "Almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." The Jewish High Priest entered "into the holy place every year with blood of others." So it was among the sur-

[1] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 507.
[2] Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, 501–521;

rounding nations. One gory Mediterranean rite, the Greek *taurobolium*, or sacrifice of a bull in honour of Cybele, was "a baptism of blood, supposed to secure eternal happiness, at any rate if the death occurred within twenty years of the ceremony[1]"; and the mystic devotee of Zagreus (Dionysus in mystery form)

Fulfilled his red and bleeding feasts[2]

while worshipping the Bull-god, Dionysus, in the groves and temples of ancient Greece. The main feature of this ritual, as Miss Harrison points out (p. 481), was the "red and bleeding feast"; and "it was turned, quâ ritual, into a high sacrament of spiritual purification."

The Cretan mystics also had the rite of the feast of raw flesh, where the slain beast was torn asunder and devoured raw,[3] in honour of the god and with sacramental significance; and it is worth noting that the Pagans brought a charge of cannibalism (*ἀνθρωπείων σαρκῶν βορά*) against the early Christians, which Justin Martyr and others indignantly repudiated.[4] Behind all these rites, as Miss Harrison observes, is always the dreadful suspicion of human sacrifice. The Arabs near Mount Sinai sacrificed beautiful boys, and slew them at dawn on a rude heap of stones: when the supply of boys was lacking they killed a faultless white camel, and ate bits of its flesh and entrails with the idea that they "absorbed into themselves part of the victim's life."[5]

The Mexicans, whose religion has many striking parallels with Christianity, killed thousands of human victims in honour of their deities annually, and with

[1] *Christian Mysticism*, by Dean Inge, p. 353.

[2] Euripides, fragment, p. 475, translated by Sir G. Murray. See Miss Harrison's *Prolegomena*, p. 478.

[3] *Prolegomena*, p. 482.

[4] *Not Scripture, but Tradition*, by Bishop P. N. Shuttleworth, p. 147.

[5] *Prolegomena*, p. 486.

accompaniments of horror which I will not transcribe. At the yearly festival of Tezcatlipoca, god of justice and retribution, "there was selected for immolation a young male captive of especial beauty, who was treated with great reverence for a whole year before being sacrificed." When the horrible ceremony was accomplished, the priests piously improved the occasion with sermons tending to show that all this was typical of human destiny, while the aristocracy (a curious instance of the caste-instinct in religion) "sacramentally ate the victim's roasted limbs." [1] The Mexicans, by the way, were not cannibals, except when they ate the sacrificially slain captive, or theanthropic victim.

Romanism has always been, in like manner, a slaughter-house. Its hecatombs of human victims in the past—with torture superadded, by direction of that theology which is admitted to be the Church's "common teaching" to this day—were not sacrifices in the ordinary sense, but they were regarded by the ecclesiastics as acceptable to the Deity. The spirit of the shambles still hangs round the religion: it still claims the right to kill, flog, and burn heretics, and some of its theologians admit that they would like to do so now, if they could.[2]

The Peruvians practised a more civilized sacrament than that of the Mexicans. They "had the institution of a Holy Communion, in which they ate of a sacred bread, *sancu*, sprinkled with the blood of a sacrificed sheep, the priest pronouncing this formula: 'Take heed how ye eat this *sancu*; for he who eats it in sin and with a double will and heart is seen by our Father, the Sun, who will punish

[1] *Pagan Christs*, by J. M. Robertson, Part IV.

[2] See, for example, *Institutiones Juris Ecclesiastici Publici* (1901), by Father De Luca, i, 142–150, 258 sq., 270, etc. This book secured a long and ardent approbation from Leo XIII, which is printed in prominent type at the end of each volume. Copies may be seen in the London Library.

him with grievous troubles'." [1] The Spanish priests explained the resemblance to the Roman rite by saying that St. Bartholomew had established it.

The Roman Church tells us that the Mass is an "unbloody" sacrifice, whereby sins and even great crimes are remitted; but, as St. Paul says that there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood, it is difficult to see how this "propitiatory," but unbloody, sacrifice can be efficacious. St. Paul also says that Christ "needeth not daily, as those High Priests, to offer up sacrifice; for this He did *once*, when He offered up Himself" (Heb. vii. 27). But Rome knows better than St. Paul, and says that the sacrifice must be renewed daily until the end of the world.

The early history of what is popularly supposed to be an exclusively Christian, a "unique and unprecedented" rite, has been sketched above; and we have seen that what Miss Harrison calls "the mummery and hocus-pocus" [2] of the Mysteries forms the foundation of the similar, and in some respects identical, ritual of the Church in our day. St. Ignatius laid in the second century the foundation of a belief that spiritual life was imparted by a clerical thaumaturgist through the agency of a magical rite; but the modern doctrine of Transubstantiation was a plant of slow growth, and its opponents were for more than a thousand years numerous and powerful. Among them was St. Augustine, the greatest of Roman Catholics, and a much better and wiser man than his successors of to-day. He said that certain disciples received the doctrine foolishly; they thought of it carnally, and imagined that "the Lord would cut off bits of His body, and give it them to eat." [3] But the great

[1] *The Churches and Modern Thought*, p. 147.

[2] "Hocus-pocus" is a Protestant parody of *Hoc est corpus*.

[3] *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, Commentary on the 98th Psalm. "Acceperunt illud stulte, et putaverunt, quod præcisurus esset Dominus particulas quasdam de corpore suo."

African told his hearers that Christ meant them to "understand spiritually" what He had spoken. "Ye are not about to eat this body which you see,[1] and to drink that blood which they shall shed who shall crucify Me; I have recommended to you a certain sacrament, which, if spiritually understood, shall quicken you." Christ appears, says St. Augustine, "to enjoin wickedness or a crime," but what He says "is a figure": we do not eat Christ with our teeth, as another great mystic, John the Scot, aptly observed. But the Church, after considering the matter for eleven centuries, and clearly recognizing in Transubstantiation a tremendous lever of clerical power, eventually decided against her greatest saint and divine. The Pagans ate their gods, and desired a rite which, like their own, brought them into *physical* union and contact with the divinity: the ancient religions of blood had their sacrifices; so Rome determined to follow their example and to establish spiritual cannibalism through the Sacrifice of the Mass. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, after approving the killing and burning of heretics, and a few minor matters of that description, explicitly approved and defined the doctrine of Transubstantiation; and the 8th Canon of the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, declared that if anyone shall say that Christ "is only spiritually eaten, and not also sacramentally and really, let him be accursed."[2] Poor St. Augustine, who plumped for the figurative interpretation, is thus in effect posthumously cursed by Holy Mother Church, just as Pope Honorius I was anathematized as a heretic by three Œcumenical Councils.

The prestige and importance of the officials who administered the Church's indispensable rites—and the augmentation of this prestige, which was the

[1] "Non hoc corpus quod videtis, manducaturi estis."
[2] See *Shall We Join the Church of Rome?* p. 26.

main object of their institution—steadily increased through the operation of the doctrine. St. Ignatius gave the first place to the sacramental supper, and the authority of the cleric who administers the rite has now reached fabulous proportions. Christ, we learn, is "in the power" of the officiating priest, who does what he likes with Him during the function, and orders Him about like a lackey: he is enabled to "command his Sovereign Lord, and make Him descend from Heaven," as the great Jesuit Bourdaloue assured his auditors. That mighty theologian, St. Alphonsus Liguori, whose word is the Church's law, states in his *Dignity and Duties of the Priest* (1888 edition), "that it is of faith that when they (the priests) pronounce the words of consecration, the Incarnate Word has obliged Himself to obey and come into their hands under the sacramental species. After having come He remains entirely at their disposal; they move Him as they please, from one place to another; they may, if they wish, shut Him up in the tabernacle, or expose Him on the altar, or carry Him outside the Church; they may, if they choose, eat His flesh, and give Him for the food of others. . . . God Himself is obliged to abide by the judgment of His priests, and either not to pardon or to pardon, according as they refuse or give absolution."

Such are the views held, or assumed to be held, by persons of good average intelligence in the ordinary affairs of life. St. Teresa, for example, a practical and energetic woman, boasted after swallowing the consecrated wafer that she had God a prisoner ("*Ver à Dios mi prisionero*") inside her. We must also remember that according to Catholic doctrine the wafer, and every crumb of the wafer, contains a whole Christ, "flesh, blood, bones and nerves"—"whole and indivisible," "entire" are some of the phrases employed to impress this on the people.

The Catechism of the Council of Trent, recommended by Cardinal Mercier as the Church's "best catechism," enjoins on pastors the duty of explaining to the faithful that the wafer, or each broken fragment, contains, "not only whatever belongs to a true body, such as bones and nerves, but also a whole Christ." [1] The sensuous crudity of the old totemistic sacraments, in which the heathen devotee supposed that he was re-charging himself with the life of his god by eating raw flesh, is faithfully preserved and reproduced: indeed, the Church in some measure enhances the crudity by insisting on certain physical details—"the entire body," "blood," "bones and nerves" and the rest of it. Taking the weight of the human body at ten stone, it would appear that a Roman Catholic priest, who performs the rite every morning of his clerical career, will, by the time he reaches seventy, have consumed more than *one thousand tons* of this alleged divine flesh. How many billion tons of it have been consumed in the world during the last eighteen centuries I must leave my readers to figure out for themselves. Let us briefly describe this extraordinary rite as it exists amongst us in this twentieth century. The priest—say, some Irish peasant youth fresh from the unintellectual atmosphere of Maynooth—takes some wafers made out of flour and sweet wine, and proceeds to make God out of them. Having thus "created his Creator," as Pope Urban II put it, he orders Him about in a most unceremonious manner, and finally himself swallows Him whole. He then distributes the newly-made Deity to his congregation, under the assurance that they will receive magical benefits by following his example. If the communicant is a woman, various other attractions are sometimes held out to her in language which is supposed to be mystical, but which I will

[1] See *Shall We Join the Church of Rome?* p. 25.

not characterize here. Suffice it to say that it frequently recalls the "sacramental love-feasts of the heathen mysteries," and occasionally descends to pure unadulterated erotism.

It ought, however, to be explained that the marvellous transformation which is supposed to be taking place during the process depends upon certain homely factors which must not be left out of account. The wine must have an ecclesiastical guarantee that it is pure and of the prescribed vintage, and the flour must be of the proper material, or there will be no transubstantiation. If the flour be oaten instead of wheaten, or the wine be gooseberry instead of grape, we have it on the authority of the Roman Missal that the miracle will not come off.

To show how completely the Roman magicians are at the mercy of earthly and material conditions, I may mention that the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Queensland the other day issued a Pastoral against Prohibition, because it aimed directly, or indirectly, against the Sacrifice of the Mass. Similar complaints have been made in America; and it would thus appear that reform, whether good or bad, has got to depend on the exigencies of miracle-mongering "religion." So deplorable are the consequences of materializing the transcendental! It would be sad, indeed, if the creation of Deity by the priests were interrupted by mundane agencies, and Heaven found itself placed at the mercy of Mr. Pussyfoot Johnson! Small wonder that Rome is an ally of the liquor traffic. The priest, Catholics say, "may find himself any day tied up with red tape and unable to say Mass"; and in America, we learn from that excellent Catholic weekly, the *Universe*, they are "anticipating a *régime* of bonded Masses at bonded altars, by bonded priests, using bonded wine in bonded chalices." Small wonder, too, that English Roman Catholics like Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc, who

chant in stentorian tones, and with almost equal fervour, the praises of alcohol along with those of Romanism, wax indignant! It is also noteworthy that the wine, even after it has been transformed into the blood of Christ, may prove—as a matter of fact, sometimes has proved—dangerous to life and health. Priests, as Catholics admit, have died after drinking the contents of a chalice which had previously been maliciously poisoned.

It does not enhance our respect for the Deity to be told that He is manufactured out of paste every morning by thousands of ignorant priests all over the world; and that the success of the manufacture depends, not merely upon supernatural aid, but on the good faith of the wine-merchant and the baker's man. As to what exactly happens when the miracle has come off, the rite been successfully performed and the wafer swallowed, there exists, as Mr. McCabe tells us, considerable difference of opinion amongst theologians. Their theories, however, are obviously nothing more than later, and in some cases contradictory, efforts of ingenious divines to escape the unpleasant implications contained in the doctrine—a subject which one would prefer not to dwell upon. I forbear, also, from going into certain unsavoury details, such as may be found in other books and pamphlets; but a moment's reflection will show the unspeakable degradation to which this alleged flesh of Christ is subjected, both before and after it is consumed.

If it be objected that I am profanely deriding divine mysteries instituted by Christ, I can only reply that I am doing nothing of the sort. There is nothing whatever that is divine about the Roman theory of transubstantiation, and it was *not* instituted by Christ. It is not, as we are told, a "unique and unprecedented" rite, but a comparatively modern reproduction of old and barbarous

superstitions, essentially human in origin, coarsely material and repellent in feature, and in nowise deserving of our respect. The Eucharist was originally an *agapé*, or love-feast in its pure form, a common meal where the little Christian band broke their bread together in memory of their dead Lord and Founder—a very beautiful and touching ceremony. The Roman Church has taken this charming rite and has degraded it in the way that I have described, and as she has degraded so many other things. To the ordinary mind it would appear almost impossible that so vulgar and nauseating a belief as that of transubstantiation, suggestive of some Central African totem or fetish worship, should commend itself to the minds of cultured men and women in these times; but Roman Catholicism is a paradox, and, in its case, the incredible is continually proving to be true.[1] The Church has staked her existence on "a low and perverted mysticism of the second order," a debased theory of transubstantiation, and a priesthood invested with magical powers wholly independent of personal holiness and purity; and the prospect of an ascent to a higher and more ethical type of religion appears as yet to be exceedingly remote.

[1] A peculiarly morbid form of the cult of expiation by blood exists in Ireland, and has been a factor in the Sinn Fein rebellion. Certain Roman Catholic extremists held, and acted upon, the view that Ireland's redemption and liberation from the Anglo-Saxon yoke could only be effected by the shedding of blood—including their own.

CHAPTER IX

THE PHYSICIAN OF SOULS

"To the confessor pertain the offices of judge and physician' (*Theologia Moralis*, by St. Alphonsus Liguori, vi, 653).

In the *National Review* for August 1920 there appeared a vigorous onslaught on my former book, *The Roman Mischief-Maker*. The author was the late Father R. P. Garrold, S.J., and in the course of his article he takes grave exception to certain observations which I made upon the Roman Catholic confessional, and the admittedly grave abuses which attend its practice. He defends the abominable instruction in so-called moral theology, given to the priests in the seminaries, by repeating the venerable *dictum* that the priest is a "physician of souls"; and, as such, it would appear, must be primed with the lore of pointless indecency in order to cure the spiritual ailments of his penitents. The analogy between the bodily and the ghostly physician is a grey-whiskered veteran which has seen much service in its time, and it is still freely employed by Roman Catholic and Ritualist confessors in these days; but I need hardly say that it is entirely fallacious. The bodily physician, who is also a competent practitioner, acts upon laboriously accumulated scientific fact, theory, observation, and experience. The Roman physician of souls is occupied with unverified opinions concerning transcendental matters about which no two people agree: he is a wizard or mystery-man, and, from the strictly

medical point of view, an unqualified amateur pretending to a knowledge which he does not possess. And knowledge is the one thing needful in a physician, either of souls or bodies: an ignorant man "cannot mend a corrupt heart as a surgeon mends a broken leg"; nor does he make himself a psychic specialist by reading formless, unsystematized catalogues of unnameable obscenities.

By way of justifying the confessional Father Garrold compares its methods with those of psychoanalysis, which has lately become a fashionable craze in this country, and which is not unnaturally hailed by Rome and Anglo-Catholicism as a kindred spirit and possible ally. The comparison is an exceedingly apt one, but it injures, instead of helping, his case; and I am exceedingly obliged to him for providing me with so admirable an illustration of the evils that follow prying by insufficiently trained persons into obscure problems that should be reserved for experts who combine thorough knowledge with discretion. And nowhere is this discretion more necessary than in that field of mental therapeutics where quacks, amateur and quasi-scientific, lay and clerical, now roam with a freedom which may some day have to be curtailed. "What is deepest in our nature," says Father Tyrrell,[1] "is last to be unearthed. Psychology and metaphysics are the most backward of sciences; man has ever been curious about them, but his curiosity has been futile." These words were primarily addressed to clerics, but there are medical and other scientific men who might also study them with advantage. "The arrogance of doctors and teachers," Tyrrell further observes, "has been one of the greatest obstacles to human progress; few men can withstand the corrupting influence of unlimited trust." Infallible, or quasi-infallible, popes are to be found outside

[1] *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 246.

the walls of the Vatican: personal authority is apt to claim an exaggerated influence in other systems than that of the Church. The medical expert, like the Roman priest, claims to speak with authority, and his qualifications as a curative agent, or professional treater of neuropaths, are usually far superior to those of the ordinary confessor; but the wise man will put the claim, in either case, to the test of common sense and such knowledge as he possesses. Every man is a judge of the laws of health—his own health, in particular—up to a point; and it is a mistake to take everything on trust, or to lean implicitly on the crutch of authority in the simpler and more fundamental matters of human existence. We should learn to think for ourselves and to verify, as far as we can, the statements of experts which contradict our own ideas and experience. Let us remember that even theologians sometimes disagree, and that specialists of all kinds are in the habit of contradicting one another flatly. Papal pretensions to infallibility, or quasi-infallibility, are out of place in these days, whether they emanate from the Vatican or Harley Street. Yet religion and medicine are both continually trying to impose upon us with their *prestige*. They ask us to accept on their personal authority, and as proved, diagnoses and dogmas and prescriptions whose validity are still unproved and, in the light of our present knowledge, unproveable.

Psycho-analysis (which is, I understand, only a branch of the larger science of psycho-therapy) is the study of the mind through the phenomena of subconsciousness. It seeks to discover the fundamental causes and motives which are at work in various mental and nervous disorders, and its method is to probe suppressed instincts, cerebral processes, and primitive passions latent in our nature, which make their appearance during periods of abnormal

stress and strain or functional derangement. In particular, it makes use of the patient's dreams as a clue to the secrets of his subconscious mind; and it largely specializes in sex. It is said to have been highly successful in the treatment of shell-shock, loss of memory, and other functional disorders of a neurotic kind; but such a system is obviously highly speculative, and, both in theory and practice, it is as yet still in its infancy. At present it is a standing temptation to so-called experts, with a taste for experimenting, or else preoccupied with sex and the abnormal, to dogmatize unduly, and in a somewhat dangerous fashion, in a field of medical research which is at present mainly unexplored. Further, it affords a splendid opportunity for charlatans of various kinds to prey, with harmful results, upon popular credulity.

The analogy drawn by Father Garrold between the confessor and the psycho-analyst is, as I have said, a perfectly correct one; and nowhere is this made more plain than in their dealings with the important question of sex. There are people, both male and female, lay and cleric, who, when once they get their noses into matters relating to sex, can with difficulty be persuaded to take them out again. The horrible and fatuous disquisitions of Roman Catholic theologians on sexuality in its lower and more repulsive aspects, the idiotic conundrums they propound and discuss at length on all sorts of unpleasant matters, and for the benefit of young students in the seminaries, show how strong is the hold these prepossessions have upon certain natures. The confessor, as St. Alphonsus Liguori tells us,[1] "stirs up the filthy mire for the purpose of curing the disease"; but, as we all know, he often does far more harm than good in the process. St. Ignatius Loyola also had healing exercises for

[1] *Moral Theology*, vi, 900.

the human soul, which are said to have resembled those of modern mental therapeutics;[1] but much depends—both in medicine and religion—upon the methods employed, and more still, perhaps, on the people who employ them. With all deference to Father Garrold, who stoutly defends the confessional-system and those who practise it, I still maintain that the ordinary Roman Catholic priest has neither the brains, training, nor personal experience fitting him to act as psycho-analyst in the sexual emotions of young women; and we strongly object to half-baked, possibly immoral, young bachelors being empowered—and on occasion compelled—to ply our wives and daughters with repulsive interrogatories in the confessional. Even more, perhaps, do we object to women being *forced* to submit to the process through the spiritual terrorism exercised by the Church.

Magical religion professes to cure the neurotic patient by magic; medical practitioners of a certain kind are apt to take unjustifiable hazards by acting prematurely on vague and unproved theories. The psychic Paracelsus, or exorcist of mental demons, poaching on the preserves of sorcery, and (like all mystery-men) preferring remote improbable explanations of remarkable phenomena to simple and probable ones, promises a physical cure by occult means of a vaguely medical nature. Like the clerical ferret who follows the instructions given him by his Church's accredited theologians, he pursues his unsavoury researches into the patient's subliminal self. He is perpetually searching for latent evil, and risks creating it by the search. Dreamland is the happy hunting-ground of the sciolist, medical or sacerdotal;

[1] He anticipated the psycho-analysts in his endeavours to induce the penitent to "act exactly as though he were a corpse" (*perinde ac si cadaver*) or a walking-stick, and so to become wholly amenable to the confessor's will.

and the psycho-analyst, acting on his theories of subconscious cerebral processes, and the rest of it, elicits by searching cross-examination the betrayal of long past (but usually non-existent) iniquities through the medium of traitor dreams.[1] Some of his patients are really ill; others are idle or hysterical persons in search of a new sensation, like those feminine frequenters of the confessional-box whom Liguori calls "bizochas"—fussy, gossipy, religious women who take up the confessor's time, to the exclusion of sensible people who are seeking to be relieved of the burden of their sins. As a candid Italian priest, Father Frassinetti, says, these women "are generally ninnies, and the more frequently they confess, the more silly do they become." Mr. McCabe tells us how the youthful confessor, when first entering upon his duties, regards each man or woman who comes into the box as "a thrilling compendium of criminal possibilities"; but he usually finds that their offences are of a very mild order.

Meanwhile a considerable section of the public, including a number of professional men and what are commonly known as Society ladies, has taken the professor of psycho-therapeutics to its bosom. The newspapers assure us—and there seems no reason to doubt the statement—that the votaries of the new craze are now very numerous, and include "schoolmasters, clergymen, and young women of social eminence." These persons, we regret to hear, have developed "a hectic manner of thinking" upon matters which they had much better leave

[1] Mr. *Punch* expounds the theory in some happy lines:—

I dreamed of blue-spotted ham,
And, although I'm as mild as a lamb,
These tarnishes mean
I must really have been
A bit of a dog in my pram.

alone; and other highly undesirable manifestations of popular depravity are recorded in the Press. Books dealing with the subject, which an eminent surgeon describes as absolutely valueless from the scientific standpoint and "only fit to be read by dirty-minded boys," sell like hot cakes; and "an outbreak of sexual dementia," in which "coloured and other foreign sailors" appear to have taken part, is reported to have occurred at certain ports on our British coasts.

In all this there is an undoubted note of exaggeration, and I do not suppose that coloured or other foreign sailors spend any large portion of their superfluous leisure in studying psycho-analysis. Nevertheless, the matter is really a serious one, and demands the attention of serious people—especially parents. Psycho-analysis, either of the confessorial or quasi-medical variety, is especially noxious in the school or the nursery; and, in the case of certain disciples of Freud, psycho-analysis has now become almost purely psycho-sexual analysis. We may take it on trust that Freud's theories are partially sound and have proved useful in experienced hands, but the normal consciousness revolts at the uses to which they may be, and have been, put by well-meaning but fussy zealots or sex-maniacal investigators. Sex forms an important part of life, but it is far from being the whole of it—in spite of certain medical and theological treatises, and lay novels and plays. There are hundreds of things which we do and say and think every day of our lives which are in no way referable to the sex-impulse; but the faddists of the new cult have no hesitation in ascribing them to the influence of the all-devouring *libido*. What Mr. McCabe aptly calls the "consecrated prurience" of the confessional becomes the unconsecrated, but no less pernicious, prurience of the heretical dabbler in matters concerning which he (or she) is in many

cases a mere smatterer. The psycho-analysts are concerned with other folk's mental obsessions: some of them had better look after their own. Let science pursue her way and continue her investigations unchecked; but the fake-expositions and experiments of sex-problem monomaniacs only serve to darken counsel and impede the progress of knowledge.

Some people hold that amateur hypnotizing, and other forms of experiment in the field of mental therapeutics by unqualified persons, should be made a penal offence. The question then arises, who is a qualified practitioner in that mysterious region, the *terra incognita* of the human soul? Are the qualifications of the general practitioner—the family doctor, let us say, of average capacity in a remote country district—sufficient for the purpose? He is, as we know, often compelled to act as though he were an animated compendium of medical and surgical science in all their branches. He may have to treat one set of patients for obscure diseases which would baffle the wisest specialist; he cuts off limbs, excises tonsils, appendices, adenoids and other unpleasant growths with marvellous readiness and facility; but when, out of his limited stock of knowledge, he starts hypnotizing, psycho-analysing, or conducting other hasty experiments in the dangerous territory of the human brain and consciousness, and trusts to luck for the result, he may easily become a nuisance and a danger to the community.

