

the same time! I fully believe that this impression will never be effaced from my heart."

Such is Jesuit revenge; such the spirit that the Society has always manifested, for they have learned it at the foot of the Cross of their Master and great Exemplar, and we may well apply to them the language of the great Apostle to the Gentiles: "For we preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord, and ourselves your servants through Jesus. In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed; we are straitened, but not destitute; we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken; we are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."

RELIGION AND THE MESSIAH.

MANKIND seems every day to be drifting farther and farther away from a true knowledge of God. Instead of being, as might be said of it at a no very remote period, an exotic, infidelity has come to be a tree so large and flourishing as almost to make us believe it indigenous to the soil. Long since has the name infidel and the profession of infidelity ceased to excite surprise, much less horror, for long since have people become accustomed to hear both. Indeed, by many it is esteemed the mark of a large and expanded mind to profess infidelity; more there are who seem to think that to this profession respectability must infallibly adhere; while few is the number who make the slightest discrimination between Jew and Gentile, Christian and Infidel.

At present, beyond dispute, there is a vast flood of unbelieving men. These, forswearing allegiance to any and all religious creeds, are ever striving to delude themselves into the belief that there is no God, and seek to find comfort in absolute and utter negation. Vain their purpose. They succeed in but deceiving their own hearts. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." So spake Job, many hundreds of years ago. Equally true are his words to-day, despite the vast advances that have been made in science. The geologist, digging deep into the bowels of the earth, may know more about its internal structure and the vast furnaces of heat but poorly concealed by the thin crust on which men walk; the naturalist by the aid of his microscope may have

opened up to our view the secrets of nature; the philosopher may be more intimate with the nice laws which govern human reason; the astronomer may have looked into the heavens and mapped out accurately the course of each particular star and planet; the historian may have deciphered the hieroglyphics of past ages, and revealed to us that what formerly was held as true is false, and true what formerly was thought to be false; nevertheless, not less certain at present than when as fresh from the mint it fell from the lips of Job is it, that only the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. And as foolishness is doubly foolish when all unconscious of itself, how sad is the plight of him who in his foolishness denies God, and yet while he does so deems himself wise!

In the heyday of youth man may play with infidelity as the child with a toy; he may work on his own mind so as to cause it habitually to reject the idea of God; but with all his self-deceiving *finesse* he cannot entirely drive out beyond the borders of his own thought-lines the traces of conviction of the existence of a divinity. When the cloudless skies that smiled on sturdy manhood are no more to be seen, when, instead, the gathering shadows, falling aslant his pathway, indicate more plainly than words that life's eve is coming on apace, then his mind begins to be filled with gloom and a fear troubles him as he thinks of the dark valley that lies beyond, which he is to traverse alone. Hastily he takes a retrospective glance back through the years that were, and reconsiders the promises by which he has been led to a conclusion so unsatisfactory now near life's close. Ten to one, if uninfluenced by his friends, if left to himself, the man comes back to God. If matters have come to a crisis, if no longer there remains time for cool deliberation, if, for instance, the poor man who all his life denied God, be on his death-bed, it will be the merest chance if, the existence of God being presented to him, he does not admit it. Here, in this critical, awful moment, with the flickerings of reason only left, the man is truer to himself and his nature than when, in the robustness of strength, he protested against any claims superior to his own.

Man in the full tide of strength and vigor may prate about infidelity in public, he may proclaim in lofty terms the freedom of mind and body that is purchased by throwing off old, slavish superstitions, among which he counts the believing in a God, and in the consciousness of his own superior enlightenment and importance may puff and strut about; but down deep in his heart man refuses to be an infidel. "In silence and at night" he is forced to acknowledge the existence of a Being, infinite, almighty, and unseen, and the "still small voice of conscience" whispers to him that to this Being, and to Him alone, shall he offer up homage, adora-

tion, and worship. There is that within man which tells him that he is not the last link in "being's endless chain," that there is a power above and beyond him to which he is subject. Nor must man be taught this in order to know it. This knowledge is within him, and is cultivated best when he is alone and silence reigns around. Who is there can look up into the heavens on a calm bright night, and see them lit up with a myriad of brilliant lights, and not feel the presence of a Being of grandeur and omnipotence? Do not these very stars and planets own the existence of a Creator, and proclaim His goodness and beauty?

