

## THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

**I**S faith intellectual? Unquestionably faith is the highest exercise of the intellect, if we regard it, in a Catholic sense, as supernatural; for, if faith be supernatural, then God is its giver, and so faith is a divine guidance of the intellect. It has been objected by Rationalists that faith is only temperament, or that, at the best, it is only determined by our surroundings. Even granted, say the Rationalists, that faith is intellectual, still, it is nothing but a natural yielding of a biased will to what appears to be a balance of probabilities. This is the assuming, by the Rationalists, that faith is *not* supernatural, or, that there can be no faith which, in addition to being natural, is also blessed by the enriching grace of the Holy Spirit. Such a position on the part of the Rationalists, is, at least, intelligible; there is nothing in it which is contradictory or paradoxical. But, when we come to speak of another position which is neither the Rationalist nor the Roman Catholic, but that of all the professedly Protestant sects, without exception, we have to face a strange paradox, half Christian half Rationalist, and easily shown, as Euclid would say, to be "absurd." The Protestant idea of faith is, that it is necessarily intellectual, because it involves the exercise of private judgment, while, at the same time, it is *more* than intellectual, because it is assisted by an illumination of the Holy Spirit. With this conclusion we can have no fault to find. But, Protestants proceed to affirm that though faith must be supernatural, because no one can believe truly without God's help; yet, at the same time, the infinite variety of private beliefs in Christian doctrines forms no barrier to the Christian completeness of each man's faith. Here, then, we have a confusion, intellectually, which the Rationalists, not unnaturally, laugh to scorn. A Protestant's faith is assumed to be intellectual, and also, in real sense, supernatural, notwithstanding that it "gives the lie" to the doctrinal beliefs of *other* Protestants, who also, theoretically, have true faiths. Thus the human intellect is put in antagonism to the divine intellect, which can approve, as it can teach, but One Truth, God being made to teach innumerable differences of doctrine, which are all equally supernatural and intellectual. The Rationalist seems to have more sense, if less piety. He can say, and he does say: "If your intellect is to be guided by God's intellect, you must all necessarily believe one and the same truth; even a hair's-breadth of heresy in any doctrine would be an impossible affront to the

divine intellect; so, that you must either accept the Catholic position, which allies all doctrine with infallibility, or you must give up the supernatural altogether." And this is precisely what the Catholic, Roman Church affirms. "Intellectual" is an adjective which can only be applied to divine faith on the condition of the divine perfection of the truths believed. A truth which is only half a truth, or half lie and half truth, cannot possibly be intellectual in a divine sense, because, if so, the divine intellect would be contradictory. Hence, faith is intellectual, and is only intellectual when it is the belief in what God wills that we should believe; it is not only not intellectual, it is irrational, when it is the belief in our own ideas of divine truths.

These three positions—the Catholic, the Protestant, the Rationalist—comprehend all the attitudes of the human intellect towards the whole, or any part, of revealed truth. To state the three positions once more: The Rationalist says that faith is only natural, being the inclination of the natural mind towards religion. The Protestant says that faith is supernatural, yet, that we may believe anything we like about particular doctrines: which is affirming that different beliefs about the same doctrines are equally acceptable to the divine intellect as are true beliefs. The Catholic says, that the divine intellect, being One, unchangeable in divine will as in divine knowledge, all Christians must either accept the whole teaching of the divine intellect or must reject every part of it as not divine.

We need not here touch the question of *how* we know what is divine; that question lies outside the present argument. Our point is, that all faith, to be "intellectual," must be, necessarily, in perfect unison with the divine intellect, in regard, that is, to the human *will* to accept as true whatever the divine intellect may have revealed.

We could hardly approach the consideration of "the intellectual," as distinct from "the spiritual" life of the Catholic Church, without trying to show how the intellectual and the spiritual are harmoniously intertwined or correlative. We affirm that there is no attitude of the human mind which is so sublimely intellectual as that of faith; and that, conversely, a man who has no faith, uses his intellect without the pursuit of its First Object. Let us travel through the centuries of Catholic history, or rather, wing our way in rapid retrospect, and see if it be not true that, alike in thought and vigorous action, the Catholic Church has lived an "intellectual life?"