One of the perils attending treatment of the kind we are discussing lies in the attitude of the mental therapeutist, be he priest or doctor, towards the patient or penitent. The price of knowledge, and of a highly problematical cure, which the psycho-analyst and the clerical "director" demand is the complete surrender of self into the hands of another human being. "You have not yet given me your

mind," a psycho-analyst said the other day to a patient. And again, at a later interview, "You have not surrendered your will to mine." A Roman Catholic "director," addressing a valetudinarian devotee, could hardly ask for more. The patient, in this particular case, not unnaturally got frightened, and sought advice in other quarters. The mischief which may be wrought by such a system is incalculable. The "director" of former days sought to make of his penitent a paralytic or automaton, and we do not want to see his efforts imitated and improved upon by lay practitioners claiming science, instead of supernatural grace, as their authority. The searching cross-examination of patients concerning sexual privacies is a thing that requires, especially in the case of young people, very careful handling. It is best sometimes to let sleeping dogs lie, and the constant obtrusion of sex upon nervous people's minds, coupled with the unearthing of skeletons which had better be left buried, is not desirable. No less does the surrender of mind and will to another person weaken character, destroy self-control and the sense of personal responsibility: and there are many other dangers involved therein which a little consideration will bring home even to the most careless. Free play should be given to medical research and practice in this broad and vastly important field, but the practitioner's experiments on the human organism should not be allowed to outstrip his knowledge.

Above all, anything in the nature of compulsion should be avoided. Psycho-analysis, with its Rosicrucian atmosphere and methods which sometimes bear a suspicious resemblance to demonology, is attended with many dangers; but nobody need submit himself to its operations unless he likes. The chief objection to the Roman confessional is that the Church makes it obligatory, and that the most difficult and

delicate duties are entrusted by her to men wholly unfitted to perform them. My Jesuit assailant argues that the objections which I have urged against confession as practised in the Roman Church apply with equal force to the practice of medicine: he says that "psycho-analysis, hypnotism, and medicine" may lead, no less than the confessional, to the making of "improper suggestions to the penitent." But the two cases are not on all fours. In the first place, the qualifications of the medical man as a mind-healer are vastly superior to those of the ordinary Catholic priest; also, he is not a compulsory celibate, and experience shows that the trust reposed in him is very rarely abused. Secondly —and this is the important point—there is no "penitent" in his case, nor is any coercion applied. The grown-up Protestant can decide for himself whether he will seek the ministrations of a professional healer, or not: the non-Catholic woman is under no obligation whatever to unburden her soul to an "eugenist," or psycho-analyst, concerning the intimacies of married life. But the Roman Catholic woman *is* sometimes compelled so to unburden hers to an ill-instructed priest; and the man does not exist who is fitted to exercise the awful powers with which Rome invests its ecclesiastics. The psychic charlatan of every variety, cleric or pseudo-medical—be his professional *habitat* the confessional-box or the consulting-room—requires to be watched, and his operations should, whenever necessary, be regulated by law. Quackery can never be otherwise than objectionable: quackery with compulsion at its back is atrocious.

CHAPTER X

ELARGISSEZ DIEU

"Détruisez ces enceintes qui rétrécissent vos idées! Elargissez Dieu!" (*Diderot and the Encyclopædists*, by LORD MORLEY, p. 131).

IT was no Roman prelate who, as Lord Morley says, burst the bonds of a paralysing dogma with this "magnificent cry": it was the freethinker, Diderot, one of those lay teachers who are now admitted by ecclesiastics to be the best prophets we have;[1] and he was, of course, attacked by the Church. He was accused of impiety and hostility to morals and religion, and the Encyclopædia was suppressed. On one occasion his house was raided, his papers seized, and their author imprisoned for an essay he had written, because his persecutors failed to see that it was they, not the critics and satirists of their theological absurdities, who were the real blasphemers and debasers of religion. The Church, though she knew it not, profited largely by the new light and the nobler ideas with which he and his coadjutors illuminated her darkness. It was Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, says Lord Morley, who were the true reformers of the Roman creed. The "leavening elements" contributed by a foreign and hostile doctrine transformed Romanism by partially freeing it from grovelling superstition, and "supplied it with ideas which saved it from becoming finally

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, by Dean Inge, p. 19. The Dean says that amongst us, as at Athens in Aristophanes's day, "the young learn from the schoolmaster, the mature from the poet."

a curse to civilization." I ought perhaps to add that, in my opinion, the salvation was only partial.

We see, therefore, that the cynic and the sceptic have their uses in the world, and that even Holy Mother Church ought to be grateful to them. The satirist is the natural corrector of error, and, if he is accused of profanity, he must point out to his critics that the profanity is not his, but that of the people who bring sacred things into contempt. The men who really show lack of reverence in dealing with divine mysteries are those who treat them as children treat Chinese puzzles, and, failing to recognize the limits of our knowledge, mock us with infantile answers to insoluble enigmas. Pascal, in his Tenth Provincial Letter, shows that banter is sometimes necessary to awaken men to a sense of their extravagances—an antidote to those burlesque parodies of transcendental conceptions which fanaticism offers us in the name of religion. "Nothing," said Tertullian, "is more appropriate to folly than raillery"; and he reminds us how God Himself "pierced Adam with sharp and cutting irony" (Genesis iii.). The unfortunate Job was also assailed by the Deity with what Mr. Chesterton describes as a torrent of terrible levities; and the provocation he afforded would appear from the Scriptural narrative to have been comparatively slight. Some of our religious conceptions, on the other hand—such as predestination, grace, and eternal damnation—are revolting to the ethical conscience of our day; they savour of diabolical, rather than divine, origin, and as such merit the lash of the satirist. The Roman Church's God is, in reality, herself: the God of Catholic imagination, who consigns unbaptized infants to undeserved torture, could never—if such a Being really existed—win or deserve our respect. We are not glorifying God by representing Him as a domineering tyrant, a potter unreasonably angry

with the pots of His own creation, and breaking them for insufficient reasons—a barbarous potentate of more than questionable character, and associated with a morality lower than our own. If Mr. Chesterton is right, the "divine frivolity" which he practises so admirably is just what is needed in dealing with so very serious a matter.

Socrates, as reported by Plato, warned men not to be guilty of the impropriety of telling people, children in particular, objectionable "yarns" that are libels on the gods; and the Encyclopædists merely followed in the track of the Hellenic sages. Simplicius, a neo-Platonic philosopher, reproaches the early Christians with being cloven by schisms innumerable about the mode of degrading the Deity (*περὶ τὴν καθάιρεσιν τῆς θείας ὑπεροχῆς*—see *The Origins of Christianity*, by T. Whittaker, p. 57), and it can hardly be denied that their combined efforts in this direction, added to those of their successors, have been eminently successful. Dr. Jowett, in these later times, is reported to have advised Mrs. Asquith to continue her belief in God, in spite of all that the clergy told her. It was perhaps fortunate for the Doctor that he did not live in France a hundred years earlier, or he might have suffered the fate of Diderot and the other lay prophets of his time.

"A new prophet has appeared in Kordofan: the police are after him." This laconic message, in an evening newspaper some years ago, summarizes the mind of the ecclesiastical and governing classes towards the man who preaches a new order or a new belief. In the East, when the police are not after him, the people are apt to stone him: it is only false prophets who, in Christ's opinion, obtain the ear of the majority. In the more tolerant West the seer now has an easier time with the authorities, and finds an audience which, at the worst, substitutes satirical criticism for brickbats. Even in

remoter ages the iconoclast managed now and then to hold his own, especially when he happened himself to be a member of the governing classes, and could therefore indulge his propensity for innovating doctrine without let or hindrance. Such a man was Amen-hetep IV, an Egyptian king who reigned, I believe, about 1500 B.C.[1] In addition to a taste for Futurist or Post-Impressionist art, he had a passion for theology in the strict sense of the word—the science which deals with God, His nature and attributes—and he devoted to questions of religion much of the time which ought to have been spent in the service of the State. When, however, he found that the "greedy priesthood" of the god Amen-Ra were absorbing the greater part of the revenues of the country (thus anticipating the action of priests in Ireland and other countries during later periods) his speculative methods took, like those of the French philosophers in the eighteenth century, a severely practical turn. He promptly determined to depose Amen-Ra and to set up a new monotheistic divinity of his own fashioning. He called this new god "Aten," and erected sanctuaries and shrines to him in various places for the use of himself and his ladies. The monarch also "occupied himself in playing the priest," regularized the form of worship, "composed one or two hymns which were sung in his temple," and otherwise comported himself in the orthodox episcopal manner.

A fight, of course, ensued, which was not unlike the battle between Popes and emperors in mediæval times, over the revenues derived from the sanctuaries and other customary emoluments of clericalism; and, as usual, the secular arm was defeated. The priests ceased to pay tribute, collected their forces, and secured the aid of "foreign bayonets" in

[1] See the *History of the Egyptian People*, by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge, p. 94.

support of sacerdotalism. The result was that the unfortunate theological Pharaoh lost the Asiatic possessions which it had taken his predecessors two hundred years to acquire, and the perils of theological speculation received one of their earliest exemplifications.

The example set by the Egyptian monarch has been followed by a considerable number of people in diverse climes and at various dates. Quite recently in this country Mr. H. G. Wells, a modern Amenhetep IV, has been devoting to theology a portion of the time previously monopolized by secular affairs, and, having donned the prophetic mantle, appears as a new Mohammed or Daniel come to judgment on an erring and unbelieving world. He, too, like the Egyptian king, is dissatisfied with the reigning Deity, and has decided that He must be deposed and replaced by one of his own creation. I say "of his own creation" advisedly, because, whoever may have created Mr. Wells, it is quite certain that he alone is the creator of his Invisible King; and, having made him, he follows the usual practice and falls down and worships the attenuated offspring of his own anthropomorphist imagination. For, disregarding Diderot's advice to "enlarge God," our latest prophet has seriously contracted his divinity. He has stripped him, in most unknightly fashion, of infinity, omniscience, omnipotence, eternal existence in the past as well as the present, and other attributes usually assigned by theology to the Creator.

Mr. Wells would also appear to have that "easy familiarity with God" which is stated by a recent clerical writer to be a characteristic of childhood. He has, we gather, "experienced" his Invisible King; but his experiences seem in no way different from those of old-time mystics or Modernist clergymen. There is nothing new about any of them—indeed, it seems to me that, on the whole, the

orthodox people do this sort of thing much better than their up-to-date imitator. The world has witnessed nothing stranger of recent years than the spectacle of that modern of moderns, Mr. Wells, adopting, as Mr. William Archer says,[1] "episcopal patter" and talking the language of revivalism, and using with unpardonable freedom the repute of the old firm to bolster up the shaky credit of the new. Similar human modifications of the celestial hierarchy may be expected as the years roll on. In the Soviets of to-morrow it seems not unlikely that the Deity will be represented as a sort of finite President of the universe elected by the suffrages of the intellectuals, with some future Mr. H. G. Wells as chairman of the caucus.

"O my Advanced-Liberal friend, this new second process, of proceeding 'to invent God,' is a very strange one." Carlyle's apostrophe (*Past and Present*, p. 195) was addressed to the people who preached religion so that the constable might continue possible; and he thought that the process of thus inventing God might draw tears from a Stoic. A terrible air of unreality hangs about most dogmatic speculations on the nature and functions of Deity: they make us feel that, in their hands at any rate, "la question de Dieu manque d'actualité"—as I believe a Parisian editor wrote to an unsuccessful contributor who had sent him an essay on the subject. Roman Catholicism, for instance, stands or falls by transcendentalism; yet, as a writer in the *Saturday Review* lately pointed out, the Catholic God is not really a transcendental Being. He is, at best, a Divinity determined by human thought expressing itself in dogmatic religion, which, being the outcome of the finite human intellect, can only reveal relative or provisional truth. That is the weak point of dogma. It pretends to a finality

[1] *God and Mr. Wells*, p. 81.

which it does not possess; it requires to be continually re-stated and furbished up anew, and in its periodical reconstructions it is always angling for the popular vote. The result has naturally been a continual lowering of the divine standard; and the palm must, I think, be awarded to Roman Catholic theologians in the age-long rivalry of sectarians over "the best mode of degrading the divinity." In Dr. Inge's words a thorough reconstruction is demanded, and has been for some time in progress. "A number of unworthy beliefs about God are being tacitly dropped, and they are so treated because they are unworthy of Him."[1] The early ecclesiastics, never particular as to the character of the auxiliaries they employed against their enemies, were wont to seek in popular polytheism an ally against philosophy and science; and the unnatural union of orthodoxy and mythology has produced some rather monstrous hybrids.

"The Church," says Benedetto in *The Saint* (p. 231), "tolerates thousands of stupid, ascetic books which unworthily diminish the idea of God in the human mind; let us not condemn those which magnify it!" I claim the right, along with Fogazzaro and Pascal and others, to condemn the stupid teaching and to add my plea for its abolition: the profanity, if there be profanity, is not ours, but that of the Church. On the other hand, it is sufficiently clear that clericalism of the Roman Catholic sort could not exist without an anthropomorphic God, and its conceptions of the Deity are therefore slow to abandon their primitive crudeness. God, "a Brocken-phantom of self, projected on the mists of the non-ego," is made to reflect the qualities, attributes, and impulses of His adorers; and His actions are the image of our human actions. In enlightened Protestant circles these things are gradually dying out, but in

[1] *Outspoken Essays*, p. 135.

Catholic countries they remain in the ascendant. The Eternal Father (as Dean Alford noted) is pictured as a rather unprepossessing old man: the only really attractive member of the Divine Family is always the Virgin Mary, on whom the affections of devout Romanists are mainly centred. In the popular apprehension the Deity, a sort of Olympian Kaiser or barbaric potentate with an insatiable appetite for flattery and finery, sits throned in an Asian palace—or what Father Tyrrell calls a "bric-a-brac rococo Heaven"—surrounded by charming cherubim with "scented locks" and iridescent wings, while a crowd of obsequious retainers hymn incessantly in speech and song, with instrumental accompaniment, His beauty and magnificence, His meritorious conduct and characteristics, and the terrors of His irresistible power.[1]

"This great God exists only to contemplate and love Himself," we learn from *The Reign of Jesus*[2] (1912 edition, p. 201), by the Venerable Jean F. Eudes, a Catholic writer of very high repute, whose manuals of devotion are in constant use nowadays. The Deity, that is to say, is represented as being, like Prince Irax, thoroughly "content de lui-même." Not

[1] To show the imbecility, and, one might add, the impiety, of it all, let me quote a human analogy culled from a review of a French book in the *Saturday Review* for September 18, 1921. Irax, Prince of Media, once had a chorus of twelve singers and twenty-four violins, who executed a *cantata* in his praise for two hours each morning. In this *cantata* there occurred, every three minutes, a refrain which, rendered in French, is as follows:—

Que son mérite est extrême!
Que de grâces! que de grandeur!
Ah! que Monseigneur
Doit être content de lui-même!

After patiently enduring this infliction for five days, Irax got so bored that he insisted upon the musicians being sent away.

[2] This book, a pitiful exhibition of maudlin religious amorosity, and a not unfair example of Roman Catholic manuals of devotion, bears the *imprimatur* of the Westminster Vicar-General, December 6, 1911, and is still a favourite with Romanist devotees.

a very ennobling presentation, it would appear, of a Divine Father who is said to have a special solicitude for His earthly children ; and we must enrol the idea among those clerical perversions of religion which theologians declare to be the fitting subjects for irony. Even more degrading and repulsive are those amorous conceptions of the Second Person of the Trinity, which are a standing disgrace to the literature of Roman Catholicism. Again, the Jesuit God, as described by a member of the Order, is a sort of glorified Jesuit, a grotesque Almighty—" quite Personal and very singular " [1]—altogether a decidedly human character, and not of the best human type. It would be easy to multiply instances of these profane travesties of Omnipotence, culled from the writings of later Catholic divines. Much nobler and grander conceptions of God and His attributes are to be found in the old Egyptian hymns (written thousands of years before Christ) which are quoted by Sir E. A. Wallis Budge and other authorities. Nor did the Early Fathers fail to discern in the wonders and glories of Nature a revelation of the Divine. " The wider our contemplation of creation," they said, " the grander will be our conception of God." [2] It is only debased Roman Catholic mysticism of the more modern type that sees in the Deity an anthropomorphic Being who revels in adulation, and exists only to contemplate and love Himself. We are not enlarging God by merely making of Him a Greater Man.

In the Middle Ages the Church's theologians used to describe the denizens of Heaven, including its principal occupant, with the detail and accuracy with which a scientist would describe his geological specimens. They knew, as by revelation, the precise size, shape, and measurements of every compart-

[1] *François Fénelon*, by Viscount St. Cyres, p. 257.
[2] *Christian Mysticism*, by Dr. Inge, p. 301.

ment in Hell; the number of angels that could stand on a needle's point, as well as the exact social grades, organization, and relations of the celestial hierarchy. The angels, as we know, have an elaborate system of social status. The "best people" among them are, like their human congeners, exceedingly haughty and exclusive, and dwell rigorously apart from their fellows.

In the eighteenth century Swedenborg displayed (like Mr. Bernard Shaw in our day) a no less intimate acquaintance with the domestic economy of Heaven. He had what we call "inside information" concerning all that goes on there. We learn, for example, from his *Heaven and Hell* that we shall have sermons and theological discussions in Heaven[1]; but, since Newman declares that intellect, as exercised in the world, is "not found in paradise or heaven, more than in little children,"[2] the homilies will presumably strike us as being (like some earthly sermons) of doubtful quality.

If God has made man in His image, it is no less certain that man has fashioned Heaven and those who dwell there on a strictly human pattern; and the paraphernalia of earthly worship, its pageantry and tawdry scenic display, are largely shaped by the popular notion of what is due to any person of exalted rank. He must be invested with regal pomp and all the insignia of opulence and power, and a large number of gaudily clad servitors must be in constant attendance upon him. Without these costly and impressive splendours he would fail to secure the respect which folk of lower degree owe to him as of right. In that quaint but highly illuminating book, *The Theory of a Leisure Class*, by Professor T. Veblen, the author draws an instructive parallel between the priestly office and the office of

[1] See *Hours with the Mystics*, ii, 328–330.
[2] *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, v, 112.

the footman. Catholic priest and secular lackey alike wear a gaudy, archaic, and expensive livery, designed expressly to enhance the majesty and importance of the exalted being they respectively serve; and both exhibit a leisurely aloofness in their bearing. The footman stands erect and passively resplendent in crimson plush, powder, silk stockings, and gold lace. The Catholic priest adopts a humbler demeanour; there is about him an indefinable air of pathetic obsequiousness, but his accoutrements are still more imposing. They are feminine in character, equally archaic and inconvenient, and, if possible, even more grotesque than those of the footman. Loving hands have laboured assiduously at the adorning of his vesture: the congregation is only allowed a glimpse of his stockings, but his back, "brave with the needlework of noodledom," is a visible embodiment of that stimulant to æsthetic emotion which Mr. Clive Bell calls "significant form." Livery and vestments alike are, in Professor Veblen's opinion, evidence of a servile status and a vicarious life; and both classes of servitor have a similar function, which is of little economic value.

All this pageantry has a common origin in the desire to augment in popular estimation the credit of the chieftain or divinity on whom the functionaries are in attendance. In barbaric cults, and among peoples of primitive character, the divinity is regarded as a species of aristocrat—"a gentleman," as we should say nowadays—in other words, a person surrounded by all the evidences and appurtenances of position and authority, and possessing ample means to obtain them. Under these circumstances he is naturally conceived to be very punctilious, having a strong sense of personal dignity, and extremely touchy about questions of precedence: being undisputed master, he demands ungrudging subservience on the part of his retainers.

As a gentleman he naturally belongs, not only to the governing, but to the predatory classes. He is a warlike being, subject to vengeful emotions and prone to take ferocious action on what we should consider to be wholly inadequate grounds. We are now speaking of uncivilized religions, but much of what has been said applies with almost equal force to that type of Christianity represented by the Roman Church, which, as we have seen, is largely made up of Pagan elements. Christian worshippers are fond of applying warlike figures of speech and barbarian epithets to the Deity, and Catholics represent Him as a sanguinary Being delighting in the slaughter and maiming of people who hold unorthodox views about religion—a confirmed militarist, and a staunch believer in frightfulness. The Lord is still regarded as a Man of War—not in the naval, but in a strictly military sense; and even in these later days the type of hymn which describes the coming of the Lord and the execution He wrought with "His terrible sharp sword," is sung with special gusto and an obvious sense of personal gratification.

Other anthropomorphic conceptions of Omnipotence are still predominant in the Latin Church; and one of the most objectionable features in clericalism is its persistency in representing the Deity as a Being who can be bribed like any corrupt human judge. The priest, however, is careful to explain to the people, and has hitherto been remarkably successful in convincing them, that the bribe, in order to be efficacious, must first pass through his hands. In olden times man tried to induce the divinity to fall in with his wishes by means of what he regarded as acceptable presents in kind, though his notions of what was pleasing to the divine mind were somewhat crude. The offering usually consisted of a goat or sheep or some other animal, the savour of whose burning entrails in the nostrils of the divinity

was supposed to have a special propitiatory influence. In civilized lands the present usually takes a pecuniary form, which is more acceptable to our modern hierophants than the burning of a goat; but the priest, with his usual cleverness, manages to intercept the cash before it reaches its proper destination. He tells the sinner that, in return for a sum down, he will give him what is aptly termed an "indulgence." As the newly appointed delegate of Heaven, the Roman Catholic priest is invested with plenary powers. He not only creates his Maker every morning, but offers Him up as a sacrifice and, as we have shown, treats Him in a very cavalier manner. It is useless for the layman to seek God's pardon for his sins: that is the affair of the clerical mediator—"*I* absolve thee" is the prescribed formula. If a sin has been committed, or a rule of the Church has been broken, the anger of Heaven may be averted for a cash consideration which—though it is received, not by God, but by the ecclesiastics—will enable you to sin conscientiously and without fear of retributory justice. I know at this moment of a Roman Catholic young lady who wants to commit the crime of marrying a Protestant, but her priest points out to her that it would be a heinous sin if she did so without a Papal dispensation. This he offers to procure for her on payment of a pretty large sum, which she cannot afford. As she justly observed, if it is a mortal sin for her to marry a heretic, it is difficult to see how the sin can be wiped out by a mere money payment. When the lady dies the priest will doubtless be willing to use certain efficacious charms and incantations for the good of her soul; but the Deity, through the medium of His Church, must first be placated in the usual way.

It betrays a curiously unethical conception of the Deity to suppose that He can be suborned, and His wrath appeased by such means as those adopted

by venal priests; but sacerdotalism in nearly all religions throughout the ages has represented salvation as being obtainable by barter. The pockets of the priests and the Church's treasury are filled thereby; but morality suffers when absolution, grace, and other spiritual favours are placed on a tariff, like whisky or tobacco. "Whom," cried St. Bernard in sadness, "can you show me among the prelates who does not seek rather to empty the pockets of his flock than to subdue their vices?" [1] Others describe how the bishops entered the Church not by election, but by the use of money and the favour of princes; "not to feed, but to be fed; not to sow, but to reap; not to guard the sheep from the wolves, but, fiercer than wolves, to tear the sheep."

Nor, at any time, have the priests shown themselves at all particular as to the character of the people to whom they sell their supernatural favours. Philo says, "It often happens that good men are not initiated, but that robbers, and murderers, and lewd women are, if they pay money to the initiators and hierophants." [2] The same complacency was displayed by the Roman hierarchy and clergy; and some rather grave, but wholly unforeseen, developments were the result of a too easy morality and the representation of God as a corrupt ruler of mankind. It was found that, when men were enabled to sin with a clear conscience, the number of sinners began to decrease at an alarming rate; and, as sin is the bank whence the Church draws her capital, it would never do if the bank should fail through depletion of its resources by the ever-sinking price of an indulgence. Moreover, a vision was granted to one of the faithful in which it was revealed that, in consequence of this indulgence, the Devil was

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, p. 132.
[2] *Christian Mysticism*, by Dr. Inge, p. 354.

not being given his due, and Hell was getting seriously depopulated ! [1]

So in ancient Greece, as we learn from Plato (*Republic*, ii, 364–5), quacks and soothsayers flocked to the rich man's door, and offered to sell him indulgences for crimes committed either by himself or his ancestors. They said—just like the Roman priests—and quoted certain authors in support of their assertions, that they had a power of influencing the gods by means of sacrifices and incantations and performances that might please a child, and things they called " rites " ; and that, for a cash consideration, offenders might procure purification from sin in this world and release from awful torments in the next, etc., etc. Frauds of this kind are perpetrated in all ages and climes by men who claim supernatural powers and knowledge which they do not possess, and who, to further their own ends, libel Heaven as a receiver of hush-money. The condemnation passed by Socrates on such " offensive stories " was in no whit too severe.