"As spangles in the sunny rays shine round the silver snows,
The pageantry of heaven's bright army glitters in thy praise."

"A million torches lighted by thy hand
Wander unwearied through the blue abyss,
They own thy power, accomplish thy command,
All gay with life, all eloquent with bliss."

The prophet sings: "The stars gave light in their watches and rejoiced, when God called them they said, here we are; and with gladness they shined to him that made them." How beautifully does not Milton express this thought in his "Morning Prayer" of Adam and Eve! but not more beautifully than when picturing this supremely holy happy pair as strolling through the walks of Paradise on a fine summer night, listening to the music of the spheres and in enraptured wonderment turning their gaze to the starry firmament set with countless dazzling lights, while to the ear is wafted the low soft cooing of mellow-throated birds and sweet aroma of herb, tree and flower fill evening air, than when as thus alone in the midst of so much magnificence and grandeur he presents them to us as overcome by the splendor of the scene about and seeking to give expression to their feelings by murmuring, one to the other, strains like this:

"Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth
Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep,
Both day and night. How often from the steep
Of echoing hill or thicket have we heard
Celestial voices in the midnight air,
Sole, or responsive each to others notes,
Singing their great Creator! Oft in bands,
While they keep watch, or nightly sounding walk
With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
In full harmonic number joined, their songs
Divide the night and lift our thoughts to Heaven."

But no less eloquently than to this primitive pair in Paradise, all alone with nature and their God, does the Creation speak to

all of us, telling us of the Creator ; and indeed, hard and calloused, if not entirely dead, must be that heart that will not listen, or that, listening, cannot hear its voice repeating ever the same story, telling over and over again of Him that made all things, and asking us to join in praising Him. Midst "pathless woods" and desert sands this voice may be heard, and, O, what a tempest of meaning has it not for him who, in contemplation, stands on the "lonely shore of the deep sea" whose waves, dashing at his feet, sing ever the same, same song! Truly, is there here a "rapture and society"—the society of God and the rapture of His presence! Well does Childe Harold address old ocean :

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Gleams itself in tempest
Boundless, endless and sublime,—the image of eternity—
The throne of the Invisible."

For him who can thus commune with nature it is impossible, long or persistently, to remain insensible to the presence of God, whose existence all the elements vie in attesting. "All nature cries aloud through all her works," and speaks to us of a power above. Every wind that blows, every summer zephyr as well as every wintry blast, every blade that grows, every bird that sings, every animal that breathes, every living thing in the heavens, on the earth or under the earth,—all attest the existence of a God. Blind must he be who cannot see; obstinately perverse, who, seeing, will not believe.

It is not our purpose by formal demonstration to establish the existence of God. Such demonstration does not properly lie within the scope of our article. It will not, however, be out of place to assert here the old philosophical thesis, that so-called theoretico-negative infidelity or atheism is impossible. That man may be a practical or theoretico-positive atheist, we readily concede. By a theoretico-negative infidel is meant one who has attained the age of maturity, and is still in entire ignorance of the existence of God. A practical infidel or atheist is one who, though he knows God, lives and acts as though he did not. A theoretico-positive infidel is one who, by the abuse of his faculties, has reasoned himself into the belief that there is no God. That there may be, really are, practical infidels, is a fact nobody thinks of denying. That there may be, and are also, theoretico-positive infidels, but skeptically rather than dogmatically so, is just as true. There is no doubt but that man starting on wrong principles, or starting on right principles but fallaciously reasoning, may come to the conclusion that there is no God, especially if he be seeking after this conclusion. But not immediately, or by one act, does

man so conclude. Doubt first arises in the mind; this, by constant repetition, becomes a habit, which in turn settles down to a conviction. Nevertheless, the conviction is never final. Never is the mind at rest in it. Nature will assert herself, and the voice of nature is, there is a God.