First, take the attitude of the Church towards heresy, from the days of Cerinthus to those of Döllinger. The whole "point" of that attitude, as we say in argument, has been that the intellect of

the Most High having revealed one thing, and all these heretics having insisted on another thing, there has been the imputation of false teaching—not on the Holy Catholic Church, but on God himself, who has guided His Church to teach wrongly. This is the special crime of heresy—that, while it professes to only condemn the Catholic Church, it really condemns the Almighty, who has misled His Church—an impossible, an inconceivable impiety. Now a true faith being a true incline of the human intellect, because it is the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, must be, necessarily, the highest use, as it is also the highest possession, of that intellect which is “made in God’s image.” Therefore, heresy at once degrades the human intellect from that dignity which the Incarnation conferred upon it, and insults the intellect of God, whom it accuses of believing wrongly, or else of inspiring the Church’s mind with false doctrine. Either way, the human intellect is wronged; it is misled on truths necessary to salvation; it is reduced to the same position in which it was *before* Redemption—that of *not* knowing the teaching of the Redeemer. And if the shallow answer be hazarded, “We still agree as to what is essential, what is important; we only differ as to this doctrine or that doctrine;” the answer is, that all heresies, all schisms have been grounded upon “this doctrine or that doctrine,” and that the primary object of a teaching Church is to decide what *is* essential, what *is* important—the very “questions” on which private judgment must always differ. Thus the Catholic Church has been occupied for eighteen centuries in defending the intellect of the Most High from being misrepresented; from being declared to teach one thing, when He has “infallibly” taught another—“infallibly,” in the sense of knowing and of imparting.

## II.

But if we step outside the narrow limits of revealed truth, and wander over the wide world of human thought, we soon get into the complex questions of the “relations” of the Catholic Church to, say, philosophy, politics, science, and even commerce, as well as to the Christian family and social ethics. What furious abuse has been hurled at “Roman Catholicism,” especially during the last three centuries of revolution, for its interference, its dictation, its ambition, its craftiness, its aggrandizement, its greed! All these hard words have meant simply this: That the Catholic Church, being the guardian of divine truth, is therefore, necessarily, the guardian of every one of those human interests which directly or indirectly affect that truth. We shall not put it too strongly if we say that, in the centuried struggle in which the Catholic Church has been engaged since the day of Pentecost,

her mission has been to direct the intellects of all the peoples of Christendom to a worshipful reverence for the intellect of God. "Do not," the Church has said to the world, "trust your own shifting, fleeting impressions of right or wrong. Your ideas of politics are leading you away from the Christian postulate, that the State must not interfere with the Christian conscience. In your passion for modern science, you ignore the teachings of experience, that the boastings of to-day may become the ridicule of to-morrow, and that no discovery, no new hypothesis, is likely to touch so much as the outworks of the evidence for the divine creation of the human family. In your advanced stage of domestic liberty—a glorious liberty, and essentially Christian—you are apt to forget that the Family, the State, and the Church, are all ruled by One and the same Divine Head; so that the same principles of divine allegiance should govern every member of a family that govern statesmen, and the whole hierarchy of the Catholic Church. And, finally, in your approved canons of social ethics, whether in affairs commercial or conventional, you are carried away by fashion, by popular habit, by example, so that you break the laws of God through the indolence of your conventionalism, and need to be corrected from time to time by the Holy See."

What are all such kindly counsels but the intellect of the Church in action; the perpetual appeal of the divinely-guided mistress of the truth to the higher intellect of all classes of society? The "intellectual life of the Church" is her sympathetic, affectionate reasoning with every member of every community that is Christian; and this "reasoning" is partly known by her established institutions, and partly by her varied counsels from time to time. We may take three of her institutions in chief as perpetually manifesting the intellectual side of her life, and these shall be Priesthood, Monasticism, and Education. A few words on each of them will suffice to establish the position that in the whole of the *spiritual* career of the Catholic Church the *intellectual* career is correlative.

Rome is, and has been for eighteen centuries, at once the centre and the fortress of the Catholic Church, because the Roman Pontiff is the head of the Christian priesthood, and therefore the head of all the Christians in the world. In this *fact*, lies an intellectual teaching, which is not obscured—it is made more manifest—by all Protestantism. All Protestants, from Simon Magus to Père Hyacinthe, have proved the intellectual stability of the Institution which is commonly known as the Roman Catholic Church, presided over by the Pope, who is God's vicar. Here we have the earthly enthroning of the intellect of God, so far as it has pleased the Divine Majesty to reveal It to us. "Rome, the home of the Vicar of Christ, the seat of that long line of Pontiffs who" (in the

fervid language of Louis Veuillot) "bind our erring planet to Emanuel's footstool," is at once the Capital of Christendom, the centre of civilization, the fortress of refined and cultured society, the Mount Zion of both divine and human love, the seed-sower of all (true) philosophy and science. As the author of a French pamphlet, "Rome's Place in the World," has expressed it: "Rome civilizes as Christ civilized, by sowing the seeds of civilization." In other words, the centre of Christendom has been, necessarily, the centre of society, because society, having derived its infallible *principles* from Rome has been rendered secure as to the basis of its *knowledge*. It is because of this two-fold character of Rome, Rome spiritual, Rome intellectual, that society must regard it as the mother-city of wisdom, where the divine principles of eternal truth are first formulated. And from Rome—flowing equally all over the body of the Church, as the blood flows from the heart to the utmost extremity—the divine wisdom pulsates through the priesthood and the laity, teaching every one what is essential to salvation. In the Fact, therefore, the visible Fact, of the Holy See, the Catholic Church teaches the world the Divine Fact of God's Unity, and the human duty of adoring that Unity. This is the corner-stone of Intellectualism; this is the first answer to the vagaries of Rationalism, which would divorce the human intellect from the divine intellect.