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, p. 132.

CHAPTER XI

A GOSPEL OF GLOOM

"O miserable man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

"The proper study of a wise man is not how to die, but how to live" (LECKY).

THE optimism of modern Christianity, according to Father Tyrrell [1] and other thoughtful Roman Catholics, is begotten of faith in this world; its Kingdom of God consists of moral and social development; its firm hope is that the ills from which mankind suffers will eventually be healed, or at least materially alleviated, by an inherent *vis medicatrix Naturæ*, and by that faith in humanity and its capacity for improvement which can remove mountains. Experience and reflection, say the Romanists, confirm the verdict which the deeper spiritual intuition passes on life, and this is always pessimistic. Man, left to himself, is bound to find, not only failure, but an iron law of inevitable failure, thwarting his efforts to rise in the scale of creation; and his only hope for the future is in "an abiding City that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God." Diderot thought that human nature was fundamentally good and capable of improvement, but that human nature, starved and mutilated in self-effacement, will never accomplish anything great. Newman, on the other hand, was of the orthodox Catholic opinion that the "great truth" is the corruption of man. He was a keen satirist, and it was a true remark of

[1] *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 118.

Leslie Stephen's that his sharpest taunts were aimed at the superficial optimism of the disciples of progress. He much preferred superstition to our so-called illumination. The world, he said, when trying to turn to its Maker, "has ever professed a gloomy religion in spite of itself." To be gloomy, to see ourselves with horror, "to wake naked and shivering among the trees of the garden" . . . "in a word, to be superstitious, is Nature's best offering, her most acceptable service, her most mature and enlarged wisdom, in presence of a holy and offended God." [1] Quite rightly he points out that there can be no common ground between the Christianity of Rome and the religion of progress: the progress of the race, he was convinced, "is a dream, because revelation"—and, if he were still alive, he might add, the Dean of St. Paul's—explicitly contradict it.

Tyrrell's confident statement—that this gospel of gloom was the religion preached by Christ, and that His revelation of the coming Kingdom was only a Gospel or Good News for those who despaired of this world—is open to question; but it is unquestionably the gospel of the Catholic Church and its most eminent divines. Romanism has ever been a horribly pessimistic creed as regards earthly things, a creed of menace that would make cowards of us all, rather than of hope. It has, or professes to have, a profound contempt for this world, its inhabitants, its joys and material advantages. Poverty is, for the Church, a purposeful creation or design of the Almighty: a community without a submerged tenth is unthinkable, a negation of Providence. Man—despite the fact that Roman Catholic theology makes him the final cause of the universe and the special object of God's solicitude—is at best but a miserable worm, a depraved being—"ruined, lost, possessed of nothing of his own that ministers to

[1] *Theory of Religious Belief.*

his salvation": and detachment from the world is his best hope of reaching the New Jerusalem. To believe that man is naturally good is, in the eyes of many Anglicans as well as Roman Catholics, "a pernicious heresy." Brief life is here his portion, until he goes down into the pit; and his spiritual exigencies are all in all. The optimism of the Apocalypse, as Tyrrell says, was only an optimism of the next world: Christ expected the End within a generation, and therefore had no faith in progress or evolution. The dreadful theories of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, reproduced later in Jansenism and Calvinism, represent human nature as hopelessly corrupt owing to the Fall; such virtue as it originally possessed was utterly lost, and the damnation that surely awaits it is only divine justice working out its inexorable decrees. St. Bernard, as we are told, beheld in a vision 80,000 unfortunate creatures consigned to Hell by the "mercy seat" at the Judgment Day, except five wretches who were sent to Purgatory; and in the last century Newman anticipated Spurgeon with his gruesome sermons on the judgment that is to come, with its eternal hell-fire and brimstone.

The horrible doctrine of Predestination, whereby millions of souls are condemned to everlasting torture by an antecedent divine decree, and through no fault of their own, was supplemented by that of Grace; and the theology of the Church is infected by both at the present day. By Grace alone can we be saved, and it is accorded without regard to the merits of the recipient, who is a puling infant at the time. If the infant dies in the "feeble and frightful condition" of unbaptized persons, as described by Newman, it has to go to the lower regions, though a merciful Creator may possibly accord it the questionable privilege of "the easiest room in Hell." [1]

[1] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 398.

Grace, it would appear, is a respecter of persons, if not of personal worth: in fact, much Roman Catholic theology represents the Divinity as a shocking nepotist. There is "no salvation outside the Church," said St. Augustine; and only the elect—or, as we should say in these days, the *élite*—are saved by Grace. Virtue in their case must be its own reward, because merit is not a factor where salvation by grace is concerned: what theologians call "imputed merit" means nothing more than the absence of all that we mean by merit. Moreover, a restriction must be imposed on the size of the heavenly, as of the earthly, aristocracy; it is essential that the elect should not be too numerous, or Heaven would be uncomfortably crowded, and the Mystical Temple grow too large—as Malebranche sagely observes.[1] It may seem strange, but it is true, that many of the Church's finest minds have consistently upheld this curious theory of celestial favouritism; her ministers have always been willing to dispense pardons and supernatural supplies of Grace for major or minor considerations. Her bishops, too, as Wyclif said, babble and "chatter of grace, as though it were something to be bought and sold like an ox or an ass." [2]

Rome's morbid gospel of terror is universally demoralizing; but perhaps the most disastrous results which flow therefrom occur in the case of boys and girls and young children. I myself know, for example, two women who were thoroughly upset, and rendered temporarily morbid in their early girlhood, by the terrifying religious instruction given to them in a convent school. Some of the manuals written for the teaching of dogma to children are positively barbarous in their crude and brutal realism. "Little child," says a work called *The Light of Hell*, written

[1] See *François de Fénelon*, by Lord St. Cyres, p. 261.
[2] See *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, p. 352.

by a Redemptorist priest for "Children and Young Persons"—"little child, if you go to Hell there will be a devil at your side to strike you. He will go on striking you every minute for ever and ever, without ever stopping." In another paragraph there is a graphic account of the devils looking at the naughty child in Hell and saying, "The child is burning." They go back and look again and again, and for ever and ever, and the answer is always the same, "It is burning in the fire." There are other passages just as bad, one of which describes the blood boiling in the scalded veins of a boy. "The brain boiling and bubbling in his head, the marrow boiling in his bones." [1]

Such teaching positively reeks of the barbarous and dreary Middle Age. And we poor people of to-day, are we in any better case than the contemporaries of the Fathers? Apparently not. The mystical Modernist, the scientific mystic, and other eminent persons assure us that our fate here is still an exceedingly dreary one, and that to be wise means also to be miserable. It is no use for the good Christian to try and be happy, because a cheerful belief in the world is discordant with the gospel of Christ. "A provisional pessimism is the foundation of the Christian type of religious character. It is the soil in which the seed of the Gospel takes root and flourishes. Despair of this life is the counterfoil of our hope in another." Every moral effort on the human plane has a certainty of eventual failure: our noblest energies are doomed to utter sterility for remoter epochs. Man's schemes are fruitless, his ideals barren, even if they were attainable; and despondency is the fruitful soil in which religion expands. The Churches may "chatter progress" as Tyrrell says—they are busy chattering it now. Rome

[1] See *Shall We Join the Church of Rome?* by a Disillusioned Convert, p. 35.

in particular, imitated by certain Anglicans, is displaying her faded charms to the lusty young giant, Democracy, ogling and wooing him with a tenderness which the coy youth knows perfectly well to be counterfeit. The Church is now promising him a good time here below; but he knows that, in any case, she is not the proper purveyor of those earthly instalments, which certain clerics are dangling before his eyes, of the celestial millennium. Meanwhile, it seems patent to the faithful Romanist that the rationalists' struggles for improvement are but "the struggles of a drowning crew trying to keep afloat as long as possible, before yielding themselves to the deep of oblivion." Earthly life "bids fair to exhaust man's nervous capacity and hasten his extinction"; and so the world goes tottering to its ruin, drowned in sorrow, whelmed in an ocean of injustice. We may hold and cherish our foolish heritage of hope, but the fallacy of progress will surely be brought home to us; human life is "an incurable tragedy," and the best it can do is to defer the inevitable day of defeat.

Spiritualism, we are told—and not without reason—can afford us no proof of spiritual immortality. It can but show us, at the utmost, a prolongation of our earthly life in an environment which makes it useless and meaningless. The futile sprites who visit their relations on earth and talk to them in exceedingly bad grammar about the inferior quality of the whiskies-and-sodas, and the cabbage-like perfume of the cigars, on the other side of the grave, are, if genuine, but wraiths of the body: they can form no permanent consolation for the bereaved soul.

Fénelon said that Nature and humanity are but playthings of the Deity, both alike under a divine curse; and his doctrine of spiritual passivity was little more than a gospel of nervous despondency

seeking the quietude of inanition. Virtue and manliness, according to the Quietists, could never save us, and earthly joys are but Dead Sea apples plucked by wretched humanity on its road to ruin. Mere piety "coloured by character" is of no spiritual value; and one of the functions of grace is to act as an extinguisher on every spark of natural life. Personality is a sin: the Self, with its ideals of racial and personal improvement—the fount of spiritual pride—must be immolated on the altar of religious passivity, and courage excommunicated as a remnant of the natural man. The Quietist theory is "a form of Stoicism run mad, of moral suicide," says Lord St. Cyres [1]; and it exhibits in an aggravated form that fatal subordination of ethics to so-called "religion," which, as I have shown elsewhere, is the chief bane of Romanism.

It need hardly be said that these strange theories are far from being the official creed of the Church to-day; but the Quietist doctrine of lulling the soul and will to sleep still infects the religion as a whole. The weakling is still encouraged by certain teachers to remain a weakling: the last thing he ought to do is to bestir himself, to strengthen his own character or act like a man by defending himself against insult or wrongdoing. We used to be told that Heaven helps those that help themselves, but Newman (in the words of the old hymn) bids us "lay our deadly doing down." "Do nothing," he says, "and you have done everything." "The less you do, the more God will do for you." [2] This pitiful incitement to inaction and excessive weakness, in a sermon full of similar sentiments in favour of moral and physical passivity, recalls the sayings of the earlier Pietists—"to act is the deed of a

[1] *François de Fénelon*, p. 106.
[2] *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 301.

novice," "to die is perfection"—and many other similar maxims and admonitions.

And now Science, allying itself for the nonce with theology, gets an occasional fit of the blues and delights in showing us a mad and monstrous world, no less meaningless than it is purposeless. It would seem to be taking a leaf from the book of that unlettered philosopher who asked, "What's the good of anything?" It depicts Nature, omnipotent but blind, inflicting on us a senseless tyranny; the universe as a blind alley leading to destruction, and the energies of its inhabitants as but "the trouble of ants in the gleam of a million suns." We are but tiny insects impotently crawling on a petty planet that is rushing madly through the ether to inevitable dissolution; and our "uneasy consciousness, which in this obscure corner has for a brief space broken the contented silence of the universe," will soon be at rest. Professor Bertrand Russell, mystic and logician, mathematician and idealist, feels keenly the oppression of man's impotence before the powers of Nature, and asks how, in such an alien and inhuman world as ours, so powerless a creature as Man can preserve his aspirations untarnished? In some very beautiful, though saddening, passages he paints a picture of our helplessness and misery such as would have rejoiced the heart of St. Augustine. "Brief and powerless," he says, "is Man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless of destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way; for Man, condemned to-day to lose his dearest, to-morrow himself to pass through the gate of darkness, it remains only to cherish, ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts that ennoble his little day." Earthly existence, for him, is but "a long march through the night, surrounded by invisible foes, tortured by weariness and pain, towards a

goal that few can hope to reach, and where none may tarry long." [1]

Now, all this is very sad and, no doubt, at least partially true. We ought by rights, if only we were as logical as Roman Catholics say they are, to be tearing our hair and rending our garments and putting ashes on our heads. Optimism, under circumstances like these, is a patent absurdity; man should rather curse the day that he was born. Yet such is our incredible stupidity that we obstinately refuse to see in existence nothing but an instrument of torture, or to abuse our parents for bringing us into the world. To the great question "Is life a boon?" the vast bulk of humanity replies with a tacit, but unhesitating "Yes." It actually goes to the unreasonable length of occasionally enjoying itself. Even the Church's practice, in this as in most other things, is not in strict accordance with her principles; and the faithful manage to preserve a fairly cheerful demeanour, and keep up a stout heart, in spite of their depressing religion. I have seen many good Catholics making positively merry, just as if no St. Augustine had pointed out to them their present misery and corruption, and the everlasting doom that hangs suspended over their heads.

The Roman Catholic has faith in God: let him also acquire faith in man. He is acquiring it by degrees, despite the mystical dervishes of his creed who would depress poor humanity in the mire, and keep it there—"a set of selfish beings," as Thackeray said, "crawling about, and avoiding one another, and howling a perpetual *Miserere*." Let the Church cease to be always clamouring for special supernatural interventions on humanity's behalf, and leave it free to work out its own redemption. Let us, on our side, have faith and religion; but let us first find out what we mean by the words. Even

[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 48, 56.

though we refuse assent to the proposition that pretended belief in fable is a necessary condition to salvation, we shall still have within us plenty of the faith whereby a man may live. Man will gradually cease to seek redemption in abstract nouns and metaphysical cobwebs, but rather in work for his own and his neighbour's betterment. His designs for the present do not outspan this little world, but the needs of its denizens will afford ample scope for his energies. His status in the cosmic order is not a lofty one; yet, though he be but a dweller for a brief space in a puny satellite of a third-rate sun, his soul will not find its habitation in a temple of despondency. The giant Despair may straddle, like Apollyon, across his path; but he will sweep him aside and, still cherishing his heritage of hope, fashion his own ideals as best he may. The Vision Splendid of a renovated world, and a new reign of justice on earth, may be only a dream, but it is a dream worth striving to realize. Amid all the woes that beset us, we may proudly defy the seeming tyranny of outward circumstance; and, like W. E. Henley, indulge occasionally in the harmless luxury of shaking our fist at the thunder, and opposing our "unconquerable soul" to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

CHAPTER XII

THE CLERICAL MIND

"The clerical mind is an unsearchable thing" (DR. CREIGHTON, late Bishop of London).

"Il ne faut jamais exiger des prêtres la sincérité; quand elle est dans leur tempérament, ils rompent tôt ou tard avec l'Église" (ABBÉ HOUTIN, quoted by the REV. ALFRED FAWKES, *Studies in Modernism*, p. 13).

"WHAT beats me," says Father Tyrrell in one of his letters, "is the psychology of clericalism"; the mentality of certain exalted officials at the Vatican during the pontificate of Pius X was as strange to him as that of a Fiji islander. Yet the clerical mind is by no means a monopoly of ecclesiastics. There are thousands of clergymen who may be said to be free from it, while large numbers of laymen and women are more intolerant, more clerically minded, than the average cleric—they are clergy, in fact, without the cassock. Theirs is a mentality which, in the field of transcendental doctrine, gets a curious twist or kink: the ethical and dogmatic confusion, the moral disease sprung from the Jesuit bacillus, appears to have infected its system and impulses, so that it moves in tortuous fashion along devious paths. Its obliquity, as Gladstone said of Newman, is as a rule merely intellectual obliquity, although in the case of the Roman ecclesiastics the crookedness extends, as we all know, to political and other practical affairs of life.

The clerical talent for obscuring main issues, and skilfully diverting the mind of the student to

minor ones, nowhere finds ampler scope for its exercise than in the sphere of religious apologetic. The marvellous adroitness with which a theologian will sometimes turn the flank of an enemy's argument, or defend an impossible position, extract unexpected meanings out of difficult or inconvenient texts, and darken counsel with an impossible symbolism, frequently compels our admiration. The subtlety of dialecticians especially runs riot in the broad field of Biblical exegesis, and their vivid imaginations sometimes produce results which, to the prosaic lay mind, are startling in the extreme. Certain orthodox Frenchmen, for example, have lately discovered evidence in the Bible that the introduction of railways was foreseen by the inspired authors; one says that the life of Columbus and the destiny of the North American Indians are indicated in Isaiah xi. and lx.; another discerned in the frog embedded in early rock strata a parallel to Jonah's experience inside the whale's belly.[1] Newman gave his heated fancy full play in the description of the Israelitish warriors slaughtering the poor Canaanites because their ancestors had misbehaved themselves. "Doubtless," he said, "as they slew those who suffered for the sins of their fathers, their thoughts turned, first to the Fall of Adam, next to that unseen state where all inequalities are righted, and they surrendered themselves as instruments unto the Lord, of mysteriously working out good through evil." The Hebrew patriarchs, as we learn from Pius X, knew all about the doctrine of the Virgin Mary's Immaculate Conception, and derived much comfort from considering it in the solemn moments of their life.

Examples of this sort of thing could be multiplied by the dozen, and imaginative theories of the most

[1] See *Studies in Modernism*, p. 52; and *Modernism*, by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, p. 51.

extravagant kind abounded in the controversies between orthodoxy and rationalism which enlivened the magazines during the 'eighties. Huxley described the allegorical method as "that universal solvent of absurdities," but the champions of orthodoxy still continue to use it, and with ever increasing freedom. The science of hermeneutics is capable of such infinitely varied application that its value as a defence against infidelity can hardly be over-estimated: an ingenious interpreter can make any passage in Scripture mean pretty well anything he pleases. That enlightened theologian, the Rev. Alfred Fawkes, assures us (*Studies in Modernism*, p. 261) that "the allegorizing stage is common to mythologies in their decadence"; and that, when it has set in, there is but a step between them and death. Nevertheless, however deadly its effects may be, the fascinations of indiscriminate allegorizing are too great to be resisted even by the modern theologian. Symbolism is undoubtedly useful as a means of illustration: it may serve as a frame or setting to deeper truth; but great truths should be stated as plainly as possible, and the allegorical method, often a mere make-shift of theologians in distress—a sort of S.O.S. dispatched by sinking dogmatism—lends itself only too readily to intellectual insincerity. "Why," asks Tyrrell with his customary directness, "express symbolically what can be said plainly?" The reason is surely clear enough: it creates a fog which enables the combatant who is getting the worst of it to make his escape. Mistiness, we have been told, is also the highest wisdom, in that it leads to high ecclesiastical preferment, and the profoundest obscurity is the mystic's highest glory: he "culminates in darkness," the darkness of the intense inane.[1] The Roman Church, the great Mystagogue of our day, is for ever extending

[1] Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, i, 13.

the elaborate system of symbolic ritual and doctrine built up in bygone days; but Catholic allegory makes the mistake of clothing itself in the robe of dogmatism, and lays down the law—which is absurd, as we used to say in the days when Euclid was the educational fashion. Symbolism is the vehicle of poetic thought, not of religious authoritarianism; yet Romanist piety, which ought to content itself with such plain statements as the populace can understand, still revels in enigma and the extended use of inferior symbols. "The countless books," says Dr. Inge, "written to elaborate the principles of allegorism contain a mass of futility such as it would be difficult to match in any other class of literature": and the nineteenth-century divine who analysed the 153 fish caught in the Sea of Galilee into the square of the twelve Apostles, *plus* the square of the three Persons in the Trinity,[1] gives us an excellent illustration of one phase of clerical mentality. Even in these matter-of-fact days the passion for misty (and sometimes extremely mixed) metaphor is apt to be a sad trial to a congregation which yearns for lucidity in religious exposition.

The Devil, we are told, can quote Scripture for his own purposes; and, with the increasing pressure of modern science and education, we may expect the Romanist hierophant to employ his subtle mind in inventing new and ever more ingenious interpretations. He will drop into symbolism, whenever symbolism suits his purpose, as easily as Mr. Silas Wegg dropped into poetry, and the religious probationer will find his task grow daily more arduous. Suppose, for example, that some future Pius X should issue another *Pascendi* Encyclical commanding the faithful, under pain of eternal damnation, to believe that the moon is made of green cheese, it

[1] *Christian Mysticism*, by Dean Inge, p. 272.

may be necessary for the laity to inquire whether the Sovereign Pontiff means ordinary grocer's green cheese, or merely green cheese of the allegorical and metaphysical variety.

Also among the Protestant denominations the science of interpretation is reaching a pitch of excellence only inferior to that of Rome. The Book of Genesis is now the symbolist's favourite field for exercising his peculiar talent; and the recent discussion in the newspapers on the Fall of Man involved us in a dialectical web of unreality which my poor brain is quite incapable of unravelling. I gather from the disquisitions of learned divines that it is generally agreed that a fall of some sort took place in Paradise, but that man nevertheless rose higher in the scale of creation: he "struggled upwards," as Canon Barnes says, and some rash people go so far as to say that there was no fall, but an actual advance. The most probable solution of the mystery appears to be the compromise suggested by an American divine, who said that man "fell upwards." Another curious example how the laws of spiritual gravitation may be reversed appears to be afforded by the history of infidelity and other sin. Theology, as I understand, teaches that the anthropoid apes or other aboriginal inhabitants of our globe did not possess original sin, but lived in a beautiful state of "innocent simplicity" (not "perfection," as one learned divine erroneously stated). Sin was reserved for man in his higher and more developed state; he did not fall until he knew the difference between right and wrong, and became aware of the conflict between freedom and conscience; and, unfortunately, he keeps falling still. There was original sin, in other words, but no aboriginal sin; and I trust I am not misinterpreting the Latin Church when I say that, in her view, an infidel but progressive world is now engaged in

raising itself downwards: her complaint against modern civilization has always been that it progresses forwards, instead of backwards. It is all very puzzling, and I must leave it to the theologians to find a way out of the labyrinth.

The ingenious blends of darkness and light, the desperate shifts to which orthodoxy in a quandary will resort, sometimes pass comprehension; but one would think that some day there must be an end to this sort of thing. The acrobatic straddle between irreconcilable theories is too exhausting to be maintained in perpetuity. The efforts made by professors of dogmatic religion to maintain a dignified equilibrium in impossible intellectual positions sometimes recall to my mind the amusing performances of certain contortionists in our places of entertainment; and religious apologetic—the word "apologetic" always appears to me to be significant—will have to adopt a different tone.[1] In the sphere of Biblical criticism it is grievous to read earnest Catholics like Miss Petre, Baron von Hügel, and Father Tyrrell condemning the obscurantist tactics of their Church, her evasions of Scripture problems, and the use of "protective methods" in the pursuit of religious truth; or that enlightened Anglican and very careful writer, the Rev. A. L. Lilley, speaking in his *Modernism* (p. 50) of the "fatuous persistency" of Anglicans in their attempts to reconcile the old dogma with the modern knowledge, and describing our English apologetics of the mid-nineteenth century as "a nightmare of pointless theology and impossible science." The old supersti-

[1] It would appear from proceedings at the recent Catholic conference at Cambridge that Romanist professors are not now to be excommunicated if they reject the celebrated text known as the *Comma Joanneum* (1 John v. 7) which, in the almost unanimous view of impartial scholars, is spurious. In 1897 Leo XIII and the Holy Office affirmed its authenticity, though the Pope is said to have bitterly repented his decision. We are evidently getting on.

tion was dangerous to life and limb, but it was usually sincere. Can we always say the same of our modern controversial makeshifts? Superstition is a genuine belief in shams: counterfeit superstition is but the sham of a sham.

The ancient Roman augurs are said to have winked at each other as they passed in the street, but we may be quite sure that they looked preternaturally solemn as they inspected the entrails and decided whether the omens were favourable or the reverse. Their successors in Rome to-day preserve a no less imposing air of gravity over their occult mysteries and astonishing interpretations, but I cannot help now and then suspecting them of pulling our legs. On the other hand, I must compliment them sincerely upon the humour they display in some of their dogmatic and ethical speculations, as well as in those absurd and often malodorous conundrums which are their special delight.

