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MICHAEL'S

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THE DIVINE GIFT

OF THE

SACRED SCRIPTURES,

AND THE

Divine Legislator's First Manifestation of His Care, and Solicitude for His Human Creation.

No. I.—Causes of the Prevailing Desuetude of the Ancient Zcal for the Study of the Sacred Scriptures.

No. II.—The Principal Motives for Cultivating their Study.

No. III.—The Christian Religion the Doctrine of the Divine Legislator of Men.—The Premosaic Sabbath.

No. IV.—The Importance of a Right Understanding of the First Act of the Divine Legislator, in dividing Human Time into Weeks of Seven Days, with the Duty of Rest on and Sanctification of the Seventh.—Conference with a Sceptic on the Subject of this Law.

BY THE REV. HENRY FORMBY.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES. 1881.

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A PRELIMINARY FRIENDLY WORD

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THE CHRISTIAN READER.

THE purpose aimed at in the present Series of Essays will easily be perceived to be incapable of belonging to the domain of religious controversy. For the conducting a religious controversy, a common ground of religion mutually accepted as the basis of argument, is indispensable, and what common ground of religion can there exist between belief and disbelief in GoD?

Let it be supposed that a man comes in my way who says to me, "I for my part totally disbelieve in the existence of GoD, or at any rate I entirely deny that He is or can be a legislator who has either the power or the right to bind me to obey His laws." What can I have in common with such a man? If I am called upon to speak to him, I can only say to him, "Sir, God gives you for the present your liberty of choice, and permit me to say you make a very bad use of it. Before a man, says the Son of Sirach, is set life and death, good and evil, and that which pleases him shall be given to him (*Eccles.* xv. 18). It is evidently death that pleases you, and except Divine mercy should condescend to open your eyes to see where you are going, the death you have chosen is that which you will have to face." To say more than this, to such a man, would be to beat the air.

Are we Catholics, then, it will be asked, to persevere in a state of helpless, torpid indifference to the growth and increase around us of the denial of GoD? Certainly not! To us, and to all who with us believe in GoD, and desire to honour His most holy Name, the increase of this denial is a most deadly pestilence, to the progress of which every legitimate barrier and corrective is to be fearlessly opposed.

My throat, says the voice of Divine Inspiration, shall meditate the truth, and my lips shall detest the impious man (*Prov.* viii. 9).

The voice even of the most innocent little child, in the utmost quiet of private life, detesting the impious denial of GOD, has a clear positive value in the sight of GOD; but something more than this may be justly looked for from the man of faith who has arrived at the maturity of his powers of mind. Without contesting the value of *any* true-hearted and righteous detestation of the impious denial, let us not ignore the truth, that the social value of the act of detestation, just and righteous as it cannot fail to be, will be largely determined by the degree of knowledge which is known to dictate and to sustain it.

Granted then that those who are most notorious for this impious denial are easily and commonly to be known by the following characteristic marks—

- (1.) Their self-sufficient contempt of the Sacred Scriptures as writings possessing the gift of Divine Inspiration ;
- (2.) Their impious rejection of the power and authority of GOD to promulgate and to require obedience to His laws;
- (3.) Their profane repudiation of the "supernatural order" of human life, and their setting at nought the act of GoD, uniting it by an indissoluble union to the "natural order;"
- (4.) Their proud denial of their debt to their Divine Creator for the benefit of His instruction in things pertaining to both the "natural and supernatural orders;"
- (5.) Their contemptuous ignorance of His perpetual intervention in upholding the political and social well-being of all the nations and powers of the earth ;
- (6.) Their obstinate blindness to the innumerable manifestations of His power in the punishment of the public sins of kingdoms, populations and associations,—

it is to be asked, Can men on the side of faith hope successfully to confront opponents on the side of atheism, such as the above, except they can come against them armed with a knowledge, adequate to sustain the collision on all the counts above enumerated?

If the present Series of Essays is but a very small contribution to the equipment of special knowledge that will be needed by the Catholic people for confronting the present unbelieving adversaries of their belief in God and His laws, let it be hoped that it will not long remain in its present isolation.