Our next point is Monasticism. What the Prayer in the Garden was to the public life of Christ, the religious life is to the priest's office in the world. At least, the similitude may suffice to express the two kinds of Devoted Life; the one, the intellectual worship of God's truth; the other, the intellectual imparting of it to others. Briefly—for we have a great deal of ground to travel over—what has the Church done for society by her religious orders, in the highest sense of the word intellectual? Well, three things which society, without the religious orders, could never have done for itself. From a literary point of view, the religious orders preserved literature, pagan and Christian, so that to them we owe the best half of our present libraries. Theologically, the religious orders have been the high schools of Christianity, without which we should have missed our best scholastic teaching. While even chivalrously, in the martial, heroic sense, the religious orders have set the example of Catholic heroism in many a time of danger to Christian nations. Let us see how these three offices work together. Thus, the Benedictines, the Chartreux, the Bernardines, defended intellectualism with the pen. The Trinitarians, the Brothers of Mary, and some of the chivalrous orders, aided the champions of intellectual liberty in these two ways—by devoting themselves to the redemption of Christian captives, and to the

emancipation of those Christians who had been made slaves. And thirdly, the Templars, the Knights of St. John, the Teutonic Orders, defended civil and religious liberty with the sword. When the tide of Moslem barbarism seemed not unlikely to inundate the West, secular chivalry offered its aid to the spiritual chivalry; the Roman Church, in her marvellous fecundity, creating those Catholic military orders in which the zeal of the monk was blended with the passion of the soldier; both reaching a pitch of heroism whose feats are scarcely paralleled in story, and leaving traces in Syria, Rhodes, Spain, and Palestine, by which we may note their work and their faith. But, to return to the monastic orders. Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians, in their preaching, both to pagans and to Christians, were putting before them the intellectual ideal of natural duties, in grounding them upon the Catholic Roman faith. Nor can even Protestants withhold their tribute of admiration from those religious orders of the thirteenth century, who contended against the Waldenses and the Manicheans; nor from the Capuchins, of the sixteenth century, who revived the primitive rule of St. Francis; nor from the Carmelite Order, whose foundress was St. Theresa; nor from the Maurist Benedictines, whose services to patristic literature are not likely to be forgotten for all time; nor from the Lazarists, who, in directing seminaries and missions, have been the pride and ornament of the Church in France; nor, later in the Church's life, from the Redemptorists, whose apostolic labors have met with such success in Italy, Germany, Belgium, and America; nor from the Ursulines, devoted to the education of women; nor, finally (to omit the mention of many others), from the Jesuits, whose services to half the world have been as intellectual as they have been spiritual, as scholastic as they have been auxiliary to civilization. "Paraguay" was a triumph of the highest science of civilization, of the combined force of spiritual energy and human culture, such as no achievement of Protestant missions has ever distantly approached, nor even so much as emulated in endeavor.

Our third point is Education. We have, already, glanced indirectly at the subject; for monasticism was at the root of education. But besides the vast bodies of religious orders to which we have made allusion, and besides the vast bodies of secular priests who spent their lives in disseminating thoughtful piety, the Catholic Church has constantly sought for new vehicles of instruction by which to promote science and art. Even Voltaire had to admit: "The sovereign Pontiffs have always been remarkable among princes for their attachment to letters." And Macaulay wrote: "In the Middle Ages the Popes were the patrons of whatever was best in education, both in the secular and the ecclesiastical groove."