Nor is the position of liberal theology by any means an easy one. We have already seen how the exigencies of propagandism determined the action of the men who built up the Church in early days, and how Pagan ritual and doctrine were introduced into the Church for the avowed purpose of making converts. Since then Biblical criticism has made an important step forward. We are now told by a number of our most eminent theologians—and many enlightened divines in England, France, Italy, and America agree—that the Synoptic Gospels "are not historical works any more than the Fourth; they were not written with the simple object of giving the facts as they were; they were books composed for the work of evangelization." The writers selected their incidents with a view to "the peculiar needs" of particular groups of converts. The Gospels were not exactly "partisan pamphlets," but they were constructed on opportunist principles,

and additions were made from time to time as occasion required. M. Loisy, for example, tells us that St. Mark's Gospel "is not a book of simple growth and homogeneous editing." When compiling his description (Mark xiv. 23–5) of the Last Supper, the author "did not wish to upset the arrangement of the early narrative," and so accommodated his account of what Christ said on that occasion to the account given by St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 25. Moreover, says M. Loisy, the special tradition of the Fourth Gospel gradually disappears, as the sense of this mysterious book is better comprehended.[1]

It is quite evident that we can no longer entertain, as of yore, that the Scriptures were dictated by God, or descended ready-made from Heaven, in their present form; but when we are told that the Evangelists did not always conform to the facts, but compiled their narratives "throughout in a dogmatic interest," and adapted them, as they thought fit, to the requirements of the hour and the exigencies of "edification," it gives us furiously to think. They are said to have written their Gospels under celestial inspiration and dictation; and, if this be true, the assertion now made that they compiled them for the purpose of obtaining certain temporal advantages, and to serve the ends of a ruling caste, sounds very like an imputation of political opportunism in quarters where we have not hitherto been accustomed to look for it. The theory must be classed among those which theologians label as "dangerous"; and we cannot be surprised if dogmatic religion finds itself still in deep waters concerning the whole matter. Even in the august precincts of the Curia doubt prevails as to whether the Pentateuch is Mosaic, "or only a mosaic"; whether Moses really wrote the account in Deuteronomy of his own funeral, and assured us that no subsequent prophet

[1] *The Gospel and the Church*, pp. 25, 26, 130.

in Israel was his equal. In 1902 a Biblical Commission, which was expected to supersede the Holy Inquisition in the field of Scriptural exegesis, was appointed to examine these matters in detail; but the work was entrusted to the Jesuits, and when some exceptionally honest and intelligent members of the body showed a too inquiring spirit, they were of course promptly suppressed.

Liberal thought in Protestant circles has apparently abandoned for good what has rightly been termed the barren fixity of ecclesiastical dogma [1]; it will have none of the subtle methods employed by Roman divines in order to evade the destructive conclusions arrived at by the new criticism, or of their efforts to make the field of revelation a neutral territory. On the other hand, the new conditions of chaotic fluidity, though an improvement on the old fixity, can hardly be described as satisfactory. The present position of both Catholic and Protestant Modernists, as I understand it, is briefly as follows. There can be no finality in dogma, or the expression of dogma. Definitions and conclusions, as Tyrrell puts it, are ever in the making, and never made: they are subject to continual restatement and readjustment. The Church's dogmas are "vehicles of the truth," but, as we do not yet know what the truth is, the vehicles will have to be overhauled from time to time and remodelled to suit their new occupants. To vary the metaphor, there will have to be periodical spring-cleanings and refurbishings of the ecclesiastical mansion, and the exceeding plasticity of the material out of which dogma is fashioned will be exemplified by fresh readjustments every decade. Relativity is the order of the day: the absolute

[1] "No dogma, no Dean," said a High Church dignitary to the rather "broad" Dean Stanley; but the present Dean of St. Paul's would seem to be a living proof that this principle no longer holds good in the Church.

values of which we are all in search are now varying values, and must be symbolized by changing symbols: theological terms have no fixed connotations. In Tyrrell's words, the Catholic Christian Idea must "revise its categories" and "shape its embodiment to its growth"—in the same way, I suppose, that a tailor shapes a waistcoat to the growth of his customer's embodiment. Tyrrell also tells us that "our beliefs are reversible"; and the tailor says the same of our coats when they begin to show signs of wear. If a doctrine, which was believed for eighteen centuries to be of celestial inspiration, is proving a stumbling-block to the younger generation of the twentieth century, clear it out of the way as a useless encumbrance, or alter it beyond recognition. Dogmas and definitions having only a provisional and relative value, the old formulæ will be reset at intervals in nice new terms adapted to the modern mind. What was true for yesterday is fiction for to-day, so theology will trim its sails to the shifting breezes of a truth which is ever in the making. The layman will gradually replace the cleric as preacher, the poet will be our new prophet. Orthodoxy will shake hands with infidelity, the ecclesiastical lion lie down with the Agnostic lamb; and the little children of the new art and the new poetry, whose intuitions of spiritual realities are finer and deeper than those of any theologian, shall lead them to a nobler truth than any materialist knows. Science, illumined and "protected" (as Cardinal Mercier told us) by *Pascendi* Encyclicals and the like, will have, like Voltaire, at least a bowing acquaintance with the Infinite.[1] Humanity at large will be content

[1] Voltaire and a friend were walking along the street one day, when a religious procession passed. The philosopher stopped, and raised his hat in token of respect. "Comment! M. de Voltaire," said the astonished friend, "est-ce que vous êtes reconcilié avec Dieu?" "Mais oui," the great man replied with a shrug; "nous nous saluons, mais nous ne parlons pas."

to attach itself provisionally to an interim creed, and then wait in patience for fresh developments in the field of scientific and Biblical research.

It is not easy to see how dogma can be permanently maintained upon such lines as these. The modern theologians are mixing up ideals with dogma; but ideals change with circumstances, which a dogma has no right to do. A dogma is not a varying proposition or reversible belief: it is a *settled* opinion positively expressed, "a doctrine settled and promulgated by authority and to be received as such." Roman Catholic dogma, in particular, is "the accurate authoritative expression of *fact*"; and the Latin Church, at any rate, still claims the right to flog and murder us if we do not accept her dogmas as correct statements of fact. The Gospels, moreover, have hitherto been presented to us as records, not merely of spiritual truths, but of historical events, and we cannot treat the latter in the haphazard fashion with which it is now proposed to treat theological opinions. You can rearrange belief as often as you like, but history kicks at the process being applied to her: only a historical answer can be given to a historical difficulty. So far as I can see, there is only one alternative left to the dogmatist. He must continue in the old course, as pursued for centuries by Romanists, preach doctrines which most people now believe to be untrue, and teach the people a fable. And, strange as it may seem, this line of action still commends itself to quite a large number of people who do not belong to the Roman communion. In the course of a recent newspaper correspondence a bold churchman declared that the only way to deal with ancient teachings which are an insult to our intelligence is to scrap them; but a clergyman openly defended the old obscurantist position, saying that churchmen do not want to disturb the placid faith of their aged parishioners:

in their view "true wisdom and tenderness lie in a wise silence." Other people maintain, on the contrary, that if the placid faith of the aged parishioners is an erroneous one, it is a kindness as well as a duty to set them right; and we also have to think about the young souls committed to the clergyman's care. They and their teachers are now growing restive: they insist upon having the truth told to them; and it is obvious that we cannot have the aged parishioners being taught one kind of truth, and their grandchildren another.

Carlyle's opinion of the clerical mind is expressed in several characteristically vigorous passages. He was no believer in the doctrinal entanglements and platitudes of nineteenth-century divines, Roman Catholic or Protestant. He admired the Bishop of his diocese for his many excellent qualities, but did not read his Charges because he much preferred speech which is articulate. "Not a credible man," said Chelsea's sage—"perhaps not quite a safe man to be concerned with?" To Carlyle the only religion worth anything is the religion which a man himself feels is true, not what another man tells him he ought to believe—or pretend to believe—a religion that is a discerned fact *for him*, with covenants which he dare not for his life's sake but go and observe. So it should be with us now, in these strenuous times, which in some respects are not unlike those when the *Latter Day Pamphlets* were written. *Laborare est orare:* the true worship is work, and to be weak in word or deed is the real misery and irreligion.

CHAPTER XIII

ROMAN CATHOLIC LOGIC

"Non in dialecticâ salvum fecit Deus populum suum" (Not by logic hath it pleased God to save His people.—ST. AMBROSE).

"Formal logic is rather a negative and a verifying than a positive and discovering process, and represents only a very small part of the actual operation by which we are guided, and necessarily guided, in all practical judgments" (*An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 210).

ROMAN Catholics are great on what they call their "logic," and not a few people give it as their reason for joining the Latin Church, that her position is a more rational one than that of Protestants. They consider themselves unequalled judges of sound arguments,[1] and exult in the beautiful symmetry of their dogmas as compared with the distressing inconsequence, the makeshift patchwork character, which are the blemish of other creeds. Those poor Protestants are very good fellows in their way, but they are so hopelessly illogical: the man in search of really puissant reasoners must have recourse to the theologians of the Roman Church.

"The world is governed by logic," says Mr. Augustine Birrell in the laudatory essay upon his favourite hero, Cardinal Newman, entitled "The Via Media."[2] When Mr. Birrell says "the world" he probably means that part of the world outside the British Empire, because the average Briton has

[1] The *Month* (December 1919) declares that "we Catholics are unequalled judges of the soundness of arguments, and are not at all the sort of people who are able to content ourselves with such as are not really sound."

[2] *Obiter Dicta*, First Series.

always refused to submit to logic's sway. John Bull, "the cloudy-browed, thick-soled, opaque Practicality, with no logic utterance," as Carlyle calls him, somehow manages to blunder into wisdom, because he has in him "what transcends all logic-utterance: a Congruity with the Unuttered. The Speakable, which lies atop, as a superficial film, or outer skin, is his or is not his: but the Doable, which reaches down to the world's centre, you find him here!" [1] Even if it be true that the *via media* is a blind alley leading nowhere, he will still follow it, believing that the middle road is still the safest, and that it is better to land nowhere than to land in a bog you cannot get out of.

Whether "the sulky, almost stupid, Man of Practice, or the light adroit Man of Theory all equipped with clear logic," the versatile Mr. Augustus Birrell, or the opaque and cloudy-browed John Bull, be right in this matter of the value of logic—whether the stupidity of the one be not often wiser than the wisdom of the other—I must leave to people better qualified than myself to judge. The point to which I would draw attention is that the most wonderful logicians in the world, if we are to take them at their own valuation, are to be found among the theologians of the Roman Church.

The most purely logical people that we know of would appear to be savages, but this does not prove that they are the wisest. The workings of primitive intelligence usually proceed on grounds which, according to the principles of formal logic, are strictly correct. For instance, the rustic who argued that, because one dose of the doctor's medicine made him feel better, a larger dose would make him better still, may have reasoned logically; but, when he proceeded to put his logic into practice, and swallowed the whole bottleful of pills, the results were disastrous.

[1] *Past and Present*, p. 137.

Of all fallacies the fallacy of bad logic is the most fatally misleading, and that wise divine, St. Ambrose, showed great perspicuity in deprecating specious reasoning, such as that wherewith the Roman casuists and schoolmen impose upon the faithful. Such reasoning is vitiated at its source. Formal logic is always, at best, a faulty method of arriving at the truth. Error creeps so easily into the most cunning syllogism: if the premises are unsound, the conclusion cannot be justified. We all used to think, for example, that Euclid was a magnificent logician, but we are now assured that not a few of his axioms and postulates are wrong, and that he has therefore been leading us all astray. The first thing in correct reasoning is to look after your postulates: if these are false, your deductions will be falser still; and, the more rigidly you reason from your unsound premises, the deeper you will flounder in the intellectual bog. Starting with the supposition that the moon is made of green cheese I could arrive at all sorts of interesting conclusions, but it is doubtful whether they would be of any value. A false theory may possibly be consistent, but sensible people do not care a brass button about its logical coherence if it proves to be constructed out of moonshine. To argue effectively with a Roman Catholic you must stop him at the first step, and bid him verify his premises. When you show him that the ground on which he is standing is very shaky, he will probably adopt Newman's position and say that we need not "vex ourselves to find out whether our own deductions are philosophical or no, provided they are religious," [1] and that savage superstition is anyhow better than modern illumination; but you must explain to him that reasoning of this kind does not satisfy the seeker

[1] *Theory of Religious Belief*, 1843, p. 351; quoted in *An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 170.

after truth in these days. It certainly does not justify the Catholics' contention that he is a supremely logical person, and the best judge in the world of sound arguments. When we ask him for some common measure of truth, he shows us the curious processes by which he reaches his opinion, and expects us to be satisfied with what is merely a demonstration of the assumptions upon which his convictions rest.

Michelet, with his customary acuteness and eloquence, gives an excellent picture of the methods employed by Roman Catholic preachers. They make the same parade of intellectualism, but, judging from the quality of their sermons, they do not rate very highly the intelligence of their auditors. "A decent, proper, blunt-looking man ascends the pulpit: he will not affect them; he confines himself to proofs. He makes a grand display of reasonings, with high logical pretensions and much solemnity in his premises. Then come sudden, sharp conclusions; but for middle term there is none: 'These things require no proof!' Why, then, miserable reasoner, did you make so much noise about your proofs?" [1]

Rome should take warning from the sad fate of poor Eve, who, if we may believe Cardinal Newman, owed her temptation and fall to the fact that she followed passion and reason [2]: presumably she failed to verify her premises, and so reasoned incorrectly. The punishment, however, would appear to have been rather a severe one for so very common an offence, not only amongst ladies, but amongst men. For example, St. Thomas Aquinas and his disciples have piled up a mountainous structure of highly questionable syllogisms, but we may well doubt whether the world is any better or wiser for the

[1] *Priests, Women and Families*, p. xix.
[2] *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, v, 112.

magnificent dialectical tangle which scholasticism has created. The Roman Church suffers from that worst form of bad logic, the logic of a false position. She may be said to have two legs, the logical leg and the leg of commonplace sentiment and unreason. Sometimes she elects to use the one leg, sometimes the other; but the pair never seem to work properly together. At various periods in her history she has been compelled to call a halt to the rationalizing tendencies of her more intellectual votaries, and, by steering a middle course, to invoke the aid of compromise and common sense in order to avoid irretrievable disaster. "Be logical," the early heretics and sectarians cried, as they appealed to the logical irresistibleness of their favourite notions, and sought to press them to conclusions which would have spelled ruin for the growing religion. "Be logical," said every sect and school; "you admit our premises; you do not admit our conclusions." But the more practical ecclesiastics saw very clearly that the attempt to attain union by merely logical means would only result in hopeless disunion, and that, however much men may seek God by means of syllogisms, they will never find Him thereby. They therefore preferred a complex and "diplomatic" creed which combined opposites, studied policy, and balanced one tendency against another.[1]

The greater part of Roman dialectic is in reality nothing more than rhetoric dressed up as logic: the rhetoric is always much better than the logic, and the resultant dogma bears clear marks of its origin. The average Catholic reader of Newman's works, for instance, thinks he is being guided by the clear light of reason, whereas in reality he is only being blinded by the eloquence of a rhetorician. Newman claims to have a logical mind, and tells us

[1] The *Theory of Development*, by Canon J. B. Mozley, pp. 41–43. See also Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims*, p. 2.

that it was "a concatenation of argument" that led him to the Roman fold (*Apology*, p. 322). He uses reason up to a point, but coolly throws it over when it has ceased to serve his purpose, because, as he says, it is no ultimate test of truth. When it has become apparent that logic will only defeat the ends he has in view, he sails off with the airy assertion that it doesn't matter if his deductions are unjustified, so long as they are religious. In other words, he has the will-to-believe, but his beliefs preceded his speculations. He suggests to us the means whereby we may arrive at belief, but gives us no guidance towards achieving correct belief; he shows how men become convinced, but not how the correctness of doctrine is proved. At one time he disparages intellect, but then proceeds to use it freely as an implement wherewith to make suitable garments for his preconceived opinions, and as a serviceable weapon in his polemics with unbelievers. A past master in dialectical fence, a debater and controversialist by nature, his plausibility, and the deplorable casuistry with which he backed his theories, illustrated the desperate shifts to which the apologetics of orthodoxy are sometimes reduced. "The more," he says, "you set yourself to argue and prove, in order to discover truth, the less likely you are to reason correctly." Having delivered himself of this admirable *dictum*, he set to work to argue and prove his case with a wealth of subtle special pleading that has never been surpassed, and established in the result, and beyond all doubt, the correctness of his earlier conclusions. He may have been the "splendid sophist" that Lord Acton said he was, but his sophistry was often very much the reverse of splendid. He was believed to have an answer for every difficulty, as Mr. Fawkes says, and the belief was not wholly unjustifiable. His verbal ingenuity rarely

failed him; but he mixed up [1] and confounded fact with theory, evidence with mental or temperamental prepossession, and showed with marvellous clearness the intellectual labyrinth in which Romanist dialectic lands those who trust it as a guide.

The real fact of the matter is that transcendentalism, especially such transcendentalism as that of the Latin Church, is not a fit subject for logic. "What," asks St. Thomas à Kempis, "have we to do with *genus* and *species*, the dry notions of logicians?" "Christ's Church," said one of Fénelon's opponents, "is not a school of metaphysics"; and it was the error of the old scholastic philosophers to suppose that, in order to be on the track of truth, you must follow the road of axioms and syllogisms, definitions and highly uncertain propositions. If the facts did not fit in with the abstract conceptions which formed their postulates, the disputable conceptions which are in opposition to our concrete knowledge and experience, so much the worse for the facts. Formal logic, we are told by that high authority, Professor Bertrand Russell, is the same thing as mathematics (*Mysticism and Logic*, p. 74); and you cannot, otherwise than in hypothetical form, deal mathematically with metaphysical terms or notions. But if the axioms and postulates of your syllogisms are purely hypothetical (like those of the Roman theologians), your conclusions are obviously disputable, and you have not the smallest right to burn or persecute a man because he refuses to accept them. Aristotle, to my humble way of thinking, probably had the greatest brain of any man that ever lived; but, as Professor Russell says, Aristotle never got beyond the syllogism, which is a very small part of formal logic, and the schoolmen never got beyond Aristotle.[2] They and

[1] "Newman miscet et confundit omnia," as the Roman ecclesiastics said.

[2] *Mysticism and Logic*, p. 76.

their successors have set before us a fine dish of problems garnished with an appetizing sauce of formal reasonings; but they always take care to cook the answer first.

The so-called logic of Roman Catholic theology, with its tedious word-spinning and jugglery with phrases, only serves to fog men's brains and to confuse moral and philosophical issues. It is partial and one-sided, and shuts its eyes to vital facts. If a man would reason correctly, he must be able to apprehend the full scope and bearing of his hypotheses, and this is impossible when you are dealing with supernatural matters; it is useless trying to construct syllogisms out of Hegelian metaphysics or vague affirmations concerning the Absolute. No less in the affairs of the workaday world does logic continually land us in dilemmas from which there is no escape. No sane person, as I think Burke said, rules himself or his life by universal principles. If he did, he might find himself locked up as insane; he certainly would not make his career a success.

Mr. Birrell, who thinks that logic is the prime necessity of the hour, tells us that "some opinions, bold and erect as they stand, are in reality but empty shells. One shove will be fatal." Quite so: and the first to tumble from their perch, when the fatal shove is given, will be the top-heavy, syllogistically-cemented, structure of Roman Catholic dialectic.[1] Whatever Cardinal Newman and Mr. Birrell may say, the path of human life is one long *via media*, an eternal compromise in the realm of opinion as well as of action. We cannot all have our own way, or follow out our ideas to what people call their

[1] On the other hand, the *Month* (December 1919), with its eye on the past as the true fount of wisdom, opines that "the progress of human thought has suffered a grievous check by the breach with the Scholastic tradition"; and that "even our wisest scientific men would do well to consult" the Catholic Church on these high matters. Professors Einstein and Eddington, and other wise men, please note!

logical conclusions. The Romanist may rend—or fancy he is rending—Protestant theology in pieces, and triumphantly hold the tattered fragments up to the world's derision ; but the victory is a barren one that in no way strengthens his own position. Moreover, there are nowadays a growing number of genuinely religious people who are not committed to any set form of doctrinal belief, and the logic which is based upon persistency in clinging to proved nonsense does not commend itself to their understanding. They think it is better, on the whole, to be half right than wholly wrong.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOGMATIC TEMPER

" In divine matters there is great wisdom in confessing our ignorance " (CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA).

" Affect not to be over-wise. . . . Why wilt thou prefer thyself before others, sith there be many more learned ? " (ST. THOMAS À KEMPIS).

" Barren are the schools ; barren are all forms ; barren—worse than barren, these exclusive creeds, this deadly polemic letter " (Sixteenth-century mystics : see VAUGHAN'S *Hours with the Mystics* ii, 90).

CHRIST thanked His Father because He had hid certain things from the wise and prudent, and had revealed them unto babes ; but the theologians of Rome reserve the doctrines of the Church for their " wise and prudent " selves, and keep it safely guarded under clerical lock and key. They have constructed an occult mystery of dogma unintelligible except to minds versed in the subtleties of Aristotelian metaphysics, and an esoteric system of ethics which (as a Catholic controversialist admitted the other day) requires trained experts for its interpretation. " We," say the Curia and the hierarchy, " are able (through divine illumination) to proclaim with unhesitating certainty doctrinal truths unknown to the foolish and ignorant. It is their duty to keep quiet, and listen to us." I, for example, am advised by my Catholic counsellors to receive instruction from Roman pundits in moral theology before I presume to talk about it : I have spent some years studying these questions, but am still (as the *Month* pointedly reminds me) an " ignoramus "

uninspired by the Curial fount of wisdom. The voice of the Church is the voice of God, and let no dog bark when the oracle opens its mouth.

One of the most prolonged struggles, and perhaps the severest, in history has been the struggle of the earnest inquirer to establish his moral right to continue his investigations without let or hindrance from clerical and political obstructionists. The battle still continues, with the Roman Church, as usual, posing as protagonist of the reactionary army, who would limit the range of free speculation. Those who oppose intellectual liberty, and freedom for critical research, justify their action by claiming to have a certitude (which we do not possess) based on the infallible *magisterium*, or teaching authority, of the Roman See. That *magisterium*, however, is a variable quantity which adapts itself to the changing circumstances of the age. At one time it would seem to be trimming its sails to the freshening breezes of rationalism; at another it boldly faces the storm, adopts a resolute air, and, as in the case of the *Pascendi* Encyclical, declares its views and intentions with a primitive distinctness that makes the sceptic chuckle and the sensible Romanist gnash his teeth in despair. The Church has always sought short cuts to knowledge; she has looked to the Holy Ghost for scientific and other enlightenment, rather than to the researches of the laboratory or the patient toil of scholarship. The results have often been startling; and we are only moderately surprised to learn, on the high authority of Baron von Hügel, that the Congregation of the Index waited until 1835 before it withdrew heliocentric books from its list![1] Pope Sixtus V issued to the world in 1590 a "genuine" edition of the Bible, from which a quotation appears on my frontispiece; and he ordered it "to be received

[1] Quoted in *Outspoken Essays*, p. 235.

and held as true, lawful, authentic, and unquestioned, in all public and private discussion, preaching and explanation." [1] A few years later it was found to be full of errors—about three thousand, I believe—and was withdrawn from circulation. Other humours of official science and philosophy, as expounded by scholastic profundity, whose one aim is the maintenance of its own authority, are too numerous to be recorded here. But we are entitled to ask why, if these supernaturally illuminated persons have for fifteen centuries been teaching us bad science, false history, and all sorts of other things which are untrue, we should pay them the deference they still claim as the chosen instructors of mankind? Their incapacity to detect falsehood, no less than their skill in disseminating it, have been proved up to the hilt times without number. They tried to bully that fine Biblical scholar and humorist, Abbé Houtin; but he defied their attacks on intellectual liberty, and, holding with Pascal that satire is a legitimate weapon against obstructive piety of this kind, treated with contemptuous indifference the "stale criticism and vapid denunciations" in which they indulged.[2] Needless to say that he and his works have both fallen under the ecclesiastical ban.

The dogmatic temper that expresses itself in these and a thousand other curious ways is based, as we have seen, upon "certitude"; but the methods by which this assurance is reached are not always such as would commend themselves to reasonable people. Newman tells us [3] that he did not join the Roman Church until he had obtained certitude concerning the matters in dispute, and he says that certitude "is to know that one knows"

[1] See *Shall We Join the Church of Rome?* p. 53.

[2] *Modernism*, by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, p. 46.

[3] *Apologia*, p. 344. In another passage he speaks of "absolute certitude."

—surely a rather arrogant assumption, and one that shows that there were two sides to the Cardinal's character.[1] He applauds servility of mind and conduct in terms that should satisfy the most sycophantic adherent of the Papacy, but he advocated religious persecution of the most extreme kind; and the persecutor is an overbearing person who is possessed of an exaggerated confidence in his own rectitude and his powers of apprehending eternal truth.

Roman Catholics appear to forget that a false or erroneous statement is not converted into a true one by labelling it "dogma," and asserting it fiercely: it grieves them to the heart when the heretic refuses to be convinced or intimidated. Newman gives expression to this grief when he complains in the *Apologia* that it is "not at all easy to wind up an Englishman to a dogmatic level." I can only utter a pious hope that the difficulty will continue and increase as time goes on, and that our countrymen will always refuse to accept mere possibility or probability as certainty. The Cardinal, on the other hand, while assuring us that he had obtained certitude of his beliefs before adopting them, confesses that he was satisfied with something very much less. He held, with Butler, that probability is the guide of life, and we learn that it was this which eventually led him to the logical cogency of Faith. There was a strong vein of scepticism in his nature, and somebody (Lord Acton, I think, or was it Huxley?) with perfect propriety described his works as "a primer of infidelity." But the dogmatic temper—that "impetuous temper" to which he confessed, and which so greatly shocked his dear brother English Cardinal—was the mastering

[1] Mr. McCabe quotes the Catholic Bishop Paterson (who knew Newman well) as saying, "Newman was an angel by grace—and a tiger by nature."

element within him, and triumphed over all obstacles. He was not content to make probability the ground of faith, or to address his prayers to a Deity who was only probably there; so he based his belief in God on affectionate desire. Nevertheless, we find in his Tract 85 the following startling assertion. We cannot, he says, be Christians (and therefore, presumably, must be damned) if we will not believe in Christ's revelation, when there are 3 chances in favour of it, and only 2 against.[1] Republishing the tract some years later, after his conversion to Romanism, he altered the odds necessary for a reasonable belief in revelation to 12 to 2; but this does not seriously affect the argument. I am not a betting man myself, and we are not here dealing with "horse-dealers,"[2] or a horse-race, so I refrain from speculating how far the odds selected by the Cardinal may be considered justifiable under the circumstances; but I do protest when dogmatically minded old gentlemen consign people to perdition, or to Purgatory, because they will not accept a 3 to 2, or even a 6 to 1, probability as equivalent to what I believe racing men term "a moral cert." Of a truth, these modern Habakkuks, whom Dr. Inge describes as "heavy-handed dogmatists," are *capables de tout*.