Theoretico-negative infidelity is impossible, because it is what it is. We cannot imagine that one may grow to the age of manhood and know nothing of God's existence. This contradicts all experience. Man is a rational animal. As such, he is necessarily a reasoning animal. Being this, he cannot remain unconscious of God's existence. For, God's existence is demonstrable, and being demonstrable, is understandable. God's existence is demonstrable by arguments drawn from metaphysics, physics and morals. Now, it may be that all men have not sufficient intelligence to understand all these various arguments; certainly all are not capable of understanding them in their details and niceties; or, granting that all have sufficient intelligence, all have not the time to devote to the study of these arguments. But, conceding this, there is no man still possessing a glimmer of intelligence who is not capable of understanding one or other of the arguments by which we are led infallibly to believe the existence of God. Equally true is this of him who, segregated from his infancy from association with his fellow-man, has not the benefit of the latter's teaching. Supposing a man, all his days, leading a solitary, isolated existence in the midst of a desert or woods, still will he come to a knowledge of God. For the assertion of God's existence is bound up with the first principles of reason. The ratiocination is so easy that even such a man as we have described, by his own unaided effort, will make it. Whether he look to himself or to the world around him—and no matter what his isolation or how limited his reason, if not entirely wanting, he will not fail to do either—he will be led to know God. These great truths, his own existence, the existence of the world, the harmony which, in a measure, he is able to see pervading the universe, will naturally suggest themselves to him. Then will come the question, whence this world, whence this harmony, whence am I? Just as naturally will he come to the conclusion that there must be a power superior to the world and to himself. He may not call it God, he may not understand just what it is. What matter? He understands equivalently, nevertheless, that the power is God. The emotions asserting themselves within him, his own purpose in life and what after life, the moral law which God has implanted in the heart of every human being,—all these again will be so many different ways of announcing to him the existence of God. It fol-

lows, therefore, that a theoretico-negative infidel or atheist is an impossible anomaly.

Indeed, we believe that of the vast number of infidels which the world to-day reckons, very few there are who stop to consider this point or who care about it. This kind of infidelity does not concern them. Nor is practical infidelity, although we know full well that there are many practical infidels or people who, knowing God, act as though they did not, that in which they are chiefly interested. The infidelity which most infidels to-day are pleased to defend is of the theoretico-positive genus. This affords better battling-ground, for it admits of a claim to honesty. With what would seem to be a very commendable candor, they will admit that they may be wrong, but if so, they are honestly wrong. They will tell you that you may be right, there may be a God, but they cannot see it. They wish they could believe like you, but they honestly cannot. However, continuing, they will tell you that, if there is a God, He is just. Now, being just, they have no fear, for, as their great apostle, Ingersoll, is reported to have said, they are able to argue their case before any just judge. On the face of it all, this appears very plausible and candid; but, when examined, will be seen to be downright sophistry. No right-minded man will allow himself to be deceived by it. Long ago, Seneca said: "Those who assert that they do not believe in God, are liars; at night and alone, their doubts teach them the contrary." This statement is borne out by the conduct of infidels who, almost invariably, at life's close are overcome by fear, and very frequently do, what in every case would come to pass were it not for pride and public opinion, renounce their old atheistic tendencies, and turn to God. Plato says of his own times: "There is no one who, in his youth, having learned to believe in the non-existence of the gods, perseveres in his faith to old age." Santhibal, a celebrated infidel of the seventeenth century, as Bayle relates, testifies of the whole infidel school that there is no one in it sincere in his belief, that all retract before death. With Bayle, we may sum up in a few words the honesty of all infidel professions: "Infidels say more than they believe, and are led more by vanity than by conscience. They mistake their audacity for the mark of a strong mind. Hence they put forward objections against the Gospel and God which they themselves do not believe. They do this so persistently that finally it becomes a habit for them. If to this we join their depravity of morals and that full indulgence of their passions to which, following infidel teaching, they are allowed to give full sway, we have the true solution of their professions."—(Liberatore, *de Existentia Dei*.) In whatever light, therefore, we view infidelity, we find that it is untenable, and that men adhere to it less

from conviction than from caprice. Man naturally has a belief in the Divinity.