When we recall such names as Clement VI; Gregory IX., Eugenius IV., Nicholas V., Pius II., we naturally think of the magnificent universities which these Popes aided in founding or endowing. Oxford, Cambridge, Padua, Naples, Vienna, Upsal, Lisbon, Salamanca, Alcalá, Toulouse, Montpellier, Orleans, Nantes, Poitiers, had, most of them, their seats of learning before Protestantism was heard of, and the Popes communicated regularly with all of them. But our point is, not only that the Popes of the Middle Ages covered Europe with splendid seminaries of the higher education; what we would insist on in this argument is, the imperishable nature of the education which was cherished by Pontiffs and by priests. Even the better class of infidel thinkers have admitted that the splendid treasury of theological science—and of philosophical science in connection with it—which was evolved out of the labors of a dozen centuries, has lain at the root of most of the great discoveries which modern thought would pretend to claim as being its own. Joseph de Maistre has summed up the truth in these words: "The sceptre of science belongs to Europe only because she has been Catholic. She has reached this high degree of civilization and knowledge because she began with theology; because the universities were, from the first, schools of theology; and, because all the sciences grafted upon this divine subject have shown forth their divine sap by increased vegetation." Protestants forget, when they speak of the learning, the educatedness of some few of their notabilities in the sixteenth century, that just as the services which Bacon rendered to philosophy, or the services which Newton rendered to science, were indirectly due to that root of Catholic theology which lay at the bottom of the Church's mind for a thousand years; so the lofty philosophy of Shakespeare—himself a product of the ages of faith—was the *natural* issue of that rarified intellectualism which was the atmosphere of all taught Catholics for many centuries. And, just one word as to Protestantism itself, in its intellectual possessions or characteristics: Be it remembered, that heresy has been always blended with truth, in every sect and schism from the beginning; the truth being always Rome's, while the heresy was that person's who corrupted it. Whatever is good and true in Protestantism is of Rome; and just as Protestantism would have had no Bible but for the Catholic Council which settled its canon (and but for the Catholic monks who translated it), so, no Protestant "Churches" would ever have been formed if the great old Church had not overspread Europe. The boast of glorious possessions by the Protestant sects—and, intellectually, they have always had great possessions—is like the boast of the appropriator who has broken up stolen goods so as to prevent their identification or reclaim.

## III.

We have to include in "The Intellectual" a vast sphere of acquirements, which, *prima facie*, lies outside "education." Let us speak of two subjects, now much in the mouths of men, so much so as to be almost what is called "popular." Science and philosophy are the boasts of our own age; and many persons imagine that they are almost new to this age, so wonderful has been their progress, their development. We may say, both of the one and the other, that whatever is sound in them is old. As to science—of which the enduring foundations were laid before Protestantism was heard of—we may make this remark, that whereas modern society produces its scientists independently of religion (and therefore scientists, who are perpetually giving scandal, besides propounding most untenable conceits), Catholic society has scarcely produced even one great scientist who was not more attached to the Faith than to his inventions. Just as André Ampère—the illustrious *savant* in spectro-magnetism—could say with his last breath: "I know the 'Imitation of Christ' by heart;" so the Catholic testimony of, say, Cassini, the astronomer; Hilaire, the zoölogist; Cæsar Cantu, the historian; Santarem, the geographer; Blainville, the naturalist (with a host of others); "as to the necessity of the true foundation of all science," was as ardent as the industry of the pursuit which rendered them such masters of their craft. One distinguishing characteristic of the Catholic scientists has been, that they regarded their researches as tentative; whereas, non-Catholic scientists usually regard their "discoveries" as being final for all men, and for all time. Cuvier, the naturalist, related an amusing incident which occurred in his own science-loving experience. He said, that in his youth some pious Christians were much troubled because it had been "discovered" that there could not have been water enough in the heavens to produce what was historically known as "the Flood." In a few years, another scientist proved clearly that the water in the clouds, under certain abnormal conditions, could suffice to submerge the earth up to its highest tops; so that the first scientist had to withdraw his demonstration and to bow to the second scientist as his superior. This one example is as good as a thousand. "What are your *laws*, as you confidently call them," asks a rigid reasoner, of some modern scientists, "but the deductions of your own natural reason; and, what are your *truths* but apparent truths?" This question suggests an attitude of the Catholic scientist which would be singularly offensive to some non-Catholics. Monsieur Renan would probably consider it "unscientific." That gentleman, who still occupies a chair in the highly-mixed University of Paris, is a type of that self-sufficiency, and assumed contempt for Catholic authority,



which are so often characteristic of modern scientists. In higher criticism, in philosophy, and, above all, in science, deductions are drawn, discoveries are proclaimed, which are assumed to demolish, at one stroke, a whole range of revealed truth, and to reduce poor Christianity to a myth. At one moment, we are startled by a confident denial of the exceptional privilege, as well as the exceptional priesthood of the Jewish race; at another moment, we are bid to ridicule our long-cherished belief in the descent of the human family from one pair; or, when discussing immortality, we are assured that a future state is only a morbid, if natural, craving of the human heart. "Science," more than "philosophy," does all this. Some one has dug up a fossil out of the bowels of the earth, or gathered a clue from the simian tribe in African forests, and henceforth all theology is reduced at once to a day-dream, and the Mosaic record has to blush for having deceived us. We are not allowed even to raise an objection, or to protest. Science is infallible; science rests on facts; theology is only a speculative mysticism.