This mechanical calculation of odds for and against salvation, the rather mercenary profit-and-loss view of faith and conduct, is characteristic of Romanism no less than of its opposite, Low Protestantism. Newman, like many other intensely pious persons, was largely influenced in his religious views by purely utilitarian, or, perhaps I should say, prudential motives. He could menace his hearers with hell-fire,

[1] See *Cardinal Newman*, by R. H. Hutton, p. 57.

[2] In *Philomythus*, p. 114, Dr. Abbott quotes a strange passage from Newman, where he classifies Roman Catholics with (among others) picture-dealers and horse-dealers; and gives instances of the Cardinal's futile, and in some cases hardly creditable, reasoning.

and breathe forth brimstone and sulphur, like any revivalist preacher. "Fear," he once said, "was what *Cambridge* wanted"; and he frequently besought his hearers to condition their life in this world by an estimate of its probable effects upon their skin in the next. "If," he said, "there is only a fair chance" (odds of 3 to 2, let us say) "that the Bible is true, that Heaven is the reward of obedience, and Hell of wilful sin, it is worth while, *it is safe*, to sacrifice this world to the next."[1] I remember discussing with a Roman Catholic, some years ago, the ethics of capital punishment, and my opponent's argument against it amounted to nothing more than the expression of a fear that God might possibly punish *us* for taking the life of a fellow human being: the purely ethical view of the matter was omitted altogether.

To believe that the human brain can achieve absolute certainty concerning anything is utterly vain. Such certainty as we fancy ourselves to possess—which suffices for the practical purposes of everyday life—is based on observation and experience; but both are fallible guides. Still less can we be certain about the events of remote antiquity and the happenings of the future, or trust the infallibility of other men's intellectual speculations. Nor is personal emotion, or religious "experience," a trustworthy guide to universal truth, because the results and conclusions arrived at vary with individuals. Their certainty is but relative to them. Socrates thought that he was the wisest of men because he knew that he knew nothing, and Newton said much the same thing. We must not doubt God; we should distrust those who dogmatize about God. A still higher authority than Socrates, Christ, said: If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."[2] In

[1] *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vi, 259. [2] John ix. 41.

other words, He condemned the Pharisees for pretending to have certainty, where no certainty existed. "Teach thy tongue to say, 'I do not know,'" says an old Hebrew Rabbi, quoted by Mr. Fawkes; and I believe his advice to be entirely sound. There is no sort of use in attempting verbally to determine enigmas or to define the unknowable. So many definitions of the Latin Church are incapable of verification; and the trouble with her is that she not only claims to know, but to be the only person who does know, and that she further asserts her right to bully us into assent. In the face of this domineering attitude scepticism is not merely a duty, but a necessity. I am well aware that the agnostic or sceptic is generally unpopular, and sometimes perhaps deservedly so. I hold, with St. Clement of Alexandria (who thought that faith was only "suitable for people in a hurry" [1]), that "knowledge is more than faith"; but I agree no less with Lord Morley when he reminds us that incredulity is sometimes the vice of a fool. Nevertheless, when this is said, I offer the honest opinion that superstition and credulity must be reckoned among the gravest ills with which the world is afflicted, and that a certain "capacity for disbelief" should form a part of every man's mental equipment. There are thousands of human beings even in our day who would do well to cultivate, to a moderate extent, that "reasonable incredulousness" (*σώφρων ἀπιστία*) which Euripides recommended [2] as a most serviceable quality for mortal men. Credulity is of many kinds, and the credulity that finds its expression in effete superstition is perhaps the most maleficent and the hardest to kill. It was superstition of the crudest and most debased kind that was mainly instrumental in destroying the great Russian Empire, with Rasputin and the Czarina acting as the evil geniuses

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, p. 86. [2] *Helena*, 1618.

of the unhappy Czar as he drew his country to the pit of national perdition. It was superstition that clouded Newman's fine intellect, and made him stoop —a grief to his most fervent admirers — to the banalities of a rather despicable casuistry. "Oh, Spirit of Truth," cries Mr. Augustine Birrell, "where wert thou, when the remorseless deep of superstition closed over the head of John Henry Newman, who surely deserved to be thy best-loved son?" [1]

How far, if at all, the spread of education will contract that large and varied world where imposture earns a living wage from unsuspecting innocence, remains to be seen. At present credulity, among many other functions, serves to fill the purses of knaves and to empty the pockets of fools, impoverishing and corrupting society in the process. The faculty of weighing arguments and sifting evidence, of discriminating between mere belief and right belief, requires to be strengthened. We can but trust that time and common sense will gradually affect a change in this direction. Even in Ireland it may be hoped that the day will come when the thaumaturgic antics of the sacerdotal sorcerer will yield before the more potent magic of enlightened minds and liberated wills; and that pious folk will learn that the preaching of hatred, the suppression of mental development and the systematic promotion of disunion, are no part of the Christian gospel. But that day is not yet. It is still the aim of religious dogmatism to make theology the touchstone of truth, the "protector" of science, and the uniting bond of all the sciences. Knowledge, and the acquisition of knowledge, must be subordinated to the needs of religion. The Church continues to deal her blows, one after another—rather wild ones, as a rule—at all learning which interferes with her prerogatives. In 1870 the Vatican Council acted as

[1] *Obiter Dicta*, I, 121.

though humanity were a pack of small schoolboys under the Curia's charge. Dogmatism attacked modern thought, and we witnessed, as Mr. R. H. Hutton said, the melancholy spectacle of "Blind Authority beating with his staff the child that might have led him." Thirty-seven years later Pius X, acting as the tool of Ultramontanism, made a still stranger assault on mental liberty. "The Pope condemns because he does not understand," said the Italian priests who were among the victims of the reactionary crowd; and sensible Catholics beheld with grief and amazement these strange pranks of jealous Authority in a panic. "It is stupidity alone," says Carlyle, "that kills religion."[1] "He that has a soul unasphyxied will never want a religion; he that has a soul asphyxied will never find any religion, though you rose from the dead to teach him one."

Yet the dogmatic quack-doctor still persists in offering us his "Morrison's-Pill" in the form of stale and outworn shibboleths—which, as it would appear, only require our acquiescence, not our genuine belief; and he tells us that, if only we will swallow it whole, all will be well. But woe betide us if we reject the proferred dose, and follow the light of reason and conscience. The malice of clericalism will fall upon us, and Heaven—which is said to register with becoming subserviency the decrees of its earthly Vice-gerent—will cheerfully acquiesce in our undoing. Let the great mediæval *savant*, Roger Bacon, bear witness. He passed a long life in scientific research, and expended every penny of his moderate fortune of £2,000 in buying books, instruments and other indispensable aids to experiment—only to find himself at the end without the means of prosecuting his researches, or even of subsistence.[2] Ruined and baffled in his hopes, in

[1] *Past and Present*, p. 195.
[2] Green's *History of England*, p. 139.

an evil day he took the advice of Bishop Grosseteste (one of the really great ecclesiastics whom Rome has produced) and became a Franciscan friar. His spiritual superiors forbade him to publish anything; but Pope Clement IV, who had heard of his fame, invited him to write. He was absolutely without means, but his friends pawned their goods to provide him with the necessary money. In the face of enormous difficulties he finished the *Greater Work*, which has since been acclaimed by posterity, and forwarded it to the Pope. No word of acknowledgment or recognition appears to have ever reached him—it is said that his Order rewarded his labours with imprisonment; and he finally died as he had lived, "unheard, forgotten, buried."

We may search the pages of history in vain to find a more pathetic tale: but the hard measure dealt out to poor Roger Bacon by clerical tyranny and obscurantism was the common lot of the early scientific pioneer. "Such," as Blanco White is reported to have said (*Apologia*, p. 119) in pained allusion to the deplorable bigotry displayed by his friend, Cardinal Newman—"Such is the venomous character of orthodoxy. What mischief must it create in a bad heart and narrow mind, when it can work so effectually for evil . . . in the amiable, the intellectual, the refined John Henry Newman."

CHAPTER XV

TRADITION

"Whence is that pretended Tradition?" (ST. CYPRIAN, Bishop of Carthage).

"Respecting the divine and holy mysteries of the faith, not even a tittle ought to be delivered without the authority of the Holy Scriptures" (ST. CYRIL, Bishop of Jerusalem).

"Take away, therefore, all those things which are derived from any other source than the canonical books of Holy Scripture. But perhaps some will ask, 'Why take away such authorities?' Because I would have the Holy Church proved, not by human documents, but by the word of God" (ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Unitate Ecclesiæ*, iv, 625).[1]

"The appeal to tradition is, in the main, an appeal to ignorance" (*Studies in Modernism*, p. 317).

IT has been shown that one of the chief privileges claimed by "the sons of God" (as Roman Catholics regard themselves) is the exclusive possession of special information concerning divine matters; and the bulk of this information is conveyed to them by that unwritten tradition which is the principal bulwark of their faith. Science may rage against scholastic theology; critico-historical exegesis of Bible texts may undermine the rock on which St. Peter's Church is built; but tradition, formless in structure and uncertain in origin, is regarded as unassailable: it, at any rate, is saved by its nebulous character from the "grievous wolves" of the Higher Criticism. Tradition is the oral instruction or "oral revelation," said to have been handed down by God to the Church from the earliest times. It is described as the "unwritten word of God"; yet

[1] See *Rome's Theory of Tradition*, by C. H. Collette, p. 54.

Monsignor Benson, in his *Infallibility and Tradition*, says that no tradition exists which is not written down: he omits, however, to tell us when, where, or by whom the writing was done. The word "tradition" may signify either of two things, the process of transmitting the oral instruction, or the instruction that is transmitted—the handing down of alleged truths and facts, or the truths and the facts themselves which are handed down; but Cardinal Mercier said that "the *organ* of transmission is Tradition," and was justly charged by Tyrrell with displaying a sad confusion of thought, which is by no means uncommon amongst Catholic theologians.

Roman Catholics account for the genesis and authority of tradition in the following way. The Scriptures, they say, are incomplete, and require to be supplemented by other forms of revelation. The evangelists and some of the apostles committed their revelations to writing, but it now appears that they omitted a great deal that is necessary to our salvation. Indeed, as Cardinal Manning declares, the Scriptures have to be interpreted by tradition, which, in its turn, has to be interpreted by the ecclesiastics; and Manning's predecessor, Cardinal Wiseman, told us that tradition is proved on the authority of Scripture: each, that is to say, contributes to the other's support—an admirable arrangement. The Scriptures, Catholics assert, are themselves only a part of tradition, which must on no account be regarded as an appendix to Scripture. "Scripture is but a collection of inspired books," or, as Tyrrell boldly phrases it,[1] "a few chance leaves torn from the book of tradition." Monsignor Benson says that tradition is "a fixed body of truth scattered through the works of the Fathers and the publications of Councils

[1] *Mediævalism*; and see, also, *Infallibility and Tradition*, and the *Catholic Encyclopædia*, art. "Tradition."

dealing with definite doctrines and statements, and these are as continuous and unchanging" as Scriptural doctrines, but, like them, subject to a continuous development. To what extent Roman Catholic tradition is fixed, continuous, or unchangeable we shall see presently; but most people will be ready to accept the Monsignor's statement that the only guarantee of Scripture, ultimately, is tradition.

In view of the immense mass of floating opinion and vague rumour attached to the early history of Christianity a competent (that is to say, divinely appointed) teaching authority to decide disputed questions is a necessity in the eyes of all practising Roman Catholics. Such an authority, they tell us, exists in the Church, which has "a living *magisterium*," or supernaturally instituted prerogative of indicating, amongst other things, what traditions are to be believed, and what are not. The teaching prerogatives of the Roman Church, we are further assured, are implied to a certain extent in her very institution: the organ of transmitting tradition must be an *official* organ, a *magisterium* (teaching authority) such as the Church. A further question now arises: what exactly is this "Church" which is said to be the depository of faith and the organ for transmitting tradition to the faithful? Is it the Pope alone, as Pius IX asserted; the episcopate in union with the Pope, as others maintain; or, as the Modernists insist, the entire body of believers apart from "a mere handful of officials"? Non-Catholics would be glad to have an answer to these important and much-debated questions. Moreover, when they are told that "Tradition was entrusted by the Holy Ghost to the Church," they ask what proof there is of this assertion, or of the stupendous claims to exclusive enlightenment based upon it, and preferred by the Papacy; but so far they have asked in vain.

The Church, Roman Catholics argue, has exactly the same powers of sifting tradition, of selecting the true and rejecting the bad, that she has of selecting canonical Scriptures. She claims to have infallible tests whereby to distinguish between what is divinely instituted and what consists of mere human additions and corruptions, and she professes to follow rigorously the rule of immobility in tradition laid down in many authoritative announcements. Of these the most important is that of St. Vincent of Lérins, whose famous Canon declares that those traditions only are genuine which have been received by the Church in all ages, by all of the faithful, and in all places (*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ad omnibus*). It seems hardly necessary to point out that this profession is, as regards the great mass of the Church's later traditional doctrine, entirely opposed to the facts. Tradition, like other rules of faith, says Father Tyrrell (*Mediævalism*, p. 96), is selected by Catholics through "an act of personal independent judgment (aided, no doubt, by grace)" —a rather large assumption. The Romanist, in most questions of religious belief, puts his brains out of commission and entrusts them to the priest's keeping, but in the matter of tradition the devotee who is also a rational inquirer has to use a great deal of private, or subjective, judgment. He must apply to it *personal* interpretation, just as a Protestant applies personal interpretation to the Scriptures; but, as the Apostolical Traditions, those derived from the teaching and actions of the apostles, are nowhere collected or codified in such a way that the inquirer can see them and judge for himself, he pursues his investigations under considerable difficulty. The Church keeps under lock and key such meagre information as exists upon the subject, and the inquirer must be content with taking the priest's word for it all.

When we agree to accept certain gentlemen in Rome as our infallible guides in religious matters we do so by an act of private judgment: we are making a choice by the light of our reason. In like manner, when we say that such-and-such a book or doctrine is inspired we are not only expressing a personal opinion on its inspiration, but we are also saying that the men who guaranteed its inspiration were themselves inspired. When we assent to certain doctrines or facts stated in certain writings we are really assenting, not to their credibility, but to the authority of the "imponents," that is to say, the people who laid down the doctrine and ordered us to believe it. But what earthly proof is there that these people were inspired men, or even good judges of historic evidence? What possible guarantee, beyond the Church's bare assertion, have we that the "revelations given to holy souls" (to quote Newman's words) are genuine revelations, or that they were ever given at all? How does the alleged "consent of the whole Catholic world" (which in the case of most traditions is wholly non-existent) justify us, as R. H. Hutton says,[1] "in accepting as historic fact that of which there is absolutely not a morsel of historic evidence? Does the consent of the heroic age of Greece guarantee the historic truth of the labours of Hercules? or the consent of the whole mediæval age of Europe prove the historic truth of the existence of fairies?"

The real fact is that most of these traditions represent, or are at least highly coloured by, the human tastes and prepossessions of a much later period; and to assume that the oral instruction has been transmitted correctly, and in anything like purity, through centuries of darkness and ignorance, is to make a very large assumption indeed. Religious knowledge in early days suffered, not only from

[1] *Cardinal Newman*, p. 204.

ignorance and lack of evidence, but from a superabundance of fiction and falsification. Literary forgery was rampant; and the student of tradition, with the imperfect means at his disposal, was unable to unravel the mass of fraud. "It became apparent," says Lord Acton in his *Lectures on Modern History*, p. 78, "that the divines of many ages had been remarkable for their incapacity to find out falsehood, and for their dexterity in propagating it." Now I must point out that considerable numbers of the divines who were incapable of finding out falsehood were Popes and other eminent ecclesiastics who claimed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. How, then, can they possibly be sure that the other writings of the Fathers in which tradition is enshrined are genuine? No doubt the critical faculties of later experts were sharpened by use; but supernatural inspiration, on which Roman Catholics rely for these matters, is the same for all ages—indeed, it is said to have been much more common in primitive times than it is now. External evidence of the authenticity of these traditions is wholly lacking: the beliefs based upon them are merely pious opinions, bearing, in many cases, the conspicuous marks of popular myths, and resting on the wish-to-believe; and the men who try to impose them forcibly upon the world are assuming a very grave responsibility. They present us with a chain of what, temporarily and for politeness' sake, we will call evidence; but, unfortunately, the chain is weakest just where strength is most needed, namely, in the links that are furthest off and nearest to the original sources of information. In fact, it may be said that these links are in most cases altogether lacking, and in their absence it is no use strengthening the chain at the other end. Roman Catholics have got to prove that their doctrines, apart from those contained in Scripture, were taught by

divinely inspired persons in the early ages of the Church: they must give us evidence from the primitive eras of Christianity, and they have none to offer. No amount of controversial writing in later days, asserting the authority of primitive tradition, can give us a test or means of distinguishing what is human from what is divine in the alleged traditional revelation. According to Irenæus, a very early Christian writer, and other great men, there is no valid tradition outside that which was written down in their day: the belief in articles of faith resting on oral instruction alone was regarded as a heretical belief, and it may safely be said that the vast mass of existing Roman tradition was written down long after the days of Irenæus.

Many of these objections can be urged, no doubt, against the authenticity of the New Testament narratives, which are based upon oral instruction. But the Gospel histories can at least give a better account of themselves and their origins than the Church can give of her traditions. The Synoptic evangelists and the apostles wrote their impressions down within a reasonable period after the events recorded had taken place: we have something more to go upon than the unverified assertions of unidentified persons at unascertainable dates and places.

Meanwhile the "supplementary revelations" of the Church by a series of alleged supernatural interventions proceed apace. Tradition is piled on tradition, an inverted pyramid on a very slender basis, a mountainous structure of dogma, an institutionalism resting on a foundation of highly disputable rumour. The idea of an "unchanged and unchangeable nucleus of sacred tradition" was a fiction invented by the Church in later times. If sceptical people suggest that she makes a good many of her traditions up as she goes along, and creates "necessary fictions" in order to extend her authority,

she has only herself to thank. Tradition " was made as well as grew." It can be manufactured—has been, and is, manufactured—in the same way that imaginary canons, " Donations," and other apocryphal documents were turned out by the dozen in the Papal forgery department.[1] There is no assurance of any kind that some of the traditions now stated to be embodied in the writings of the Fathers were not fabricated in similar fashion. St. Jerome complained, just like any Protestant Society in our day, that the Church usurped in the name of Tradition the sanction and authority of Holy Writ; and the traditions which he deprecated were derived from Pagan sources.

The manufacture of tradition is carried on under the mask of so-called interpretation; and interpretation, as M. Loisy tells us and as we all know, is governed by all sorts of political and opportunist considerations—the necessity of compromising between philosophy and Christian tradition, the natural exigencies of propagandism, and many other reasons of strategy or politics—anything, in short, except the desire to obtain essential truth. What is called the interpretation of old doctrines is usually the creation of new ones. At least twelve additional Articles of Faith were created by the Council of Trent and by Pius IV in the sixteenth century. There was a prolonged and angry debate in the Council on the question whether Apostolic Tradition was on a level with Scripture, and the historians inform us that there were as many opinions as tongues. It was made perfectly clear that the belief in the supreme authority of tradition (as it is now understood) was *not* held everywhere, always, or by all Christians. Similar discord, accompanied

[1] " The age was rife with forgeries," says Professor Tyndall. " The end being held to sanctify the means, there was no lack of manufactured testimony."

by much strong language, prevailed at the lengthy deliberations of the Vatican Council in 1870, when the Pope, in the face of much determined and highly enlightened opposition, was declared infallible, and the innovating power of the Church in doctrinal matters largely extended.

"La Tradizione son' io—*I* am tradition," said Pius IX, who assumed the newly woven mantle of infallibility; and the words give us the situation, as it now stands, in a nutshell. Tradition *is* the Pope, and the bishops do not count unless they are "in agreement with the Pope": as Tyrrell puts it, they "are simply on parade at a legal ceremony," and, if a doctrinal dispute arises among them, we have it on Cardinal Mercier's authority that "the Pope settles it by his supreme authority."[1] To Apostolic Tradition is now added "Ecclesiastical (or, as I should prefer to say, Papal) Tradition," and the poor layman must believe both under threats of hell-fire. The Pope can interpret tradition at his own sweet will: he is the originator of fresh revelations, not merely the guardian of old ones, as heretofore. A wholly novel system of doctrinal teaching is thus inaugurated by the ecclesiastics. They take what is at best merely the opinion of a school, and convert it into a dogma under the pretence that it was fixed and accepted from the beginning. The commandments of modern men are set up as the precepts of God in primitive ages; what M. Loisy (writing as a Catholic apologist) termed "the artifices of interpretation" are called into play, and "the rags of the ancient Catholic tradition" are employed to hide the shame of a new and extremely discreditable fabrication of imposture.

The work of traditional exegesis, according to M. Loisy, "seems in permanent contradiction with the principles of a purely rational and historical

[1] *Mediævalism*, by G. Tyrrell, p. 55.

interpretation": in other words, there now remain very small limits or restraints upon Papal powers of doctrinal innovation. What is new-fangled and of external origin will be represented as having been there potentially and "implicitly" all the time. "You applaud what is ancient, but live from day to day upon novelties," as Tertullian justly observed. "Do not come to me with the latest phase of opinion which the world has seen, and protest to me that it is the oldest," said Newman in one of his sarcastic diatribes against Anglicanism: with more reason, perhaps, he might have addressed his remarks to the Roman Curia.

But the theory of traditional infallibility occasionally proves too much even for the ingenuity of Papal casuists. Tradition, for example, as interpreted in numerous Papal pronouncements, told us that Moses wrote the Pentateuch in the form in which we now have it: the verbal inerrancy of Scripture has always been a plank in the Papist platform. But even Roman obscurantism now shies at the final chapter of Deuteronomy, where the great Hebrew lawgiver appears as the chronicler of his own obsequies. "It is evident that the dear man Moses did not write this," as the famous mystic, Jacob Boehme,[1] said of the Mosaic story of creation. Roman Catholic tradition, therefore, has been caught tripping, and, when once its inerrancy is disproved, it can no longer be accepted as an article of general belief. It is highly improbable, however, that the trust of the faithful in its efficacy will be greatly shaken. They seem quite content that orthodoxy should be the Pope's 'doxy, that policy should be allowed to modify old dogmas, invent new ones, and adapt institutions and ritual to the requirements of an individual imperious will. Since the Vatican Council, and still more under the Pontificate of

[1] See Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, ii, 118.

Pius X, the *ecclesia discens*, the lay mind, has been regarded as a sort of putty mould prepared to receive the impress of the reigning Pope's ideas.

"A perfectly new platform of doctrines is created," said Newman of the "new dogmas" introduced by the Vatican Council. "The whole Church platform," he added—and surely good English Roman Catholics will believe their favourite hero—"seems to me likely to be off its ancient moorings: it is like a ship which has gradually swung round, or taken up a new position." "Tradition broken down, assent replaced by evasion. Was it worth having come so far to find so little?" is Mr. Fawkes's comment.[1] The sham antiques of the Roman Kabbalists (Kabbala means oral tradition) are novelties, "with youth in their countenance," introduced for political ends; but the real nature of the transaction, the abrogation of ancient tradition, is concealed from the laity under a mist of verbiage which the mass of the faithful do not understand. They shrug their shoulders and leave the matter in the hands of their spiritual guides. Roman Catholics, and the majority of other sectarians, are overpowered by the glamour of big words, and governed in religious matters by a superstitious regard for names rather than realities.[2] If we could substitute the words "rumour," "legend," "myth," or "gossip" for "Tradition," its glamour would evaporate, and its true value as evidence might be made apparent.

To sum up, Roman Catholic traditions are the product of human minds in an unenlightened and

[1] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 44.