From this it follows, as a direct corollary, that man not only must believe in, but must practise, religion. If there is a God, that God must be worshipped. There can be no dispute about this. If God is, He is benign, good, just; He is Creator, Sovereign Master, Lord. We do not now speak of Him in relation to the Christian economy. We speak of him absolutely, as God. As God, He is all and more than we have said He is. As God, then, He must be worshipped, and be worshipped by man. For man is His creature, and bears a relation of recipiency to God as Creator, Sovereign Master, Lord; to God as benign, good, and just. Man is, therefore, bound to worship God. God being Creator, man is bound to worship Him with far more justice than the child is held to reverence his parents. Now, this relation of man to God, this obligation to worship, what is it but the essence of religion? Given man, therefore religion follows as a corollary to God's existence, and God's existence is a fact that all men, to be consistent, must concede. We think, then, we are not saying too much when we affirm that all men are inclined to religion.

Our conclusion is not a little strengthened by what we see every day occurring around us. The topic of religion seems to be all-absorbing. Ever agitating, the mind is ever grappling with it, ever seeking to find rest by determining on some satisfactory solution. It is in vain that we seek to drive it from us. Like Banquo's ghost, it will not "down." It is ever demanding settlement at our hands, and will give us no peace until its demands are satisfied and, we may add, until satisfied correctly. Outside the true religion no one is at rest. To this constant unrest, arising from uncertainty, if we leave out those who, having been born in, have persevered in, or having sought, have found, the true religion and in it enjoy peace and tranquillity, there is no exception. All else alike—and the infidel as well—are subject to uneasiness and discomfort of mind. They are ever discussing with themselves, and are ever ready to discuss with any other willing to enter the arena, the question of religion. Though we have excepted him who, enjoying the true religion, enjoys peace, from the worry and excitement of unrest and the consequent all-absorbing desire of him who is unsettled to cross swords with an antagonist, apparent or real, in religious controversy, we make no exception of him to the general rule that religion is for all a subject of paramount interest. On the contrary, we say for him, even more than for others, religion is the uppermost thought of the mind. Now, this strange adherence of religion to the mind, this constant seeking for recognition, this refusal to be cast aside, is a phenomenon peculiar to religion

alone. Of no other subject is it true. Any other subject may by great effort be dismissed. We may refuse to think longer on a beautiful picture, a lovely face, or a handsome figure; a poem will be forgotten, scientific problems will cease to interest; politics have their season and are succeeded by quiet; tariff to-day may excite the country, but to-morrow it will be something else; even stocks, with all their excitement of rise and fall, of pleasure and profit, may loose their hold; any and all other subjects we may refuse to think on, but uppermost still there remains the subject of religion, and this by no effort can we shake off. After the mind has travelled about, after it has buried itself in investigation in vain quest of diversion and forgetfulness, unerringly and undeviatingly, as infallibly as the needle turns towards the pole, back must it turn to the old question of religion. This persistency of the subject of religion as a problem adhering to and perplexing the mind, this refusal to be driven forth, leads us to conclude that the idea of religion is, in a wide sense at least, innate in the mind of man, and that just as truly as man is a rational, so may he be called a religious, animal. " 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us."

A circumstance in Greek history forcibly evinces this religious craving of the mind. We learn, on the testimony of Juvenal, Persius, and Horace, all of whom, however, cite the fact but to ridicule it, that many Greeks, after becoming convinced of the hollowness and sham of paganism, and perceiving its utter untenableness, were yet unwilling to abandon themselves to total unbelief. As an alternative, they chose rather to cast their lot with the Jews, whose religion, while not believing, they saw to be more consistent, and if it did not satisfy, tended, at least, to relieve them of the desolation of paganism, or worse, no religion. Accordingly, with this end in view, without caring for the reality, they adopted the letter and ceremonial of Judaism.