Yet, even as to "discoveries," we might gaily accept the challenge which the New Philosophy is fond of throwing down to Catholics; nor, in any department of intellectual achievement, need we be afraid of "coming in second" in the great race for initiation or for development. It suffices to mention the names of the Catholic princes in science, to intimate the tone and spirit of their philosophy; and, for the sake of convenience, let us include in the compass of science all those accomplishments, as well as discoveries, of the Catholic intellect, which might, in popular sense, be termed "scientific," as well as in popular sense "artistic." Now, what we contend for is, that the Catholic science and the Catholic philosophy—using both words in popular sense—have been singularly harmonious throughout history; so much so, that some of the greatest scientists could hardly have achieved their great works had they not been inspired by Catholic philosophy; or, conversely, that some of the greatest Catholic philosophers have owed their greatness to their profound science of theology. Thus, we might put it in this way: that just as St. Thomas Aquinas could write his "Summa," because his philosophy was the logical outcome of his theology, so we might say of Raphael that his great picture which is now at Dresden, was the inspiration of his Catholic faith and piety; or, of Michel Angelo, that his "Pieta," or even his "St. Peter's," was the consistent expression of his intensely Catholic disposition; or of Dante, that he could not have written his "Divine Comedy" unless he had known that the Catholic religion was supernatural: or of Cardinal Newman, that he could not have thought out his "Gerontius," unless he had first submitted his intellect to

the Holy See. And if, putting aside the great masters of Catholic expression, we speak only of a few of the scientists who were also Catholics, it will suffice to note that, in mathematics, in astronomy, in geography, and also in mechanics, and in navigation, the Catholic pioneers, not only preceded all other people, but showed to all other people the precise road which they must follow. A philosophical dictionary of much more than ordinary dimensions would be wanted to tell of those scientists who were *first* Catholic, and only afterwards were devoted to great attainment. In astronomy, Pope Sylvester II.—and later in the centuries, Friar Bacon—preceded the illustrious Jesuits, De Vico, Secchi, and Perry, whose names are now historic, and must ever be so. It is well known that the religious orders have been fond of erecting observatories, just as it is historic that in many countries they have been called upon by civil governments to originate or to conduct “observations.” If we speak of arithmetic, we are reminded that it owed its origin—that is, its origin as a science—to Gerbert, who was educated by Religious; while we also remember that the first published work on algebra was from the pen of an Italian Franciscan friar. Descartes is known to have invented the new geometry, or the application of algebra to geometry; and when we recall the history of such branches of science as mechanics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, hydro-dynamics, the names of Leonardi da Vinci, Galileo, Borsu, Castelli, Gassendi, and Viviani, with many others, come up before us, as claiming the honors of inventions, or of such systematizing as made invention to become useful. Scientists tell us, that Father Secchi constructed the automatic meteorograph; and that Shyrle de Rheita invented the now familiar opera-glass, after first using a convex lens for the telescope. A hundred and fifty years before Watt, Father Lourochon composed a learned work on steam; while the first persons to attempt aerial navigation were two priests, who were named Lala and Galien. If it be asked, who first thought of the polarization of light, or who first determined its velocity; or who discovered dynamical electricity, or invented the galvanometer, the thermo-electric multiplier, or even the battery—the answer will be that the discoverers were Catholics. It is worth noting, as Mr. Fay has recently told us, that all the apparatus now in use for illustrating electro-magnetism were devised by André Ampère, a French Catholic. To cut the inquiry short, it is scarcely possible to name a science which does not owe its origin, or at the very least, its utility, either directly or indirectly, to some Catholic. And, as to our every-day implements, or “useful things,” a writer has well remarked that, if you took away all Catholics out of history you would have to take away, with them, your clocks, watches, spectacles, firearms, gunpowder, thermome-