[2] A curious example came to my notice a year or two ago. An excellent servant in our employ was an ardent Ritualist, and fond of discussing religious questions. My wife asked her one day if they believed in transubstantiation at her church. "Yes, we do," said the girl; "only we call it *trans*substantiation." "Well," said my wife, "that doesn't make much difference, does it?" "Oh, yes, it does," said the girl very earnestly: "it's *quite* different."

superstitious age, and they bear clear traces of their earthly origin. The hall-mark of truth is lacking to them, and each year that passes lowers their credibility in the eyes of reasonable people. Their actual sources are shrouded in mystery. When they are not the deliberate inventions of interested persons, they describe phenomena or events as they appeared to the people of their time, and register the speculative theories and conclusions formed by those people on wholly inadequate grounds.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SONS OF GOD

"The sons of God must not espouse the daughters of men" (The Rev. George Bampfield on *Mixed Marriages*, and their evils).

"Let no man beguile you of your reward, being a voluntary in humility, and . . . vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Colossians ii. 18).

> And the Devil did grin, for his darling sin
> Is pride that apes humility.
>
> Coleridge.

Humility is the badge of all good Roman Catholics. The religion is a system of spiritual servitude, of timid subjection to formal ordinances and priestly domination; so its teachers naturally impress on their pupils the virtues of meekness, the supreme importance of complete submissiveness, and the disfranchisement of will and judgment in spiritual matters. The Romanist ideal is admirably expressed in Bishop Ken's lines upon St. Thomas à Kempis, which are printed on the frontispiece of the *Imitatio Christi* :—

> Thrice happy Saint, remote from haunts of ill,
> Employed in hymn, and dispossessed of will.

Here we have the model pietist of monastic imagination—a humble man who has surrendered his personal volition into priestly keeping, and occupies his time and energies in singing hymns. Similarly, Newman, a true son of the Church, glorifies the servile temper in language which Dean Inge rightly characterizes as somewhat nauseous. He regarded inaction, terror, and obsequiousness as the hall-marks of true piety; his great aim was to make people anxious and afraid.

W. G. Ward, again, recommended as most acceptable to the Deity an attitude which is self-depreciatory, penitential, and "abject." This spirit of deferential abjectness is often displayed by Roman Catholics to their priests, as well as to Omnipotence, as anybody who has travelled much in Papist countries must know.[1] Pride—other people's pride, that is to say—is the deadly sin in the eyes of the Catholic ecclesiastic; it, and independence of mind, are the qualities more opposed than anything else to the genius of his religion, the deadliest corrosives of that absolutist system upon which Romanism is based. That servility to mere outward formula, coupled with blind unreasoning obedience, debases the human character and eats into the heart of true religion, does not concern the men for whom piety consists in the surrender of our mental personality to the superior wisdom of spiritual instructors.

Leaving the ecclesiastics for a moment, let me cite the authoritative opinion of a distinguished English layman who has joined the Roman communion. Mr. G. K. Chesterton, dealing with the Irish Question in a communication to the *Observer* (November 30, 1920), says that the fundamental blunder in the relations between Irish Protestants and Catholics is the arrogance displayed by Ulster; and he bids us observe the marked difference in this respect between uppish Belfast and meek, humble Dublin. This arrogance is, for Mr. Chesterton, a matter of morals—"more moral, indeed, than morals." "Catholic opinion," he tells us, "regards superiority not only as a sin but as a weak indulgence, a thing cowardly and corrupting like a drug"; pride is the absolute annihilation which makes devils and destroys

[1] A soldier who served for some years on the French Front told me that, among all the wonderful and dreadful things he had seen, nothing impressed him more than the sight of an old woman grovelling on the ground before a German priest in a town near Cologne, and getting up bespattered all over with mud.

men ; and the egoist who makes himself the standard of everything is more hopelessly diseased and degraded than the man who has had six mistresses or has murdered six men.

Let me remark, in passing, that Quebec freely accuses Ontario of a similar superciliousness ; and a greater than Mr. Chesterton, St. Thomas à Kempis, teaches that " it is great wisdom and perfection to esteem nothing of ourselves." There is no doubt whatever about the Church's theory concerning these matters ; but we have also to consider her practice. Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that pride is the deadly sin that it is represented to be ; let us admit freely that few of us are as humble as we ought to be ; but when Roman Catholics rate us for our sinful arrogance, and warn us as to its deplorable consequences, it behoves us to consider whether they are the proper people to deliver the lecture. We must ask whether the Church of Mr. Chesterton's choice—a Church which is isolated, exclusive, and aristocratic on principle—is herself a shining exemplar of the particular virtues which she parades before mankind. Is she in a position to admonish Belfast, Toronto, or anybody else on their airs of superiority, or to contrast them unfavourably with her own alleged meekness ? We know that her ministers profess that " humble conceit of ourselves " which St. Thomas recommended, and no doubt practised himself : they frequently don the robe of humility, but they wear it with a doubtful grace. Also, there are amongst them men who, while professing a constant esteem of others, adopt very singular methods of manifesting it. Persistency in detachment breeds, as usually happens, an attitude of superiority.

Mr. Chesterton is an acknowledged authority on heretics, and I must remind him that the official theologians of his Church regard heretics—people, that is to say, whose only crime is that they are

unable to share her views—with men guilty of the worst crimes and the vilest vices. Pope Benedict, who—if we may credit St. Thomas à Kempis—ought to "think always well and highly of others," disparages the earnest English and American Protestants of Rome in language that would appear quite shocking to that admirable Saint. The Pope is a religious aristocrat, if ever there was one. He will not meet other Churches on terms of equality. His terms are unconditional surrender. Is there no note of "superiority" here? And the words of reproach which he used concerning the Protestants in Rome—"emissaries of Satan"—have the authentic ring of spiritual *hauteur*. He would be the last person in the world to acknowledge that a non-Catholic is the spiritual equal of a Papist. Similarly, the attitude of Cardinal Newman—in private life a courteous and affable man—towards his religious inferiors was occasionally in later days arrogant in the extreme. His satire and criticism of the beliefs entertained by poor benighted Protestants were sometimes extremely witty, but the tone is presumptuous and overbearing. Even in these days the Roman Catholic who, obeying his natural instincts, marries a Protestant lady is considered to be uniting himself with one who is on a lower plane of Christianity: it is a shocking *mésalliance*, in fact, because, as Father Bampfield justly observes, "the sons of God must not espouse the daughters of men." So convinced, moreover, is the Roman Catholic Bishop of Bathurst (in Australia) of this fact, that he told his flock the other day that he "would discourage friendships and affection between young people of opposing faiths," [1] because he found that mixed couples had no "hatred of heresy." In plain words, the Bishop's spiritual pride has made him a fomenter of sectarian strife, a creator of artificial barriers between the sexes,

[1] *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 17, 1921.

and of discord among young people whom Nature intended to coalesce. What a strange *rôle* for a spiritual overseer, a minister of a Christian brotherhood, to play in life! How redolent are his words, and those of Father Bampfield, of that haughty caste-spirit which delights in contemning the poor neighbour who is outside the pale!

Yet the same lack of true humanity, of the genuine milk of human kindness, has been shown by the Church in all ages. She is a well-spring, not only of public strife, but of domestic unhappiness. Every consideration of natural benevolence, family affection, and the social instinct must give way to her imperious will and to what are supposed to be her interests. The corporate sense of self-importance induces even saints to behave brutally. St. Jerome scorned the idea of thinking about a mother's tears, or respecting the ties of kindred and filial reverence. Your widowed sister may throw her gentle arms about you; but, where Mother Church is concerned, "cruelty is the only piety." St. Bernard bereaved mothers of their children, the aged of their last solace and support, and praised most those who left most misery behind them.[1] Once more I say, "What a *rôle* for gentle and dove-like men to play in life!" Only a Church which makes herself the standard of everything (a very wicked and foolish thing to do, as Mr. Chesterton rightly says) could be guilty of such malignant egoism.

From the Roman Catholic standpoint the Bishop of Bathurst was of course acting quite correctly. The Church of Rome regards her children as a *gens sancta*, a caste apart from, and superior to, the presumptuous persons who dispute her authoritative

[1] Quotations of this kind could easily be multiplied. See Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, p. 137; Cohen's *Religion and Sex*, p. 217; Milman's *History of Latin Christianity*, ii, 121; Lecky's *History of European Morals*, ii, 134–135.

claims; and the laity entertain a denominational contempt, which at times they are at no pains to conceal, for other religions and for the benighted beings who cannot see eye to eye with them on transcendental matters. They inherit the traditions of those ancient peoples who regarded themselves as God's people, if not actually His sons or descendants. Many friends of mine, who know Catholics and like them, have complained to me of their tacit self-assertion, and their quiet assumption of a superiority based on an ill-founded certitude that they are wholly right and we are wholly wrong. God, if we are to believe their Church, distributes His favours denominationally, and without any regard to personal deserts. Grace, as we have seen, is the monopoly of a sect; and if the poor pariah outside the pale is damned eternally, so much the worse for him. To slay the heretic is not only right, but a kindness to him. The heresiarch is an embodied evil, and should be dealt with by the competent authority. "To spare him is a false and dangerous pity. It is to endanger the souls of thousands, and it is uncharitable towards himself." [1] Not all Roman Catholics hold these extreme views, but they unanimously consider "our separated brethren"—thus, with a suave urbanity which sometimes thinly disguises a bitter scorn and dislike, do they term their Anglican fellow-Christians—to be divided from the Roman flock as the goats are divided from the sheep. The highest of High Churchmen lacks the required denominational *cachet;* and, as for mere Evangelical "piety coloured by character," it has, in orthodox nostrils, a distinct savour of goatishness. Anglican episcopacy may achieve unity with Rome any moment it likes, but only at the price of complete submission to the Papacy: for the Protestant goatherds, with their

[1] Cardinal Newman, quoted by Dean Inge in *Outspoken Essays*, p. 178.

invalid priestly Orders and doubtful episcopal ones, to claim equality with the duly accredited shepherds of the faithful is a piece of rank presumption. Yet, strange to say, the desire of furthering reunion with Rome is a lure which always attracts the Ritualist as a May-fly attracts a trout, and he will endure much in order to attain it. The acme of humiliation was reached in 1896, when the late Lord Halifax, sadly ill-advised by his fellow High Churchmen, visited Rome and humbly begged the Pope to recognize the validity of Anglican Orders. He was hospitably received and informed that an answer to his petition would be forwarded in due course. It arrived eventually in the form of a Bull, the tone whereof was neither meek nor humble, but had the true dogmatic ring appropriate to a haughty and exclusive episcopate. The British nobleman had called for Orders, but the sons of God, mindful of their ancestry, bluntly informed him that they had none to give. "Motu proprio," they said, "certâ scientiâ, pronuntiamus et declaramus ordinationes ritu Anglicano actas irritas prorsus fuisse et esse, omninoque nullas" ("of our own initiative, with infallible knowledge, we pronounce and declare that Anglican Orders always have been, and still are, entirely void, and altogether of no effect").[1] Disheartened by this cruel rebuff, Lord Halifax took counsel with his friends in the English Church Union; and Roman Catholic modesty in action, thought, and demeanour was once more exemplified in a somewhat striking manner.

To the non-Catholic mind humility of the dictatorial Roman type savours of presumption: as Dr. James Martineau pertinently observes in his *Seat of Authority*, "an over-acted humility transparently covers a presumption more than royal."[2]

[1] See *Studies in Modernism*, p. 102.

[2] The royal "we," assumed by Roman Catholic prelates, is one nstance.

Cowper has some very apposite lines on the same subject :—

> Pride may be pampered while the flesh grows lean,
> Humility may clothe an English Dean ;
> . . . . .
> Pride thrives in misery, and abundant grows
> In misery fools upon themselves impose.

There is a species of self-abasement which often leads to its exact opposite—an overwheening sense of self-importance, which in the Roman Church attains proportions that are absolutely staggering. The clerics entertain the most extraordinary notions about their consequence in the eyes of God. We learn, to take one example, from St. Alphonsus Liguori that " Jesus died to institute the priesthood." It was quite unnecessary, the Saint says, for Him to die to save the world. He could have achieved that object by much simpler and pleasanter means ; but, if He had not died, where would the priest have found a victim to offer up in the Mass ? [1]

Such self-complacency would be almost incredible did we not see continually in the Church human pride at its apex, coupled with an affected lowliness which is theatrical rather than convincing. Resignation mingles with self-assertion ; pride of place and the lust for authority with a sense, occasionally genuine, of utter unworthiness. The ecclesiastics deprecate violence, but many of them encourage rebellion ; they preach gentleness and non-resistance, and then burn or maltreat some poor wretch for daring to think differently from themselves. The Pope is *servus servorum*, the servant of God's servants, but he is also *potestate Petrus, unctione Christus*, " ruler of the orb of earth," a second God upon earth. " We hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty," Leo XIII is reported to have said, and there is no

[1] *The Dignity and Duties of the Priest*, or *Selva*, by St. Alphonsus Liguori, edition of 1888, pp. 26, 33.

doubt that he thought so. The successors of Boniface VIII do not shout out their pretensions so loudly as he did, but they have a pretty large idea of their human dignities and prerogatives, and thoroughly enjoy being reminded that they are terrestrial divinities. The Cæsarian attitude is perfectly genuine; the bowed head and bended knee are a more or less transparent pose. The subordinate ecclesiastics, with their suave and deprecatory attitude, are no less taught, as their imitators the Anglican Tractarians were taught, to "magnify their office" while magnifying the Lord, and they are not slow to follow the advice. Precepts enjoining humility, however admirable in themselves, are "peculiarly for home use," as Ruskin has it; but the Church, while approving the subservience for the laity, thinks it a very poor thing for clerics.

The same inconsistent blend of opposing qualities is shown in the Church's theory of the cosmic order. While representing man as a miserable worm, and otherwise depreciating him in the scale of creation, the Catholic propositions about religion and the world's order nevertheless make humanity the final cause of the universe. The Divine purpose was centred upon his regeneration and salvation, a notion that Voltaire illustrated in the witty fancies of *Micromegas*. "The little animalcule in the square cap who makes the giant laugh in a Homeric manner by its inflated account of itself as the final cause of the universe is the type of the philosophy on which Catholicism is based." [1]

Tyrrell, who was himself a Jesuit for many years, and describes the Society as incorrigible and irreformable, depicts in vigorous language "the spirit of corporate conceit" existing in an Order which regards itself as the bodyguard of the Madonna, her select Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms; and the

[1] *Diderot*, by Lord Morley, p. 102.

"braggart boastful spirit" which he tells us is a marked feature of the Corporation hardly seems consonant with the spirit of the Head whose name it bears. People in close touch with another Roman Catholic brotherhood, that of the Sacred Heart, do not represent its members as being by any means indifferent to social distinction or other attributes of earthly grandeur: we are also given to understand that they, like the Jesuits, are regarded in celestial circles as being among the smartest of smart Societies. Yet we have no proof that Heaven views these vainglorious regulars with any special favour: the evidence, as a matter of fact, is all the other way. As the Lollards said, "God made not priests, for in Christ's time there were no priests. What need to go to the feet, when we may go to the Head?"[1] In a more remote antiquity Agamemnon (as reported by Euripides in his *Iphigenia at Aulis*, 520) was no believer in clerical disinterestedness or humility, but described the whole tribe of seers and diviners as "one ambitious pest" (*φιλότιμον κακόν*). As Dr. Inge reminds us (*Outspoken Essays*, p. 236), even St. Augustine rejected the priestly intermediary, and only wanted to know God and his own soul; "these two things, and no third whatever."

The self-depreciatory Romanist who rebukes the pride of reason, but himself rushes audaciously into regions where wiser men scarcely dare to tread, is surely displaying an overweening self-confidence. Who is the more humble, the man who freely confesses his ignorance in the face of impenetrable mysteries, or the cocksure person who asserts that he knows all about it and complacently offers us his facile, reach-me-down solutions of enigmas that have defied the finest human intellects for centuries? Mr. McCabe, who has made a careful study of the figures, estimates that there are about 190,000,000

[1] See *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, p. 366.

Roman Catholics in the world, and that out of this number 120,000,000 are entirely illiterate : [1] nor does a censorious world usually credit the remaining 70,000,000 with an endowment of overwhelming brain-power. But the sons of God are far from sharing these estimates of their mental capacity. Cardinal Manning assures us that " the collective intelligence, culture, experience, instincts, and discernment, natural and supernatural, of the Catholic episcopate is the highest light of council upon earth." Irish bishops, men of humble exterior for the most part, are convinced that they are infallible transmitters of divine enlightenment ; and the keen, logical intellects of the Papist clergy and laity (including, I suppose, the 120,000,000 illiterates) make them unequalled judges of the soundness of arguments—people who would never be able to content themselves with such as are not really sound.[2] Before this galaxy of mingled wisdom and logical acumen, holiness, and humility there are many who still bow their heads in silent admiration. But others recognize that there is another side to the shield, and view with less favour the spirit of corporate and individual self-complacency displayed by these unassuming ecclesiastics. Uriah Heep was, I believe, a " British Low Protestant "—the type to which the *Month* assures its readers that I conform—but his *genus* is not confined to any one denomination. The opinions held by the late Father George Tyrrell concerning certain obsequious, yet truculent, pillars of the Papacy are on record ; and here and there a cynic or heretic may still be heard to echo his fervent prayer, " I trust I am not humble, from what I know of humble men."

[1] *The Popes and their Church*, p. vii.

[2] Mr. Belloc is quoted (*The Literary Guide*, October, 1921) as saying that "the Catholic Church is the one place where real thought is always to be found."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RELIGIOUS OUTLOOK

"The Gospel—by which is meant the personal teaching of Christ—has passed through four great transformations." . . . It is now "a standpoint rather than a creed." . . . "The lines on which mankind is now advancing are not those of ecclesiastical or dogmatic Christianity" (*Studies in Modernism*, pp. 316–17).

"Institutional religion does not represent the Gospel of Christ, but the opinions of a mass of nominal supporters. It cannot be expected to do much more than look after its own interests, and reflect the moral ideas of its supporters" (*Outspoken Essays*, by DEAN INGE, p. 264).

"A profound reconstruction is demanded" (*Ibid.*, p. 135).

THEOLOGY has been described as religious intellectualism. Theologians represent the *intelligentsia* of the Church; their work is purely a work of the understanding, and ought not, properly considered, to be credited with any more divine sanction than the labours of chemists or geologists or the students of ethics. Religion, which is quite different from theology, but is habitually confused with it, rests, like philosophy, on a temperamental basis rather than on the reasoning faculties. Even "Heaven is a Temper," we have lately been told by a very intelligent lady; we can all attain it, if only our temper be the right one: and religion is certainly *une affaire de goût personnel*, as I believe Renan observed. You catch it, or I would rather say it catches you, whenever your system is ready to entertain the germ. People say that Jones has "got religion," just as they say that Smith has got the influenza. As taste and temperament change,

religion changes too; and theology, after its wont, follows the fashion and cuts its coat according to its cloth. All the talk about identity and immutability of doctrine or practice is the merest moonshine.

Those highbrows of dogmatism, the Scholastics, sought—and claimed success for their efforts—to arrive at eternal truth by means of the syllogism: dialectic, basing itself on philosophy and revelation, was made supreme, and the formal logic of Aristotle replaced the intuitive methods favoured by Plotinus and the other neo-Platonic philosophers. The dialectical process is now rejected by most people, and the judgment of St. Ambrose, who condemned it, has been vindicated. Modern theology, having come to the conclusion that mere belief in a proposition is an insufficient form of faith, is now casting about for new methods of verifying its hypotheses, and is showing a willingness to be content with something less than certainty. It does not go quite so far as Newman, or suggest that a 3 to 2 probability ought to be enough to satisfy any good Christian, but it is losing a good deal of the old intransigent self-confidence. The attitude of the educated Japanese towards religion has been wittily described as "an attitude of politeness towards possibilities"; and Newman showed himself more than polite towards them. He obligingly provided us with a large "inventory of possibilities," a repertory of fairly tenable hypotheses; and then proceeded, somewhat unscrupulously, to treat them as though they were certainties. He professed the deepest contempt for the *via media* of Anglicanism, but constructed a middle road of his own which the Church clearly saw would lead her into perilous places.

The relations existing between Roman Catholicism and theology are varied, and they have been rendered more difficult, instead of easier, by the mental exercitations of men like Newman, who, as

the Roman cleric observed, "mix up and confuse everything." The Church always endeavours to make out that Christ was a theologian, a charge which He would probably have repudiated with the utmost indignation. Catholic theology calls itself a science, which it never was and never will be. In spite of its claim to be the protector and regulator of science, it finds itself compelled in these days to conciliate the progressive spirit; but when it temporizes with modern thought, it does so at its peril. The two cannot mix any more than oil and water. When liberalism and Curialism meet, one of them has got to go under: amalgamation can only mean that one has absorbed, and by absorbing has destroyed, the other. The Rev. A. L. Lilley quotes [1] Abbé Marcel Hébert as saying that a day may come when "Catholicism will make its act of Protestantism, and then there will be an end of the latter." Such a day, Mr. Lilley thinks, may be the beginning of Catholicism: to my mind it will certainly be the end of Romanism. It seems probable that the Church, in spite of the Curia's professions to the contrary, will be compelled to modernize herself, but the patchwork process cannot go on indefinitely. Grafts may be called natural growths; fictions of unchanged doctrine and immutable sacred traditions may be piled up mountain-high, one atop of another, but they only make confusion worse confounded. The doctrine *has* changed; the Church has had to bow the knee to the laws of natural and political development, and she may be compelled to make further concessions. Tyrrell, with other liberal Catholics, thinks that the desperate efforts of theology to maintain the *semper eadem* fiction, the struggle of conservatism against the irresistible laws of change and growth, have been the means of saving Christianity from destruction, or, at any rate, from trans-

[1] *Modernism*, p. 64.

formation out of all recognition. He finds comfort in the reflection that, amid all the protective theological accretions, "the nucleus of Christianity has been preserved like a fly in amber, or like a mammoth in ice." [1] The result hardly seems commensurate with the vast labour expended in achieving it; and some of us would like (if I may slightly vary the metaphor) to thin down the huge protective husk and to be allowed to see a little more of the kernel it envelopes.

Certain Modernists prophesy that the Christianity of the future will consist of mysticism and charity, with the Eucharist in its primitive form as an outward bond; and Tyrrell thinks that one day the historical lie of the Papacy will be recognized, and that we shall have a Catholic Church without an infallible Pope. Mysticism—of a sort—we already possess in plenty, but religious charity is as yet sadly to seek. The mystical tide is now flowing strongly in the denominational world, and it seems probable that the dogmatic and institutional element in religion will be still further replaced by the personal. Let us hope that the mysticism of coming generations will be of a quality superior to that now supplied by professional occultists and spook-raisers, or the accredited miracle-men of the Papacy. We do not want to perpetuate the sorcery of the fashionable tea-party, graced by the presence of some drawing-room Cagliostro or journalistic Swedenborg, or to be taught by the pundits of the East, or of Rome, to seek Quietist perfection by sitting on nail-studded chairs and contemplating our navels. As to the Spiritualists and necromancers of our day, I do not know of any more depressing people. Their dreams, the communications they profess to give us from most unentertaining wraiths concerning the quality of the food and drink and tobacco in the nether

[1] *Autobiography*, ii, 218.

world, etc., etc., are the reverse of inspiriting. "There is not even a fine nightmare among them," as Oscar Wilde justly complained. "They are commonplace, sordid and tedious."

The ordinary Roman Catholic of our time will, of course, continue to insist on a full measure of undiluted magic and supernaturalism, pressed down and running over. He wants a religion that is "warm." He would shiver at "the cold Christs and tangled Trinities" of the schoolmen, but finds abundant consolation in the more ardent, but exceedingly primitive, mysticism which the Church serves up to her votaries. He still maintains a robust faith in her future, and not a few among the faithful look forward with hope and longing to a restoration of the temporal power. To the British critics of Papal futility during the world-crisis the selected British champions of the Vatican reply, with Benedict XV, that "to-day" the Pope could do no more. "His power is too weak," they say; those who desire the Pope to arbitrate effectively should "labour to strengthen it"—with bayonets and guns and other embodiments of material force. And this, in their opinion, may yet be done. So far from holding that the Papacy is a mere transient or embarrassed phantom, or that (as D'Argenson thought, so early as 1753) "every priest, all priesthood, all revelation, all mystery" will be banished,[1] they believe that it will reach its apogee some time during the present era. Let me cite the view of an exceptionally able and influential Roman Catholic, Monsignor R. H. Benson, son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury.