As is the experience of the individual, such, also, is the universal experience of the race. Whenever and wherever we find man, there we also find religion. It was not the Jews alone who possessed a religion. No nation, no people destitute of it has ever existed. Plutarch we believe it is who says, it would be more wonderful to find a city without walls, laws, and government, than a people without the knowledge of God. Trace back the history of nations and peoples, go back as far as history leads us; leaving history, march into the realms of tradition, until tradition itself is lost in the "twilight of fable," and at no time and in no place will you find a people who worshipped not God in one or another manner. The ancient Chinese, 3370 years before Christ, followed a system of natural philosophy given them by the great Fo-hi. Succeeding this, there was introduced a religion which gave su-

preme homage to Tien. Subject to Tien, or Heaven, were many subordinate gods. In the course of time Buddhism crept in. The Buddhists expected a redeemer who was to come from the west. In India, after the pantheistic religion first practised by the inhabitants, Buddhism and Brahmanism had a fierce and long strife for the ascendancy. It appears that Brahmanism was at first successful. But Buddhism had its day of triumph also, for we read that it succeeded Brahmanism. The Hindoos possessed sacred books which they called Vedas. "These contained all revealed truths, and form the four most ancient collections of documents bearing on religion." Their contents were said to have been given by the Deity. Tradition says that Brahma appeared in person to the Hindoos. A most firm belief was entertained in the coming of a promised saviour. The Chaldeans worshipped the stars. The sun was their chief god. The Persians had a dualistic religion. They honored Ormuzd as the true and eternal God, while they feared Ahriman as the spirit of darkness. What seems to be a later invention is that Ormuzd and Ahriman were the sons of an omnipotent being, Zervana Acarena. The resurrection of the dead was believed in, and its accomplishment was attributed to Sosoish. Astrology was the basis of all religion in Egypt. The chief gods of the Egyptians—for they had a multiplicity of deities—were Isis and Osiris; and supreme honor was paid the latter, who was called the sun-god. But the Egyptians did not confine themselves to planets in their worship of gods. They worshipped animals, many of which they deemed sacred. The orgies of Egyptian worship are revolting in the extreme. In this respect the Egyptians were below all of the ancient nations. Two systems of religion seem to have obtained amongst the Greeks, one, that of the vulgar, was at first universal and consisted in the worship of the Olympic gods, chief among which was Zeus; the other was an esoteric religion, or religion of the wise, which gradually began to obtain ground as the former lost it. This second proposed a belief in a first being, and was altogether more deserving of consideration than the former religion of the Greeks; yet it was hollow and hypocritical, and entirely unable to satisfy the acute minds of a people who had become tired of sham, and longed for something more substantial to relieve them of the desolation which weighed on their spirit. The religion of Rome, as far as Rome possessed a religion characteristically Roman, was in form monotheistic. After Rome became rich and powerful, and even before, she copied Greece. Thus did it come that Rome worshipped so many gods that it was said of her that she worshipped more gods than there were planets in the heavens. Yet the religion of Rome never entirely lost its monotheistic form. St. Augustine affirms that all the Roman gods cen-

tered in one. But long before Christianity appeared knocking for admission at her gates, Rome had ceased to possess any religion at all. Infidelity was the popular profession.

To this universal existence of religion savage nations offer no exception. The discovery of the new world opened up a country inhabited by a people who must have been separated for centuries from the rest of mankind, but who, nevertheless, amidst virgin forests and trackless wastes, looked up in awe to the "Great Spirit" or Manitou. The inhabitants of Central Africa, as well as the Pacific isles, to-day practise a rude form of religion. In a word, nowhere and at no time do we find a people without some kind of a religion. Sometimes the religion found is coarse and primitive, sometimes sensual and hellish; nevertheless, the practising of it even in these forms shows a consistency and conformity to nature of which our modern infidel, if we are to believe himself, is wholly bereft.