ters, magic lanterns, mercurial barometers, cameræ-obscuræ, canal-locks, water-mills, water-engines, dynamo-electric machines, electric lamps, steamboats, organs, bells, banks, glass windows, mariners' compasses, the domestic enjoyment of tea and coffee—but no, we must not prolong the list, for a whole chapter would not suffice to enumerate the “necessaries” of which the suppression of Catholic intellect would leave us devoid. Finally, as to the boldness of exploration—the dauntless pluck of Catholic travellers and adventurers: our first homage is due to those Catholic missionaries who visited the unknown regions of the earth, and afterwards wrote their descriptions of what they saw. Here again, in this department of exploration, we find that the first map of China was designed by a Jesuit, just as, in the same year, the first catechism in Chinese was drawn up by a Jesuit hand. It may be mentioned, that it was in the year 1246 that Pope Innocent IV. sent Father Carpino, accompanied by a small band of Franciscan monks on a mission to the savage emperor of Tartary. And, a little later, in 1253, another monk, also a Franciscan, by command of King Louis IX. of France, was sent on an exploring mission to Asia, and succeeded in exploring more of that quarter of the world than any European before him had thought traversable. But why speak of the exploits of the travelling heroes of those dangerous times; of Marco Polo, who in the thirteenth century spent twenty-four years in Eastern wanderings; of Columbus, of Vasco di Gama, of Magellan, of Balboa, of Cortez, of Pizarro, or of De Soto, whose names are as household words to the students of ancient geography, though it is not often remembered that they were all Catholics. Nor was it a slight tribute to the reputation of the religious orders that in days when to travel was to brave death, civil governments selected *them* to do the world's hardest work, because they knew that they “feared nothing but sin.”

If space permitted, we should like to trace the intellectual life in Catholic statesmanship, and in the higher walks of diplomacy, as well as in certain sections of the fine arts. It has always seemed to us—and our readers, who have travelled much in Europe, will probably bear us out in the impression—that the most wonderful of the *visible*, intellectual creations for which society is indebted to the Catholic Church, is the multitude of cathedrals, which, in countries once Catholic, speak the mind, proclaim the faith, of our forefathers. If there were no other monuments to Catholic intellect existing in the nations of the world, even pagans might exclaim: “What a profound belief these Catholics must have had to inspire their souls with these conceptions!” Such force, or finish, or refinement; such strength of conception with realization; are not seen in any monument of pagan times, nor in any modern

imitation of Catholic outlines. They were only shadowed in the wondrous temple of Jerusalem, which truthfully indicated the intellectual life of the Jewish Church, as our cathedrals do the mind and grasp of the Catholic faith. "Exquisite in their beauty, overpowering in their majesty," remarked M. de Montalembert, about a quarter of a century ago, to the present writer, "are your English cathedrals—almost all of them. Your architects were gods in the olden times!" And the same truth might be affirmed of most of the cathedrals of Europe; they suggest an inspiration by divine faith:

The ear doth slowly to the mind supply  
The truths that flash like lightning through the eye;

and the eye that rests on Westminster or on Salisbury, on Wells, or York, or Canterbury—to speak only of the old cathedrals of England—takes in the soul of the intellectual life which is bequeathed to our apprehension by such monuments.

#### IV.

"By their fruits ye shall know them." We have still to notice, though in few words, the fatal results of that New Philosophy, which, begotten in the sixteenth century of the revolt from Catholic intellect, has brought a good part of the world back to mental chaos. It was by its *opposition* to the Catholic intellect that the New Philosophy proved the wisdom of its opponents; and thus we may claim it as the most practical of the demonstrators of the pure reason of the Catholic philosophy. Starting with doubt as its basis, and taking experimental investigation as its method, the New Philosophy put Individualism into the place of divine authority, and, indeed, clothed it with transcendental infallibility. In the sixteenth century a sort of Deism, plus a sentiment of Christianity, was the fashion among the educated classes in England; and, a little later, Rationalism and Pantheism pervaded much of the literature of Germany. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there was much scoffing and sneering; but in the nineteenth century, the "philosophers" adopt the tone of a sort of superior ignoring of divine authority, rather treating Revelation as an interesting fable, than as a "theory" that has to be dealt with Rationistically. The reach or compass of such "philosophy" naturally differs in different countries. Let us glance at a few of the prominent characteristics. In France there is a positive hatred of the Catholic Church, because the French *know* that the Catholic religion is divine. (There is no such hatred of Christianity in England, because no Protestant ever supposed, in the wildest flights of his imagination, that there could be anything divine in the