In his striking novel, *The Dawn of All* (1911), the Monsignor presents us with a dream of the Papacy in the not far-distant future, which, in his preface, he describes as a sketch of "the kind of developments *which may reasonably be expected* [my italics]

[1] *Diderot and the Encyclopædists*, by Lord Morley, p. 180.

about sixty years hence," if the pendulum of modern thought swings in favour of orthodoxy. About half a century from now the reign of mediævalism will return; and the Pope, Father and Sovereign Lord of princes and monarchs, will wield a power such as no living being on earth had ever wielded before. Theology is then paramount over the civil law, reason once more bows its head to ecclesiastical authority, and the dogmatist has the time of his life. All the ancient pageantry of the Papacy, its frills and feathers and furbelows, its gold lace and gewgaws, reappear on a vastly augmented scale, and are depicted with intense gusto by the author. Haughty Cardinals, attended by gorgeous flunkeys, sweep by in splendid Rolls-Royces, and the population grovels —as it ought to grovel before such gilded and sanctified magnificence. Lines of passenger airships (named after archangels!) ply regularly between London and the great Continental capitals, each airship being luxuriously equipped and furnished with an oratory. Religious persecution of the most flagrant and unblushing kind is in full swing, and is frankly justified and approved by the author, though he repeats the stale old pretence (now abandoned by many enlightened Roman Catholics) that it is the State, not the Church, which is responsible for slaying unbelievers. English heretics are handed over by the ecclesiastics to the secular arm, for execution or other punishment, as offenders against society; and an amiable monk, who has been condemned to death for somewhat mildly heterodox views, cheerfully acknowledges the justice of the sentence as he is led out to his doom. The Socialists and heretics not unnaturally rise in revolt against sacerdotal pretension and tyranny, and there is a parley between their Envoy and the Pope, who represents the Christian Powers. His Holiness says that he accepts no terms; those he offers are " absolute and uncon-

ditional submission to myself," and he warns the Envoy that the air-fleets of orthodoxy start at midnight on their voyage of destruction. The Envoy bids him reflect upon the appalling slaughter and suffering which will ensue. The Pope justifies himself by saying that he is Christ's Vicar, and by quoting the old familiar tag about his Master coming to send, not peace, but a sword into the world. The rebels are smashed up by the Papal forces; and the book ends with a florid description, where all the resources of the dictionary are drawn upon for a suitable exhibition of lavish verbiage, of the Pope being rowed in a magnificent galley between lines of saluting warships, with fleets of stately airships circling overhead, and receiving the homage of the assembled earthly potentates, during a grand ecclesiastical regatta at Portsmouth.

So runs the modern Papist's dream, which has always been the dream of good Catholics throughout the ages: it still remains the ideal for which Ultramontanes, who are the controlling power in the Church, are continually striving. The modern and democratic ideas which certain Roman preachers now expound are merely a cloak donned for a purpose, to be thrown off whenever occasion requires. Meanwhile liberal theology goes on its way, unperturbed by the thought of future massacre by renascent clericalism, and with very different aims and aspirations. Its view is that the sun of institutionalism is setting, and that it must abandon the theory of the necessity of priestly mediation, and rely henceforth on personal and direct communion with the Creator. The Rev. Alfred Fawkes, alluding to the results of Biblical exegesis and research, points out that much of what is generally understood by Christianity has disappeared in the critical analysis. "The soul has been preserved, but the body has evaporated: Christology, the Church, her creeds, her sacraments are

gone." [1] The débris which blocked the entrance to the temple having been cleared away, we are allowed to have access to the shrine; and modern theology, finding that dogmatic assertion about religion is not to be trusted, is relying more and more on a kind of personal intuition which it terms "experience." This becomes, for some people, a divine revelation which takes the place of reason and conscience; and for them it is sufficient. But, while it may undoubtedly form an admirable basis for personal religion, as the foundation of a religion that is at once magical and intercessory, dogmatic and institutional, it is obviously inadequate. You cannot with any show of decency visit with severe spiritual penalties a man who does not share your private intuitions, or refuses to accept their validity and relevance. How far the thrill of a deep emotion may be regarded as a criterion of objective reality is a subject on which the world will always be divided, and I do not now propose to consider it at length. But we may say with some confidence that the theory will never meet with general acceptance. Mr. A. J. Balfour observes in his *Foundations of Belief* (p. 111) that the most immediate experiences (based upon observation of physical objects and experiments thereon) carry with them no inherent guarantee of their veracity; and with still more certainty can we say this of "mystical" experiences. What is true for one man in this sphere is not necessarily true for another. Mr. H. G. Wells, for instance, "experiences" his finite Invisible King; orthodox Romanists and Anglicans of earlier epochs experienced an infinite Being of wholly different calibre. Hindoos and Mohammedans have personal revelations quite different from ours; and, amongst ourselves, the inner light of Brown may be but darkness to Robinson. Their visions and conceptions are

[1] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 61.

facts, no doubt, but only subjective facts: they are real for them, but not necessarily so for the other man. The intense conviction of the visionary is no proof that his vision is objectively true. In a word, the "personalist" method of hunting religious truth is little more than a form of cultured revivalism, a riot of subjectivity which only results in hopeless contradiction. To make the psychical phenomena of individual consciousness the fulcrum of a creed that claims to be universally authoritative, is to sign the death-warrant of dogma.

Tyrrell is probably right when he declares that there never is, and never can be, a new religion: certainly the new religions which people offer us nowadays have about as much novelty as the everlasting hills. The witch of Endor anticipated Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir A. C. Doyle, and she was very old in her day: I believe the revelations of others among our new prophets date from about the same epoch. We are approaching an *impasse*, and the way out is not yet clear, though far from me be it to say that such a way may not be found. We have yet to discover a criterion of right belief as opposed to merely sincere belief, and to seek some means whereby the life of religion may be broadened and rendered more rational. Since intellect, as Newman correctly informs us, is "at the utmost but tolerated by the Church," the great mass of reasonable people will probably continue to gather their mental and spiritual sustenance outside the Roman communion. Dean Inge has expressed the opinion that a code believed to rest on Divine authority, which must not be modified or criticized, "is the most paralysing thing in the world"; and the Roman creed is certainly an admirable code for paralytics. It does not develop our faculties, or help us to create new ones, but cramps those we already possess. It holds out to us no common hope for this world or the

next; it offers us no universal or genuine emotion with which our hearts can thrill in unison, but insists on the old narrowness and bids us be content with the dry husks of a pettifogging formalism for which the large majority of mankind have no longer any use. They have small respect for a system where the sorriest scrub of a priestling claims to make God out of paste every morning of his life, dispenses (or refuses), at his own discretion, absolution to intelligent men and women; holds himself at liberty to insult decent wives and their children, and otherwise comports himself as a small god upon earth. There can be no place in any well-ordered community for the malice and uncharitableness of the professional mischief-maker, lay or clerical. People are sick and tired of the sectionalism which sets the nations adrift one from another, and creates permanent cleavages in sect and class in each community. If the old theology insists upon still remaining a sword of division, pooh-poohs reunion as a sign of weakness and decay, and prefers to waste its time and ours in squabbling over formulas that have now grown meaningless, the world will have done with it. Orthodoxy will become mere rationalism pietized.

Mr. Fawkes has reminded us [1] how, in the warfare that goes on incessantly between the temporal and spiritual powers, the Church (like the Serpent in the Creation story) lies in wait for the State's heel; and he thinks that it may with equal truth be said that every Church is anti-social and unethical. It would certainly be difficult to conceive anything more opposed to the interests of morality, religion, or social order than the conduct of the Latin Church during the last decade. It is now some years since Mr. Fawkes's book was published; and subsequent events in Ireland, America and Australia—all over the world, in fact—have given additional point to his remarks.

[1] *Studies in Modernism*, p. 143.

There are many lions in Rome's path at the present time, and some of them are distinctly formidable. The political elements of the Church in many countries are rebelling against the secular authority assumed by the ecclesiastics; and the Archbishop of Genoa has recently resigned on the ground that his authority has been defied by the laity. Similar trouble appears to threaten the Irish hierarchy. But perhaps the most serious problem confronting the Curia is that of clerical celibacy. The secession of the Czecho-Slovakian Church, which was chiefly due to this question, has been described as "a tremendous blow to Catholicism"; and it is undoubtedly an event of great importance. Over a million Bohemians have joined the Orthodox Greek communion, and the Jugo-Slavs, following their example, are leaving the Roman Church in considerable numbers. The mutterings of revolt are also heard in Italy, Spain and other Catholic countries; and we are not surprised to learn that the Vatican is growing anxious. Celibacy, in spite of its obvious disadvantages, is the mainstay of clerical authority. The Roman ecclesiastics, with their keen insight into human nature on its lower and more commonplace side, are well aware that the confessional would cease to give them that complete mastery over the human soul on which their power is based, if the priests were allowed to marry. No prudent woman would ever confide the intimacies of her private life to a married priest of the ordinary Roman Catholic type; and the boasted "seal" of the confessional, already a poor safeguard against the divulging of family secrets, would be still further diminished in efficacy. The Roman Curia has good reason to be alarmed at the spread of a movement which at present is only in its infancy. The rebellion against an abominable and unnatural system, which is an affliction to the priests

and the cause of untold social evils, is bound to increase.

Social considerations are stated on good authority to be the most potent factor in affecting conversions to Rome, and I know of no people in the world so amenable to their influences as Catholics. The venerable antiquity of the Latin Church—*elle a treize cents ans dans le ventre,* as an admiring Frenchman said—appeals to some people as a mark of social distinction; but even old people can be vulgar sometimes, and the essential cheapness and vulgarity of latter-day Catholicism may in time be recognized even by the most fashionable. It is just possible that a day may come when the Roman religion will cease to be the futile and debasing creed that it now is—the football of self-seeking politicians, a cause of perennial strife and ill-blood all over the world—and become a blessing instead of a curse to mankind; but there are few signs as yet of so desirable a consummation. We admire the courage of Catholics and the devotion they show to a lost cause; we are well aware that they would die for their opinions—just as there are probably men who would die for the multiplication-table or the theory of relativity. We only suggest to them that it is better to live heroically (as we know they can live) for the common good of mankind, than to die or pine away heroically for opinions which may be—and indeed often have been—proved to be completely mistaken.

Clerics, no less than laymen, see that things cannot go on much longer upon the old lines. Dogmatic theology is in the melting-pot, and we must leave it to extricate itself as best it can. The doctrinal retreat "according to plan" to previously prepared positions in the rear is fast degenerating into a rout; and as yet it is doubtful at what point, and how far back, the final stand will be made. A reconstruction is certainly demanded, as Dr. Inge says, and it

will come; but the ground has got to be cleared in advance, and the Roman lumber must be swept away first. Catholic theologians, in particular, are confronted with the unpleasant alternative of either admitting that they have hitherto been wrong—in which case they can hardly expect us to regard them as infallible—or of running the risk of being swept away in a flood of derision by the advancing tide of modernity. Probably the rationalizing process will go secretly, but steadily, forward in the Churches, with occasional set-backs towards reaction in the form of Syllabi, Decrees, and other Papal fulminations. Blind Authority will continue laying about him lustily with his futile staff; but his blows get ever feebler, and even Roman Catholics are beginning to find that they do not hurt much. On the other side the attack from criticism and comparative mythology is only just beginning. "At present," says Sir J. G. Frazer in his preface to *The Golden Bough*, "we are only dragging the guns into position: they have hardly yet begun to speak."

Science is Catholic, Romanism exactly the reverse. Beside the "fertilizing compound" which we term modern thought the conceptions of the theologians are for the most part tame and barren. The Church, a kind of religious Cook, would act as guide, showman, and arbiter of our journey through life, and thus deprive us of the gratification and the stimulus which people derive from managing their own affairs and finding things out for themselves. Hence it has come about that the individualist or "personalist" standpoint is asserting itself more and more in the religious sphere: men are ceasing to reject, from cowardice and "because of their unbelief," the new revelations that are offered them. The spiritual gaze fixed obstinately backwards is being replaced by trust in an earthly future and the "rapture of the forward view." We shall probably find, too,

that, as the years go on, conduct will be made the ultimate test of religion. The large majority of sensible people have made up their minds that right behaviour is of far greater importance than any loud-voiced, but frequently insincere, assertion of belief in nebulous transcendental hypotheses. They do not regard scholasticism as the last word in spiritual enlightenment, or as in any way a guarantee of sound ethics. They observe, on the contrary, that a rigid system of religious faith is not incompatible with a notable deterioration in morals. They will judge doctrine more and more by its social fruits, and reject a creed which exalts mere pietistic fervour above ordinary or "natural" virtue.

Nor is there any need to fear that unbridled licence will follow the decay of dogmatic religion, or that mankind will lose itself in "quagmires of sensuality" down this new path. If ever the world lost itself in such quagmires, it was during those so-called ages of faith—the darkest, and probably the dirtiest, which this earth has ever known—when the Papacy was supreme.

In that dear middle-age these noodles praise,

as Bishop Blougram puts it with perhaps unnecessary bluntness, we have it on the testimony of the Church's noblest saints and prophets that mankind was exceptionally wicked, and the clergy were no better than the rest. If morality depended on superstition, or exclusively on a belief in the supernatural, the outlook would be dark indeed. Our divorce courts have been very busy of late, owing to the peculiar conditions set up by the War; but, in spite of occasional set-backs, the world gets wiser, and therefore better, as it grows older and less orthodox. Let us trust the secular conscience, which, as ecclesiastics now concede, is superior to that of the Churches. In any

case, we have no faith in the Roman Church as a guardian of true morality.[1]

It may fairly be hoped that that particularly unpleasant form of the religious spirit, which expresses itself in perpetual squabbling with rival denominations, will become increasingly unpopular. The sectarian nuisance must be reckoned among the worst and most needless of our present afflictions—a running sore on the human body, a canker eating into our national and civic vitality. In the words of Cromwell, "Every sect saith, 'Oh, give me Liberty!' But give it him, and, to his power, he will not yield it to anybody else." Let each man worship God in the way that to him appears best and most seemly, and address himself *directly* to the Deity, without the intervention of any unnecessary third party. Above all, let him leave the other man to go his own religious way, so long as that way is the way of peace. As Cowper says,

> Grant them the rights of men: and, while they cease
> To vex the peace of others, grant them peace.

That peace would be nearer, perhaps, if an end could be put to the somewhat grotesque, and largely insincere, ecclesiastical demagogy which is a new element of disorganization in modern society. The unnatural alliance between Socialism, or Sinn Fein anarchism, and reactionary sacerdotalism is hardly likely to be permanent, and we may fairly hope to be spared a clerico-plebeian oligarchy—perhaps the worst form of oligarchy which could possibly be conceived. Certain churchmen are now dangling before the working man the prospect of a mundane utopia,[2] instead of the "bric-a-brac rococo heaven"

[1] See Appendix II.

[2] Organized religion, Dean Inge is reported to have said, "is always on the winning side and is nothing more than a creaking weathercock."

satirized by Tyrrell; but the trades unions are not greatly impressed by the latest clerical gospel, and continue to pin their faith on coal and railway strikes.

Magical religion may be expected to dwindle by degrees, though we may be sure it will make a stout fight for life. The religious minister of the future will probably become more and more a pastor *pur et simple*, the shepherd of his flock, rather than an ecclesiastical sorcerer with claims to talismanic powers and attributes that can never be substantiated. Man, as his powers develop, will not be satisfied with mere assertions which are neither verified nor, so far as we at present know, verifiable. If he finds that the affirmation of those absolute values, which we are all seeking, cannot be honestly achieved, he will content himself with such approximations as are within his reach. He wants an anodyne for the ills of life, but not at the price of surrendering his reasoning faculties. In the meantime the attempts at accommodation between the new ideas and the old, the amendment and patching-up of religious dogma, may be expected to continue. The Solera system (as I believe it is termed by wine-merchants), by which the cask is continualiy replenished with new liquor as the old is drawn out, will be applied to theology. New and heady vintages will be put into the old bottles; and it is very doubtful if the bottles will prove equal to the strain.

Before closing I would make another and final appeal for honesty, courage and lucidity in our treatment of religious questions. Let us pay in full our debt to candour in these matters, which is now reaching a considerable figure. The average man of education and common sense is satisfied with one kind of truth. He does not profess to distinguish between "truths of fact" and "truths of faith," and he emphatically rejects the notion that there

are different orders of verity, or that " an ostensibly historical proposition may be false as a matter of fact, but true for faith." [1] As his intelligence enlarges, and his means of acquiring knowledge is increased, he will be less inclined to accept the argument of balancing theologians that " whatever suits souls is true." To plain questions he will expect plain answers, not answers that wrap up momentous issues in loose verbiage and a cloud of intentional obscurity. He will demand to be told definitely which passages in Scripture he is to take in the literal sense, and which in the allegorical—which are plain prose, which merely poetry. We want to know whether events, which are represented to us as actual physical occurrences, happened in reality, and in the way in which we have always been led hitherto to suppose they happened. Such cryptic phrases as, " It may have to be relegated to the subjective order of phenomena," " It is a truth of faith, not of fact," and similar shifts of the embarrassed faithful, will fail to satisfy us.

The world has changed, and we must change with it, if we would cease to be ineffectual. We want new incentives to mental activities, not old Roman dopes for budding enthusiasms. Let us seek as teachers men who offer us full freedom of the human mind and spirit, not an unwholesome prison-house of the soul. A Church divorced from the general intelligence of the people carries within itself the seeds of dissolution : it is only because most Catholics are ignorant that their Church endures. We cannot have one set of truths for the study and the closet, and another for the market-place. Religious authority may keep silence on the grave questions that are now agitating men's minds—refrain (as the clergyman said) from disturbing the placid faith of its aged parishioners ; but such silence is akin to the silence

[1] See *Outspoken Essays*, by Dean Inge, p. 113.

of death. *Qui cherche la vérité trouvera Dieu.* On the other hand, *l'art de chicaner avec Dieu,* with its elaborate technique devised and perfected by generations of Roman theologians, is a miserable art, as irreligious as it is immoral. Neither in Scripture nor anywhere else is there any valid sanction for obscurantism, or for the boon companion of obscurantism—mendacity. Browning may be right when he suggests that, under the guidance of the Latin Church,

> Men have outgrown the shame of being fools;

but the Roman Catholic or other devotee who seeks to be a fool for Christ's sake, or to pervert the truth in God's service, should first satisfy himself that his intentions are acceptable to God.

At the time of the Reformation Protestantism jettisoned much of the *damnosa hereditas* it had received from Romanism in the shape of false beliefs, "Churchianity," a rotten moral theology, and a dead-weight of superstition; but more of the superfluous cargo will have to be thrown overboard before the ship is rendered seaworthy and fit for the rough weather she seems likely to encounter. This done, we can continue our voyage with a reasonable confidence that new havens will be found where the vessel of the human soul may cast anchor and ride in safety. The barque of Peter will remain at its old moorings in the land-locked harbour of mediævalism; but our craft must answer the call of the great waters, and steer for the open sea. Even though the pursuit of essential truth be difficult, and dangers attend the adventure—which I take leave to doubt—we may face them without undue trepidation. In all probability we shall find that, as usually happens, the boldest course is also the safest, and that in this high enterprise the path to true happiness and tranquillity lies.

APPENDIX I

THE *NE TEMERE* DECREE MARRIAGE FORM

LAST year, by a happy chance, one of the jealously guarded marriage forms, which an autocratic Church compels Protestant no less than Catholic parties to a mixed marriage to sign, came into my hands. It appeared in the *National Review* for October 1920, and I am assured on good authority, and believe it to be the fact, that the document had never before been made public. It is now reproduced here, and the reader's attention is called to certain important points illustrative of the Church's insolent attitude towards Protestant or civil marriage.

I

The Form of Application for a Mixed Marriage must be filled in by the Priest making the application and signed by both parties in his presence. It is not allowed to send forms away for this purpose.

No. .....
Date .....

APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION FROM THE IMPEDIMENT OF MIXED RELIGION.

Man's Name .....
Domicile [1] .....
Religion .....
Place and Date of Baptism .....

Woman's Name .....
Domicile [1] .....
Religion .....
Place and Date of Baptism .....
Canonical Reasons (*to be stated fully*) .....

[1] i.e. *Domicilium, vel quasi domicilium, in vero sensu canonico.*

II

PROMISES TO BE SIGNED BEFORE APPLICATION.

To be signed by the Catholic Party.

I, the undersigned, do hereby solemnly promise and engage that all the children, of both sexes, who may be born of my marriage, shall be baptized in the Catholic Church, and shall be carefully brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic Religion; and I also promise that (according to the instructions of the Holy See) my marriage in the Catholic Church shall not be preceded nor followed by any other religious marriage ceremony.

(*Signature*).....

To be signed by the non-Catholic Party.

I, the undersigned, do hereby solemnly promise and engage that I will not interfere with the religious belief of..... my future wife (or husband), nor with her (or his) full and perfect liberty to fulfil all her (or his) duties as a Catholic; and that I will allow all the children, of both sexes, who may be born of our marriage, to be baptized in the Catholic Church, and to be carefully brought up in the knowledge and practice of the Catholic Religion.

(*Signature*).....

Date .....

N.B.—Tertia promissio, de conversione compartis acatholicæ pro viribus curanda, a parte Catholicâ saltem vivâ voce fieri debet. Insuper, si partes jam cohabitaverint, declarandum hic erit an proles exinde nata sit, et, quatenus affirmative, utrum in Catholicâ Religione baptizata et educata fuerit.[1]

Name of Priest .....

Address .....

The *Ne Temere* Decree, as I explained in my former book, is merely a republication (with certain amplifications) of the Council of Trent's *Tametsi* Decree issued in 1564. The *Tametsi* enacts that no marriage is valid (it is declared

[1] I append translation, with apologies to classical scholars: "The third promise, concerning the conversion of the non-Catholic party, which should be sought after to the best of one's abilities, ought to be made by the Catholic party at least by word of mouth. Moreover, if the parties have already cohabited, it must here be declared if there has been any offspring of the union, and, in so far as the answer is in the affirmative, whether it has been baptized and educated in the Catholic Religion."

to be "invalid" and null, without any reservation: the Church does not merely say that the marriage is of no effect in Catholic eyes. It is an invalid marriage, not merely in the sight of Rome, but "in the sight of God") unless the ceremony is performed *in the presence*, or by permission, of the parish priest or of the Ordinary, and in the presence of two or three witnesses. Otherwise, as we are still frequently informed, the supposed marriage "is no marriage at all," but merely a state of "legalized concubinage."

The provisions of this remarkable ordinance, in themselves sufficiently startling, have since been supplemented—"tightened up," as Catholics express it—by the Roman ecclesiastics during the last few years, and without any authoritative pronouncement on the part of the Church. In the first place, the Tridentine Decree was not dealing with "mixed" marriages at all, but with clandestine marriages, which were considered to be a danger to morality. Secondly, the marriage ceremony now has to be performed, not merely (as enacted by the *Ne Temere* and *Tametsi* Decrees) in the presence of a Romish priest and witnesses, but *by* the priest, in a Papist Church and with Papist rites. Thirdly, the contracting parties are now required to sign certain promises, of which no mention is made in the Trent or *Ne Temere* Decrees. The latter prescribe no form of application to the Roman Church for permission to marry; nor are the parties required to make the stringent engagements which are now exacted from them. The Catholic party now has to promise, not only that the children shall be baptized and brought up in the Roman faith, but that there shall be no other religious marriage ceremony. The non-Catholic bridegroom—who vainly imagined himself to be a free citizen of a free country—finds himself compelled, at the bidding of a foreign Church and under pain of losing his bride-elect, to promise solemnly that he will not interfere with the lady's religious opinions, and also that he will allow his children to be brought up in a faith which he does not believe, and which in many cases he views with entire disapprobation. It will further be observed that in the "third promise" (carefully veiled in the obscurity of the Church's execrably bad Latin) the Catholic party is made to promise to do that which the Protestant must promise

not to do—namely, to attempt the conversion of his (or her) yoke-fellow. There is also an unpleasant suggestion of pre-marital intercourse between the parties to the union, which any self-respecting person would regard as a gratuitous insult. The Marriage Form states that these things are done " according to the instructions of the Holy See," but we are not informed when, where, or by whom these instructions were issued.

In some cases, where the parties are already married according to the rites of a Protestant church, the ecclesiastics insist on re-marriage in a Catholic place of worship, and the Church claims, and frequently exercises, the right to expose the man and wife to open scandal if her orders are not obeyed. The parties are described in the certificate, issued on official paper by the Government of a Protestant State, as " bachelor " and " spinster " respectively, and the wife has to sign the document in her maiden name. I have before me, as I write, a photograph of one such certificate: the couple had been married several years, and had two children. In another recent case the parties, who had been married some years previously and had one child of the union, were required to remarry in a Roman Catholic church; and the Protestant husband was invited (the document is now in my possession) to describe the partner of his joys and sorrows as " my future wife." He very properly told the priest to go—somewhere, and the demand was not insisted on.

In the case of rich or titled persons the Church is more complaisant, and frequently waives what she is pleased to call her " rights." The whole matter demands the attention of the Government and the public, and Roman Catholics should be restrained by law from making insulting references to British subjects who are married according to the laws, the social and religious customs of their country, and from describing the offspring of those who are so married as illegitimate.