Besides this universality of religion, teaching that the religious idea must be innate in the mind of man, there are other striking features which will not have escaped any one's notice. One is, that nearly all peoples seem to have a tradition of the fall of the race. Thus, for instance, the northern nations have a tradition that the ascs or gods, in the beginning of the world, lived in Asgard or Paradise, from which they were expelled because of their lust and avarice. The Hindoos speak of four ages, in the first of which, called the age of truth, lived Brahma, who, because of pride, was expelled from Brahmapatna or Paradise. The Persians, also, on the teaching of the Zend-Avesta, believed that the world had four ages, in the first of which men dwelt in the land of Ormuzd and enjoyed the "hundred happinesses"; but having allowed themselves to be deceived by Ahriman, they fell from their high estate. The Chinese have a legend, which says that before Fo-hi came into the world, men lived in a state of perfect happiness and in complete accord with the brute creation. After Fo-hi, begotten of a dragon, appeared, having set himself to acquire knowledge and succeeding, happiness, which till then reigned, was dispelled by knowledge. All will perceive what a similarity these traditions bear to that known as the Christian, founded on the Mosaic account; also, how natural are the divergencies noticeable.

A second feature is, that all nations retained a vague conception of the One True God. This may not at first strike all as being true, and yet it is, strictly. At first glance it would seem that the multiplicity of gods worshipped contradicted the monotheistic idea. A little further thought will show that it does not. Although many gods were recognized by ancient peoples, yet were they all recognized as subordinate to some one supreme God. We think it will be difficult to point out a single nation of which the contrary

is true. Authors are not over-clear on this subject, at least some are not; but we do not believe any author will be found asserting that there did not exist among all nations some traces, some vague memory of One True God.

But the most noteworthy feature of this universal tradition is that it all pointed to the coming of a Saviour or Messiah. This is the central figure around which are grouped all the others, the main fact to the sustaining of which all others contribute. All ancient tradition blends into one common voice, announcing the advent of a Christ, who was to renew the face of the earth. Whatever else was rejected, whatever else men forgot in the long lapse of ages, this coming of a Saviour was not rejected or forgotten. Everything pointed towards it, everything went to give it a firm basis in the minds of the people. The idea as scattered may have grown dim and misty, its boundary lines may have become less marked, its shape and form less distinct; but, instead of losing its hold on mankind as these its outward marks grew vague, it seemed rather to obtain a firmer grasp. So bound up with the destinies of the people and so intimate and present had it become to them that we may compare it to the pinnacle of a grand edifice, made up of varied and diverse materials, some of which were rough enough, but were growing into harmony as they approached the top, an edifice that had stood for thousands of years, around which during all this time had played the winds and storms, but without producing any other effect except to chip off the corners and gables and sombre the walls.

The expectation of a Messiah was the one bright star illuminating the firmament of the ancient world. It begot hope in the hearts of peoples sunk in the gloom and despondency of paganism, and cheered them to look forward to the coming of a brighter and better day. When overcome by desolation of spirit arising from the hollow forms that religion, as known to them, presented to their imaginations, this glowing picture of the future, when the earth was to be blessed and happy, rose up before them to comfort and console. The accomplishment of the reality was the bread the people were crying for, alas! how long crying for in vain, until, overcome by the disappointment of ever receiving a stone, the cry had settled down into one long, continuous wail, broken by but few faint notes of gladness. Amidst this wilderness of desolation and gloom we can understand, as the world grew old, what a source of joy must have been the thought of that promise made so many ages ago, whose fulfilment must be now near at hand. Ah, what a magic power must not its mention have had, especially for all oppressed and enthralled nations who looked to the Saviour's coming as the day of their deliverance! How must not old faces, grown long

with waiting, have beamed with joy, how must not heads bowed with cares and troubles have been lifted up, how must not the hearts of all bounded as they heard the Saviour spoken of! Possessing such a power to charm and such a potency to soothe, may we not in imagination look back through the years to the time when the Saviour's coming was, the thought that engrossed all minds, and thus looking back may we not see friends, as they gathered about the couch of the sufferer, whisper the Saviour's name, while the eyes of the sick one, as he heard it, beamed with strange light; or may we not see the mother, as bending o'er her little one to stop his infant cries, she told of the happy days that were to come, while, as if hushed by talismanic spell, the child dried his eyes and began to smile? The coming of a Saviour was an event ardently expected by all the ancient nations. In the east they pointed towards the west, in the west towards the east, as the place of His advent. The idea had so gained ground at the time of Cicero that we find it spoken of as an event certain and soon to be accomplished. Dionysius and his friend, Apollophanes, of the Areopagus, looked daily for its fulfilment.