Anglican establishment.) Hence, in France there are two schools, and two alone—the Catholic, which is intense and intellectual; the infidel, which is superficial and rationalistic. Cousin, by his Pantheistic speculations; Comte, by his “*Philosophie Positive*,” with the host of unbelieving doctrinaires, such as St. Hilaire, Arago, Renan, Lamarck (who first broached the comic theory that man was the descendant of an ape), have been compelled to “cry down” the Catholic believers, whom they could not reason with in patience and sobriety. It is nothing to these self-complacent rationalists, that men who were their superiors in everything, profoundly revered the very truths which they despise. That such men as De Cauchy, the greatest mathematician who has succeeded to Laplace, or Vinet the mechanician, or Quatremain de Quincey, the archæologist, or the Orientalists, Abel Remusat and Sylvestre de Sacy, or the Armenian scholar, St. Martin, or hosts of other great men, should have been Christians in faith and in action, no more affects the serenity of the Rationalists than the knowledge that Chateaubriand intellectually stripped the disguise off French skepticism, or that de Maistre, and de Bonald, and Montalembert, and Lacordaire—not to mention the admirable non-Catholic Guizot—were all champions of the very truths which they assailed. Guizot was, indeed, a great thinker, notwithstanding the accident of his born Protestantism. In his “*The Christian Church and Society*,” he told Frenchmen that they were under a delusion when they insisted on the prominence of the natural law, and denied the supernatural and the miraculous. *His* philosophy was Christian. Indeed, he was so nearly a Catholic that he protested against the usurpation of the temporal power of the Pope, maintaining that it was “only a trick of the infidel party to overthrow the dominion of the supernatural.” Guizot was a grave and sober reasoner; whereas, the “philosophy” of infidel Frenchmen is simply a dressed-up natural pretext for getting rid of the responsibilities of the human soul.

Let us glance at Germany, Italy, Spain, and England. Fifty years ago, the German mind, half exhausted by metaphysical speculations, took up with politics and the physical sciences; yet continued in the same false mood of experiment founded on a skepticism which was universal. Its public press was in the hands of Jews and infidels; and in most of its universities—hardly a quarter of a century ago—the skeptic, the rationalist, and the Catholic professor taught day by day in the same halls, handling the biggest problems of the human mind from their various standpoints of belief or unbelief. It was in 1860, that Professor Clemens, who occupied the chair of Philosophy in Münster, took as his thesis for a public lecture, “*Philosophy is the Handmaid of Theology*.”

Professor Kuhn, also a divine in the same faculty, denied this ; and a warm dispute was carried on by the professors. Now, no two disputants could have chosen a better subject for the bringing out of the exact teaching of the Catholic Church. That "philosophy is the handmaid of theology" (not theology the handmaid of philosophy), is a truism which no Catholic should deny ; and happily, in our own time, the German Catholic mind is too vigorous to be misled by any sophistry of the rationalists. Indeed, the Catholic intellect of Germany in these days is more robust than that of any other country.—For, Italy is fatally enfeebled by the revolution. Under the first Napoleon she was indoctrinated with the ideas of '89 ; and under the second Napoleon she yielded Rome to the revolutionists ; nor is there that backbone of intellectual faith in the Italians which should oppose resistance to the chronic scandal of the usurpation.—Portugal was once called the Refuge of the Revolution, for it drank deep of the cup of its enchantments ; yet it has long since tried to shake off the hallucination, and is now no disgrace to its Catholic neighbors.—For, Spain has been quite awakened from its moral torpor, and is a striking evidence of the vitality of Catholic principles.—As to England, the characteristics are exceptional. The English mind is either practical or sentimental ; it is not, in strict sense, philosophical. The Catholic intellect in England has not to contend against speculations which are assumed to be a pure exercise of the reason, so much as against traditional prejudice, in regard to the Christian action of the Catholic Church. The prevailing form of English rationalism must be rudely called mental sloth ; it is not the result of intellectual activities, but the apology for a not honorable indifference.

One other country, Belgium, might be referred to, because the question of wholly secularizing the State was fought out in Belgium to the bitter end. That question has now righted itself ; but in France and Italy there is still much infidel talk about the desirableness of divorcing government from religion. We all know why the Catholic Church cannot approve of this divorce ; either in regard to principle, because it is opposed to revolution, or in regard to polity, because it means "the State First, and Religion in complete subjection to the State." Lamennais, before his fall, with other writers in the *Avenir*, advocated this unnatural divorce, wholly forgetting that all society, from its cradle to the grave, is indissolubly bound up with the Christian religion, so that the State *minus* the Church is really national apostacy, not only in theory but in fact. As we are thinking now of the intellectual life of the Catholic Church, it may be well to mention that there are two chief mistakes in the New Philosophy in regard to the Church's relations to civil government ; the one, that all religion should

be divorced from civil government, the other, that the religious and civil authority should meet in the same power, namely, the State. We need only say thus much at the present moment: That the divorce of the State from all religion means the interference of the State *with* religion, and very soon its complete tyranny *over* religion—as is practically the case now in France, and conspicuously the case now in Italy—while the other theory, the uniting of the two powers, as exemplified in the institution called the Church of England, means that Christianity cannot possibly be supernatural, because the Parliament controls its *imperium* on every point, and that the liberty of the Christian subject is to be circumscribed by the State, as when Queen Elizabeth punished all Catholics who would not attend her Protestant service; or as—to take an instance from modern Russia—when the Czar flogs or banishes his Catholic subjects who refuse to adore his majesty's private orthodoxy. Space forbids us to dwell further on this subject; yet it was necessary to touch upon it, because it is manifest that it is mainly *through* the State's good will and co-operation that the Church can work her way in all society; in other words, that the intellectual life of the Church can permeate both all communities and their civil laws.