APPENDIX II

ROMAN CATHOLIC MORALITY

In the *National Review* for August 1920 the late Father Garrold, S.J., alluded to what he called my "gratuitous statement (in the *Roman Mischief-Maker*) that morality in Catholic countries is worse than elsewhere"; and he declared the assertion to be "unsupported by an iota of evidence." Also the *Month* of February 1920, in the course of an exhaustive review of my book, says that, "After all, it is the pragmatic test that is conclusive herein. Do the ill-results which Mr. Stutfield apprehend really come to pass? Are Catholics who go habitually to confession morally worse than Protestants who don't?"

Thus directly challenged, and seeing that the matter lies at the very root of the controversy, I have been at considerable pains to arrive at the real facts; and, aided by the kindness and diligence of many valued correspondents in various quarters of the globe, I am now enabled to show that there is an immense amount of evidence—much of it supplied by Romanists—to show that Papist morality all over the world is much lower than that of the people whom the Church describes as heretics.

Let us begin with our own country. Protestants assert that Roman Catholics in Great Britain are four times as criminal as non-Catholics; and a letter in the *Tablet* of July 19, 1913, deplores the distressing fact that (according to official statistics published in *The Times*) the Catholics of England and Wales, forming about 4·75 of the total population, "contributed about four times their due share" of the inmates of His Majesty's prisons at that time. The writer further pointed out that the Roman Church (with a much smaller total population) supplied *nearly three times as many* prisoners as all the

leading Protestant Nonconformist bodies combined! Catholics "contributed actually a larger share than any other body except the Established Church." I may mention that the latter, being the fashionable denomination, is regularly credited with a bigger proportion of criminals than it deserves. The Government issued on March 28, 1906, the following return of prisoners in Great Britain [1]: Salvation Army, 11; Congregationalists, 53; Baptists, 132; Methodists, 496; Presbyterians, 1,803; Jews, 262; Church of England, 16,235; Catholics, 5,378. This has been worked out as giving the following proportions per 100,000 of population, but I cannot guarantee the exact figures:—for the Nonconformist Churches and Jews, 2, 3, 9, 10, 46, 116 respectively; Anglicans, 118; Catholics, 247.

I have failed to obtain recent official figures for England, as the authorities appear to have discontinued issuing religious statistics of prisoners. We must therefore rest content with earlier information. *The Times* of October 27, 1874, reviewing a Government Report, showed that, while Scotland furnished only 2·3 per cent. of our criminals, Ireland supplied 14·2 per cent.; "and the Irish female constitutes no less than one-fifth of the whole female prison population of England and Wales." A letter in the *Liverpool Daily Courier* of January 4, 1876, states that the Romanists (forming one-fourth of the Liverpool population) furnished four-fifths of the criminals. *The Times* of November 26, 1878, says that "it is among the Roman Catholics that the most extraordinary records are obtained; an absolute majority of the prisoners (in Liverpool), male and female, belong to that communion. Of the 12,285 prisoners during the year, 8,453 were Roman Catholics." The *Catholic Times* of April 17, 1885, gives some no less illuminating statistics concerning "a state of things which the Catholic public cannot contemplate without feelings of sadness and humiliation." Out of 21,324 prisoners, "13,676 were Catholics, while Protestants and all other denominations numbered only 7,648." A year later Monsignor Nugent, who did excellent work among the poorer and more criminal classes, gave corroborative evidence;

[1] Government Report of March 28th, quoted by Mr. A. Le Lievre, to whose work, *The Protestant's Treasury*, I am indebted for the bulk of the information in the two succeeding paragraphs.

and the *Universe* confessed that "the vice and immorality existing among the Catholic body in Liverpool are fearful . . . a horrible, a hideous blot on the Catholic character in the great northern seaport." . . . "In Liverpool the strongest phalanx in the devil's army is recruited from the ranks of Catholicism. Of the three great divisions in that gloomy host—thieving, harlotry, and intemperance—the majority are members of our community." The above statements are confirmed by information I have received from barristers on the Northern Circuit and others; and I am told that a similar state of things prevails in Birkenhead. There is very little doubt that magistrates in large towns like Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester would corroborate these allegations.[1] The *Tablet* of February 12, 1898, said in a leading article: "Throughout England 25 per cent. of the persons in prison are Catholics." The latter form less than one-twentieth of the total population; and Cardinal Vaughan, Lord Edmund Talbot, M.P., Father Bernard Vaughan, and other Catholics lamented at various times a state of things which was "a disgrace" to the Church.

In Scotland the Irish Catholics—who form an element of turbulence and demoralization in every country which they make their home—are equally a community of law-breakers. The *North British Daily Mail*, referrring to observations made in 1876 by the Irish Census Commissioners, said: "But for the presence of the Irish Roman Catholic element in our city, we might dispense with the services of three-fourths of our policemen, might shut up the same proportion of our workhouses and gaols, and reduce our assessments for the support of pauperism and the repression and the punishment of crime, to one-fourth of the present amount. . . . Of the Roman Catholic population 1 in every 27 is a criminal prisoner, of the remainder only 1 in 132 belongs to this category." In a leading article on the Scotch Criminal Statistics for 1901, the *Scotsman* pointed out that the figures showed the Roman Catholics to be about five times as criminal as the Protestants. In 1903, out of 53,763 prisoners received into Scottish prisons, 22,246 were Irish and 28,995 Scotch. The Irish form about one-tenth of the population. The Report

[1] See also the *Quarterly Review* for January 1888 for confirmatory statistics.

on the Judicial Statistics of Scotland for 1907 gives the number of convicted persons received into prisons and police cells as 57,213. Of these, 22,914 were of Irish nationality. An Edinburgh newspaper stated in 1904 that "the Roman Catholic churchgoers in the Cowgate and Canongate furnish more visitors to the police court than all the Presbyterian churchgoers in Edinburgh put together."

Turning to America, I have no recent Canadian figures to offer; but the *Quarterly Review* for January 1888 states that the Roman Catholics of Ontario, forming only 16 per cent. of the population, supplied in 1881 3,844 offenders out of 6,940. Out of 8,112 commitments to the Toronto prison in thirteen years, 2,812, or 34·66 per cent., were Roman Catholics. The late Mr. Robert Sellar states on page 364 of his *Tragedy of Quebec* (4th edition, 1916) that the statistics of police and criminal courts in Canada, added to the reports of municipal officials, judges, superintendents of charitable institutions and hospital physicians, show the Papists to be an exceedingly troublesome class. The United States, on the other hand, furnish statistical and other evidence in overwhelming abundance. Let us give priority to that of Romanists. That excellent prelate, the late Cardinal Farley, asked "why there are so many Roman Catholic boys who find their way behind prison bars?" In 1912 he said: "We are too generously represented in penal and other institutions." Addressing a Catholic meeting in New York in 1916, Judge Collins (R.C.) said: "In the Children's Court 146,000 cases are brought up every year: 60 per cent. of these are Catholics; 65 per cent. of the boys in the reformatories are Catholics." Monsignor Francis Hall followed with the lament that "It is a dreary commentary on our religion that so many of our children should pass before the judges and receive sentence for felonies and other misdemeanours." Catholics form about one-ninth of the United States population; in New York the proportion is somewhat greater. The New York penitentiaries eight years ago held 26,157 prisoners, of whom 15,064 were Papists. The Milwaukee House of Correction in 1913 contained 67 per cent. of Catholics; and in the workhouse of St. Paul, Minnesota, where the population has only about 7 per cent. of Catholics, 54 per cent. of the inmates were members of the Roman Church. My friend Mr. George L.

Fox, of Newhaven (Conn.)—whose letters in the *Spectator* and the *National Review* have helped to open the eyes of Englishmen as to the anti-British propaganda carried on by Roman Catholics in America—has kindly sent me some further statistics of affairs in his State. The 1920 Report of the Directors of the Connecticut State Prison shows the following percentages: 59·73 Catholics; 30·20 Protestants; 4·03 Hebrews; 6·04 Agnostics. The Report of the Directors of the State Reformatory gave 52·4 Catholics; 41·5 Protestants; 4·9 Hebrews. Another Report shows 61·4 Catholics; 35·2 Protestants; 3·4 Hebrews. Out of 1,271 inmates of the Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet, 571 were Roman Catholics.

The drunkenness of Romanists, and the immorality which prevails amongst their women, are a constant source of vexation to good Catholics. "How," asked a well-known temperance reformer, Canon W. Murnane, at a meeting in Birmingham some years ago, "How can you expect conversions when a Roman Catholic prison chaplain can assert that of six or seven thousand women brought into the prison yearly, more than 80 per cent. are Catholics?" Monsignor Nugent and other good priests engaged in rescue work have much to say on the subject. "Nine out of ten," said the Monsignor in the League Hall, Liverpool, on November 11, 1886, "of the girls to be seen at night along London Road or Lime Street are Catholics; there is no use hiding it." A well-known New York physician, Dr. W. H. Sanger, author of *The History of Prostitution*, interrogated 2,000 New York outcast women. 972 said they were Protestants, 977 Roman Catholics, the remainder "non-professors." "Of the Catholic outcasts, no fewer than 706 were born in Ireland!"[1] In an article in the *Catholic World* for September 1890, Father Walter Elliot, a well-known priest belonging to the Paulist Fathers, said that "In many cities big and little we have something like a monopoly of the business of selling liquor, and in not a few something equivalent to a monopoly of getting drunk. . . . From Catholic domiciles—miscalled homes—three-fourths of

[1] *The Protestant's Treasury*, p. 69. It appears, says the *Quarterly Review*, that "an overwhelming majority of the habitual criminals and of the public courtesans come from the Roman Catholic sections of the population."

the public paupers creep annually to the almshouses, and more than half the criminals snatched away by the police to prison are by baptism and training members of our Church. Can anyone deny that the identity of nominal Catholicity and pauperism existing in our chief centres of population is owing to the drunkenness of Roman Catholics? And can anyone deny that this has been the horrible truth for something like thirty-five years? . . . The neighbourhood of a Roman Catholic Church is a good stand for the saloon business; and this is equally so in nearly every city in America. Who has not burned with shame to run the gauntlet of the saloons lining the way to the Roman Catholic cemetery?"

Through the kindness of various correspondents in Melbourne and Sydney—to whom I am greatly indebted for the trouble they have taken in the matter—I am enabled to give some interesting statistics, culled from official reports, concerning crime in Australia. From these statistics I gather that the Roman Catholics of New South Wales are, compared with their co-religionists elsewhere, exceptionally virtuous folk. That is to say, they are only twice as wicked as the heretics. In the four years, 1915–1918, there were 2,191 Catholics in gaol under sentence, and 3,255 non-Catholics. As the former constitute about one-fifth of the total Australian population, this gives them about double their proper proportion of delinquents. In 1920, out of 1,035 prisoners, 420 were Roman Catholics. In Victoria the Papists, we are told, gave a very poor account of themselves in 1917. "For every 10,000 of the population they had 8·95 prisoners in gaol, and the Protestants 4·37." In other words, they would appear—and have been stated—to have had more than ten times their due proportion of prisoners. Previous years made, according to extracts from the *Victorian Year Book* for 1917, and other official sources, a still worse showing. In 1871 the ratio of prisoners constantly detained, "per 10,000 of population," is given as—Protestants 18·88, Catholics 32·59; in 1881, Protestants 14·36, Catholics 32·98; in 1891, Protestants 1312, Catholics 29·33; in 1901, Protestants 7·19, Catholics 17·63; in 1911, Protestants 4·90, Catholics 11·07; in 1919, Protestants 3·38, Catholics 7·61. It strikes me, however, that possibly by "population" is meant population of denomination: it seems difficult to believe that Vic-

torian Papists can be more than five times as wicked as their brethren in New South Wales. In New Zealand, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania Roman Catholic criminality exceeds in a very considerable, but not specially remarkable, degree that of the non-Catholic community, including the native races. I should add that, if the comparisons in all the States were made with the Protestants alone, the showing would be much more to the disadvantage of the Roman Church, as Jews and Chinese and other races contribute largely to the criminal classes.

"The statistics of homicide," says the great criminologist, Professor Cesare Lombroso, "are a sure guide as to a people's state of culture."[1] Lord Acton, writing to Lady Blennerhassett, says that the Ultramontanes were "worse than the accomplices of the Old Man of the Mountain, for they picked off individual victims, but the Papacy contrived murder and massacre on the largest and also on the most cruel and inhuman scale. They were not only wholesale assassins, but they also made the principle of assassination a law of the Christian Church and a condition of salvation." He also condemned the Papal party who condoned these deeds as "infamous in the last degree."[2] With these high examples before them, Roman Catholic nations are naturally well to the fore in the matter of homicide, and the recent Irish murder campaign becomes more easily comprehensible. Lombroso gives the following statistics of homicides per 100,000 inhabitants in various countries: Italy, 96; Spain, 58; Portugal, 25; Hungary, 75; Austria, 25; Sweden and Norway, 13; France and Belgium, 18; Germany and England, 5 each. In the United States, Scandinavians, Germans, Irish and English furnished between them, on an average, about 8 homicides per 100,000 in each nation; but Italians had 58·1, and Mexicans 116·9. In 1884 there were 434 murders committed in the province of Palermo alone, compared with 170 in the whole of England.[3] According to the Catholic *Universe* for January 21, 1899, 128 murders were committed in Rome, which had a population of 274,000. There were fewer murders

[1] *The North American Review*, December 1897.

[2] *Selections from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton*, by the Rev. J. N. Figgis and R. V. Laurence, i. 55.

[3] *The Fortnightly Review*, November 1887.

in London during a space of more than five years. The *British Quarterly Review* for January 1856 gives some extraordinary figures presenting a vivid contrast between the respect shown for human life in Catholic and non-Catholic countries: the years, of course, are picked ones. In 1835 England had one murder or attempted murder per 178,000 inhabitants; Scotland 1 per 270,000. In 1826 Spain had 1 per 4,113; Naples 1 per 2,750; the States of the Church 1 per 750! The writer of the *Fortnightly* article alluded to just now, Mr. Strachan Morgan, says (p. 651) that Naples, with 300,000 inhabitants, had in 1881 196 assassinations and 823 homicides. "Taking the whole country (Italy), the annual average of murder is sixteen times greater than is that of England." He describes the social conditions in Sicily as appalling: "adultery, incest, uxoricide and prostitution are terribly frequent." Racial characteristics, climate and other factors must, of course, be taken into account in judging of these matters, and obviously many (but by no means all) of the above facts and figures have been selected for controversial purposes; but I do not think that there can be any reasonable doubt that the general conclusions which they seem to establish are correct. It is at least quite clear that religion, in Roman Catholic countries, has acted as a very ineffective deterrent.

In the Middle Ages, when Europe—under the moral guidance of the Popes and priests—was a cesspool of sexual and other depravity, the laity were wont to excuse themselves by saying that they were no worse than their clerical mentors; and morality amongst the Romanist clergy in our day leaves much to be desired. Let us freely admit that there are thousands of noble Catholic priests who lead pure lives of wholehearted devotion to duty; but such men, especially in Latin countries where the Church is paramount, form a small minority. If Catholic priests, as the Roman theologians inform us is the case, frequently lead loose lives, the fault is less theirs than that of a Church whose wicked celibacy system makes widespread unchastity inevitable.[1] An Australian journal quotes a passage from Döllinger stating that "Liguori

[1] Priests were forbidden by the Church to marry in the fourth and fifth centuries. There were many later prohibitions, and celibacy was officially and finally enforced in the eleventh century.

himself confesses that 'the most virtuous priests are constrained to fall at least once a month.'" I am not acquainted with the passage in question, but the Saint more than once says something of the sort in his numerous works, and in his *Selva* (p. 213) he asks: "How does it happen that there are so many priests in the world, and so few holy priests?" Mr. McCabe, a very competent and careful authority, gives English priests a moderately good character, and English nuns an excellent one, but he states that in Catholic countries such as Spain clerical immorality is general.[1] The same may be said of Southern Italy (where 95 per cent. of the priests are stated to be immoral), Sicily and Malta. A Roman Catholic who had lived many years in Hungary told me not long ago that, while the Orthodox (Greek) clergy usually married, nearly all the Romanist priests in that country kept "establishments." When, six weeks later, I read that the neighbouring Czecho-Slovakian Church had severed its connection with Rome on the celibacy question, I was not surprised. People long resident in Peru and Chili tell me that priestly morals out there are atrocious.[2] In Argentina they are said to be bad enough, but distinctly better than in the adjoining countries The clerical ethics of Mexico approximate to those of Peru Lecturing to our troops in France, under War Office auspices in 1918, I obtained startling confirmation of the reports as to the goings-on of French priests in the towns, but many of the village curés are excellent men.

The same conditions have prevailed for centuries, and they will continue until holy Mother Church, who is herself a lady with a past, ceases to force her priests to live lives of thwarted natural instincts. Bad enough in our day, the consequences of celibacy in the Middle Ages were simply appalling. "The immorality of the clergy," says Mr. Rufus Jones (*Studies in Mysticism*, p. 131), "from the highest rank to the lowest order, was universally recognized." The "fearful picture of social conditions is hardly more sombre

[1] *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, p. 107.

[2] Cardinal Vaughan, travelling through South America in 1863, was greatly shocked by what he saw. The priests in Peru scandalized the people, and "the monks here are in the lowest state of degradation, and a suppression of them would be an act of Divine favour" (*Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, by J. G. Snead-Cox, i. 125, 136).

than the dark pictures of the moral condition of the clergy, high and low," which are to be found in the chronicles of bishops, saints, friars, priests and lay chroniclers of the period. Nor was the corruption temporary or sporadic; it lasted continually for much more than a thousand years. It began in very early times, as we learn from the letters of St. Jerome, who describes the priests and laity, men and women, as sordid, greedy, unchaste and utterly irreligious. He warned the virtuous young ladies under his charge not to remain in a room with a Roman priest [1]; and his "fierce declamations afford a terrible picture of the disorders prevalent among those vowed to celibacy, and of the hideous crimes resorted to" in order to conceal their guilt.[2] In 494 we find Gelasius I, one of the ablest Popes, "lamenting the incestuous marriages entered into by the virgins dedicated to God." The condition of Spain, Africa, France and Italy are depicted by sundry writers of the period in the darkest colours. At a later date, in certain Swiss Cantons, and in parts of Spain, the laity had a lively appreciation of the inconveniences attending clerical celibacy. They compelled "a new pastor, on taking up his charge, to select a concubine as a necessary protection to the females under his care." [3] Not all the nunneries were bad, by any means, but many of them are described as "notoriously no better than brothels"; and the monasteries were worse. Amid a variety of remarkable ordinances the palm must be accorded to that of St. Theodore Studita, who, in the ninth century, found it necessary to prohibit the importation of female animals into monasteries.[4] Uncleanliness apparently came before godliness in that "convent of a hundred and thirty nuns, who never washed their feet, and who shuddered at the mention of a bath." [5]

Of the Papal Court at Avignon, Petrarch, who claimed to tell only part of the truth, said that "chastity was a reproach

[1] *Letters* xxii and cxxv; see McCabe's *The Popes and Their Church*, p. 18.

[2] *The History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, by H. C. Lea, i. 108 (third edition).

[3] Lea, quoted in *Religion and Sex*, by C. Cohen, p. 221.

[4] *Testament*, v; see Lea's *Sacerdotal Celibacy*, i. p. 121.

[5] Lecky's *History of European Morals*, ii. pp. 107–110, quoted in *Religion and Sex*, p. 212.

and licentiousness a virtue." "The aged priests were fouler in their wickedness than the younger, while with the Pontiff the vilest crimes were pastimes." [1] King Pedro of Spain in 1351 ordered, as Lea (i. 382) tells us, that all clerical concubines should be plainly attired, and wear a red fillet round their heads. In French nunneries "infanticide was common, and priests had to be forbidden to have mothers, aunts or sisters living in their houses," on account of the frequent scandals which arose.[2] Pope Gregory IX described the German Church as "abandoned to lasciviousness, gluttony, and all manner of filthy living," the clergy "committing habitually wickedness which laymen would abhor." [3] The Teutonic prelates excused their shocking conduct by pointing to the example set by the Pope. "A protest was made by the Senate of Rome in 1568 against the reforming efforts of Pius V on the ground that the compulsory celibacy of priests would make it impossible for the citizens to preserve the virtue of their wives and daughters." [4] Æneas Silvius, afterwards Pius II, wrote in 1453: "Whether I look upon the deeds of princes or of prelates, I find that all have sunk, all are worthless. . . . Execration and falsehood and slaughter and theft and adultery are spread among you, and you add blood to blood. . . . There is no shame in crime, for you sin so openly and shamelessly that you seem to take delight in it." [5] As an example of the openness and shamelessness, I may mention that the rigid moralists who formed the reforming Council of Constance in 1414 "were accompanied by an army of prostitutes." In the pages of Lea's two lengthy books, and those of many other authors, the curious reader may sup to the full off details of a similarly unpleasant character.

There were always plenty of good men and women who strove hard to stem the tide of iniquity, but their efforts were unavailing. Prominent among these was St. Catherine of Siena, great woman, great saint and mystic and would-be reformer. "Oh me!" she cried, "that which Christ won upon the wood of the Cross is spent with harlots!" And she bade the Papal Legate "get rid of the wolfish shepherds

[1] *The Medieval Inquisition*, by C. T. Gorham, p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 15. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.
[4] *Ibid.* [5] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

who care for nothing but eating and fine palaces and big horses." To Gregory XI she wrote that " ever since the Church has aimed more at temporal than at spiritual things it has gone from bad to worse." [1] St. Catherine was a favourite with God, and had familiar conversations with Him concerning the morals of Catholic priests. Her remarkable *Dialogues*, translated into English, were published in 1896 by Messrs. Kegan Paul, and we are told that their special value lies in the fact that they are " nothing more than a mystical exposition of the creeds taught to every child in the Catholic poor schools."

In response to a request from the Saint for more explicit information concerning the ministers of the Holy Church, God is represented as delivering to His " dearest daughter " and " Seraphic Virgin " an astounding harangue. The speech is too long, and in places too blasphemous, for reproduction in full, but I give some extracts. The priests (said the Lord) " are My anointed ones, and I call them My Christs, because I have given them the office of administering Me to you ; and have placed them like fragrant flowers in the mystical body of the Holy Church." " No man should offend them, because in offending them he offends Me, and not them ; for I have forbidden it, and have said that I do not wish My Christs to be touched by their hands." " They are My Christs, and you ought to love and reverence the authority which I have given them. This dignity belongs to good and bad alike " (p. 261). Then follow some very lengthy and striking examples of the habits and characters of these " fragrant flowers " of clericalism. " Oh ! temples of the devil : I have appointed you to be earthly angels in this life ; and you are devils. . . . Woe ! Woe to their wretched life ! For they waste with harlots that which My only begotten Son, the sweet Word, acquired," etc. (264). " They have chosen for their table the public tavern, and there openly cursing and perjuring themselves, full of many miserable sins, have become animals through their sins, and live lasciviously in word and deed." " These incarnate demons adorn with Church property their she-devils, with whom they live in iniquity and impurity. . . . They have made My Church into a

[1] *Studies in Mysticism*, by the Rev. R. Jones, pp. 303, 304.

stable, and lie there in the filth of their impurity, for they keep their she-devils in the Church as a bridegroom his spouse in his house." For several pages the unfortunate clerical reprobates are thus chastised with the lash of the Divine scorn and vituperation, but my readers will probably have heard enough. This extraordinary effusion earned an elaborate review and hearty approbation in the *Month* for June 1896. Lastly, we learn from Liguori (*Selva*, p. 80) that Our Lord said to St. Brigitta, who was also a great favourite in celestial quarters, " I see on earth Pagans and Jews, but I see none so wicked as priests " ; and He asked, " How many priests are now in hell for sins against purity ? "

The Church is thus confronted with a mass of testimony, some of which Roman Catholics at any rate cannot impugn, as to the ravages of the moral disease which infects her organism. It is for her to diagnose the case and to find a remedy. I suggest that it is high time the Roman pundits turned from the study of scholastic subtleties to the consideration of the more pressing problem of clerical celibacy. Roman Catholics maintain that these crying evils are, as Newman assured us, " no prejudice to the sanctity of the Church." They " affect not the vessel and treasure of Catholic Faith "—a familiar argument which is presumably meant for Catholic consumption only. Where sin abounds, there grace doth yet more abound ; and it may be that, as we learn from certain Catholic mystics, sin affords an occasion for repentence, and so operates as a ladder whereby we may climb to Heaven ; but those who are entrusted with the administration of law and the maintenance of order in civilized communities can hardly be expected to rest satisfied with these comforting assurances. The Roman Church, regarded as a moral agent, is, and always has been throughout history, a conspicuous failure ; and the real secret of the failure has always, to a great extent, lain in the corruption of her clergy. *Fructu cognoscitur arbor* : by their fruits ye shall know them. History proves that Cowper's poetic instinct guided him aright. " 'Tis in the Church the leprosy begins."

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From England BLH

Oct. 1928