We have said that the Messianic tradition was universal. We have not, however, as yet spoken of that people who, more than any other, treasured the hope of its fulfilment, and who, more than any other—going forth to every land—caused the diffusion of this hope throughout the world. This was the Jewish people. From the time of Abraham we find the Jews, who were of Chaldæic origin, separating themselves from surrounding peoples, and asserting for themselves a special mission, the keeping alive of the knowledge of the One True God and of the Saviour's coming. The Jews possessed a number of books which were delivered to them by Moses, the great law-giver. These books, the Jews claimed, were written under Divine inspiration. They contained an account of the origin of the world, of man, prescribed certain laws for government, etc. According to their account, man was created out of the slime of the earth, after God's own image and likeness, and after creation placed in Paradise, a garden of all delights. Man's original condition was that of pure innocence. Having sinned, he fell from his high estate, became deteriorated in body and mind, subject to concupiscence, sorrow, death, and forfeited his rights to Heaven, which, if he had been faithful, was to be his. Although displeased at man's sin, God, because of a great love He bore man, did not abandon him. Nay, He promised that, in time, a Saviour would be born, who would repair the ruin caused by Adam's, the first man's, sin, and re-establish harmony between earth and heaven. The Jews were God's chosen people. There was imposed on them as a binding obligation, the observance of ten commandments em-

bracing all the natural law. These commandments, engraven in tablets of stone, were given by God Himself to Moses amid the lightnings and thunders of Sinai. As long as the Jews observed them, no harm would befall the Jews themselves; but if they departed from these laws, they—the Jews—were to be punished, or as Achior, in the book of Judith, so beautifully relates to Holofernes: "Wheresoever they went in, without bow and arrow, and without shield and sword, their God fought for them and overcame, and there was no one that triumphed over this people but when they departed from the worship of the Lord their God." Such in brief was the Jewish tradition. By comparison, we will find that, in its main features, it differed not essentially from what we have seen was the universal tradition of mankind. Rather may we say, both are in full accord, proving plainly the fact and the unity of a primitive revelation. The main points of agreement are: First, the assertion of a One God; secondly, the preservation of a remembrance of the fall; and thirdly, the central point of all revelation, a belief in the Messiah. The Messianic idea we trace, therefore, to a primitive revelation, and of it we predicate the same universality as of the revelation on which it rests.

But to what purpose have we established this? It may, perhaps, by some one be said: Granted the fact, what does it prove? Granted that the Messianic idea or belief in a Saviour has always and everywhere existed since the beginning of the world, that it is universal in time and space, what from this do you deduce? The name of the Messiah, His nation, the time of His coming,—of these all that has been said tells us nothing. On the contrary, because of the very vagueness, and, at the same time, universality of the idea, the confusion becomes denser, and the difficulty of *locating* the Saviour all the greater. The validity of the objection, as far as it concerns the failure of what has been said to tell us who or what the Saviour was, or whether or not he has come, we cheerfully concede. In order to *locate* the Saviour, we must proceed after a different method. But to accomplish this end, we do not deem it necessary to go aside from the beaten path, despite the fact that the Jews, following it, with all their facilities for knowing the Saviour failed at His advent to recognize Him. Their failure, however, was not owing to ignorance or to the insufficiency of means which had been given for knowing the Saviour, but rather to their blind and stubborn prejudices. In order to locate the Messiah, it will be necessary merely to establish the divinity of Jesus Christ. The arguments by which this is done are familiar to all. We indicate but a few of the best known: That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, is a historical truth. To doubt it were to doubt all evidence. Of the existence of no other person have we so abundant