## V.

It would need such a mind as that of the late Cardinal Newman to even present in fragmentary form the great truths we have ventured to glance at; nor is it sought here to do more than ask of non-Catholics: Are you wise in forsaking the guidance of the Church's intellect, which does not derive from private reason its first principles of what is right, but from the divine guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit, Who, in imparting the "philosophy" which is eternal, necessarily implies the best philosophy in things temporal. There is no possibility in this world of preserving continuous harmony between the rule of God's truth and man's will, because human feebleness must be always tumbling into rebellion; yet the broad outlines of right and wrong are so clearly traced on the world's map that we are, really, without excuse in not recognizing them. The brief survey which we have just taken amounts to this—if we may recall two or three of its leading points—Faith is intellectual, *because* divine; and therefore, the "attitude" of the Catholic Church towards the world is that of paternal, because eternal, legislation. Priesthood, Monasticism, and Education have been said to be three expressions of that Catholic intellect which rests on the Divine Wisdom for its first principles. In the material order, such first principles have been "a success," as witnessed by the splendid achievements of good Catholics before the revolution

of the sixteenth century disturbed the world. As to "philosophy," so-called, all those countries which have bent the knee to the set-up image of private judgment or individualism, have suffered correspondingly "intellectually," while those countries which have kept their first love, and have insisted on the divine authority of the Holy See, have escaped the tyranny which personal caprice always engenders, and the servitude which self-worship always entails. If we turn our eyes now to Rome—to Rome usurped, and deeply secularized—we see the focusing of all the energies of rebellion against the divine institution of the Papacy. We see at a glance, intellectually, the travesty of the human intellect which, not only refuses to honor divine authority, but seeks its glory in falling down to the golden image. Rome is (for the present) "a trim-built municipal city," as Cardinal Newman said it would be when secularized; it is dishonored by the unseemly contests of mundane interests, and has lost the honor and the peace which should belong to it. And this fact is in close connection with our subject, because the fact is so profoundly *unintellectual*. The home of the Pontiffs being the home of Christian unity—and therefore, necessarily, of the intellectual harmonies—the home where education, art, and science, and the nurseries of the Catholic missions, are supposed to be cherished tranquilly and securely, the spectacle of a stolen Rome, a rebellious Rome, a Rationalist Rome, is repugnant to the first instincts of the Christian intellect. The idea of intellectual "life" is, like the idea of all healthy life, the idea of a sound and restful life-centre, from which the harmonies of the whole body may be vitalized. The New Philosophy has done well—that is, consistently—in attacking the Church's head and the Church's home; for, if you smite the source of the intellectual life, you are pretty sure to injure the limbs and the extremities. Happily, there is a divine power behind the intellectual power, which prevents the conflict from doing worse than causing scandal. Destruction, final overthrow, are impossible. "The gates of hell shall never prevail against it." Yet it is lamentable, it is humiliating, that the human family, in this nineteenth century, cannot yield its first homage to the *idea* of the intellectual life, and to the duty of intellectual justice and harmony. We said just now, that by its opposition to the Catholic intellect, the New Philosophy proved the wisdom of its opponent; and every one can see the meanness, the imbecility, the vulgarity, of the appropriation of the Pontiff's sovereignty—which is *our* freedom. Twelve centuries of that sovereignty have lain at the root of civilization, not only because the independence of the Pontiff guaranteed his free exercise of paternal rule, but because the idea and the fact of the intellectual life of the Catholic Church are primarily grounded on justice and



equity. The Father of Christendom—and therefore the Father of intellectual life—is too venerable to be subjected to worldly accidents ; so that the New Philosophy (which is the most unintellectual thing in the world) is quite consistent in heaping insults upon God's Vicar. Most non-Catholics are willing to concede all this intellectually, though they stop short at a theoretical concession. It would be too troublesome to pass on to the *spiritual* duties which must follow upon the *intellectual* recognition of evident truths. Lord Macaulay was an example of the strange union of the recognition with a quiet practical disregard of the obligation. No writer ever recognized more than he did the intellectual consistencies of the Catholic philosophy. It was in his "History" that he wrote this one fragment, which was in harmony with numerous other fragments of his other writings : " The spiritual supremacy assumed by the Roman Pontiff has effected more good than harm ; and the Roman Church, by uniting all men in a bond of brotherhood, and teaching all men their responsibility before God, deserves to be spoken of with respect by philosophers and philanthropists."

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