and irrefragable testimony. The life of Jesus may be narrated in a few words. He was born of a virgin, in a stable, at a village of Judea called Bethlehem. The circumstances surrounding his birth, though unknown to the world at large, were of a most extraordinary kind, clearly pointing to supernatural agency. After His birth, Jesus led a most retired life for thirty years, during which period we hear of Him but once, when, interrupting His usual quiet, He went to the temple where He disputed with and questioned the doctors of the law, at the same time surprising them by the acuteness of His intellect. For three years, after He had attained the age of thirty, He went about preaching, teaching, and continuing on a larger scale what had marked His whole life, the doing of good to all who came in His way. During His public life He proclaimed Himself the Son of God, the promised Messiah, whose coming the world had been so long waiting for, and, in confirmation of His assertion, wrought many signs and wonders. Although unable to explain the miracles He wrought, the Jews, who had expected the Messiah to come in pomp and glory, repudiated the claims of Jesus, whom they saw in the garb of humility, and culminated a most unholy and brutal torturing of Him by putting Him to death on a cross. Jesus accepted the death that He might manifest Himself master of death. This He did by coming forth from the sepulchre, the third day after His burial, glorious and immortal. Having remained on the earth forty days, in the presence of many witnesses, He ascended into Heaven. Such was the life of Jesus Christ on earth.

He proclaimed Himself the Messiah! Were His claims true? The united voice of nineteen centuries answers, yes. True, here and there, there have always been some to deny, yet even these admit that, if the whole story about the long-promised Messiah be not a myth, then that Saviour came on earth in the person of Jesus Christ. The life of Jesus testifies He was the Messiah long spoken of and expected. The miracles He wrought, the virtues He practised, the wisdom He displayed,—all attest divinity. In the person of Jesus were fulfilled, also, all that the Sibyl had announced and the prophets foretold of the Messiah. The time, the place, the circumstances of the Saviour's coming, had all been accurately specified, notably by the prophets Jacob, Daniel, Aggeus and Malachy. In fact, every page of the Old Testament contains something in regard to the Messiah. Now, in no point does Jesus contradict anything, but, on the contrary, down to the minutest details, agrees with everything that had been foretold of the Messiah. The conversion of the whole world to Christ, the destruction of the synagogue which, up to Christ's time, though many times attacked, had never been completely overthrown; the substi-

tution of the new for the old economy,—all are so many facts attesting the divinity of Jesus. These arguments, presented in their full force with all their wealth of details, give us more than a moral; they give us a metaphysical certainty of the identity of Jesus with the Messiah. This is sufficient for us to believe, in all confidence, that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Messianic idea, that He is the long desired of nations, the seed of Abraham in whom all peoples were to be blessed. “When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, they said to Him: ‘Art thou he that art to come, or look we for another?’” No such question need we ask. We have the testimony of nigh two thousand years to assure us. We have seen the miracles and wonders Christ wrought, and in His person we have seen the prophecies fulfilled, the Sibylline oracles confirmed, the expectation of all antiquity answered. No, we look not for another, but in full confidence we believe that Jesus is the promised Saviour, the Son of God, as St. Augustine says, who, quitting the eternal mansions of His father, “appeared to men, to a world in the decline of old age and in the throes of death, that, while everything about them was rapidly going to decay, He might by His presence infuse into them new life and vigor.” Therefore do we Christians, not only at Advent, but during the whole year, in expectation of His annual Christmas coming, sing the anthem of the prophet: “Drop down dew ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour!”

To sum up. We find that, by nature, man is not inclined to infidelity, but to religion. This universal religious idea points clearly to a primitive revelation, the central figure of which is the Messiah. We have shown that this Messiah is realized in the person of Christ. Christianity, therefore, or a belief in Christ, is as old and as wide as the world itself. Man is naturally not an infidel, but a Christian. This is the truth, that our partial and discursive consideration of Religion and the Messiah has brought us. Can the infidel refute it?