HENRY FORMBY.

ST. PETER'S PRIORY, HINCKLEY, June 1st, 1881.

PREFACE.

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DEISM, Theism, Pantheism, Positivism, Agnosticism—including every other kindred school of thought, for which, as time progresses, the busy mind of men may invent other similar names will be found on examination to have all one and the same sad ruling purpose in common. This is to cover, with the more or less specious disguise of a profession of science, the virtual independence of man from the duty and the benefit of his submission to the laws of his Divine Creator.

The rebellion of the angels in heaven is known to us from the light of revelation as having been brief, sharp, and decisive, and as having drawn down upon the rebels a punishment irresistibly carried into execution, with a promptitude and a decision proportionate to the higher nature of the offenders and their offence. The nature of man being lower than that of the angels, created essentially flexible and persuasible in itself, and subjected by the condition of human life to an almost infinite variety of conflicting influences, some working for good and others for evil,—it has pleased the Divine Creator that the term of probation for man should be extended to the whole of his life. The merciful character of this dispensation is proved by the striking example of the penitent thief on the cross. By it a life that, to all human appearance, promised to end in utter reprobation, happily terminated in pardon and acceptance.

The Christian Society is but rarely found seeking to argue directly against Deism, Theism, Pantheism, with all the different varieties of pseudo-scientific pretexts for palliating the real withdrawal of the human soul from the recognition of its duty to the Divine Legislator and His laws. There is here too little ground in common for an argument. It is far more moved with compassion at witnessing the currency of errors that can but have one and all a common disastrous issue, viz., the leading men away from the duty and happiness of submitting themselves to the legislation of their Divine Lawgiver.

Preface.

Human life wholly withdrawn from this duty can but have one end, a reprobation similar to that of the fallen angels.

The proper work of the Christian Society is thus easily seen to be twofold, viz., (1) to labour for the effectual protection of its own people from the fascination of the current errors, and (2) to endeavour further to form and educate its members to a capacity to render a charitable service to those whom they may see either to have been, or to be in the proximate danger of becoming, led away by them. What spectacle can be better calculated to excite Christian compassion, and to move to the desire to render active help, than the witnessing our fellowcreatures either ignorant or heedless of the truth, that this life is their time of probation, the happy issue of which is an eternal reward, the disastrous issue an eternal rejection?

A study of the treasures of inspiration contained in the books of the Sacred Scriptures has always been held in the Church to be both the most unfailing spring of the strength of mind, which is itself proof against the temptation to error, and the richest source of the knowledge and eloquence which is best capable of reclaiming a wanderer from the error of his way.

Essays I. and II., consequently, undertake to review briefly the causes of the prevailing desuetude of this salutary study, and to place before the reader some of the chief motives for its resumption. In Essays III. and IV. the purpose mainly kept in view has been to bring the Person of the Divine Legislator before the reader, as manifesting His all-wise and considerate solicitude for the welfare of His human creation from the first beginning.

The subsequent Essays, V., VI., VII., and VIII., will easily be perceived, on referring to their titles on the cover, to have in view the legitimate development and the further carrying out of the subject treated in those which are now laid before the reader, continuing to follow up the same twofold purpose already explained.

The above, then, may suffice, by way of preface, to introduce an effort in behalf of a purpose of charity, the limited promise of whose utility may crave pardon for the sake of the end at which it is seen to aim.

ESSAY I.

No. I.—THE DIVINE GIFT OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES AND THEIR RELIGIOUS USE.

THE STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES A SPECIAL SAFEGUARD OF DIVINE FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF APOSTASY TO THE LICENSE OF FREE THOUGHT AND UNBELIEF.

Synopsis of Contents.

Acknowledgment of a present prevalent desuetude of the zeal for the study of the Sacred Scriptures which distinguished former epochs in the Church.

The FAMILY BIBLE, an existing evidence of the imperishable regard of the families of the Church for the Sacred Scriptures.

Four principal causes of the existing desuetude of the study of the Scriptures :--

- (1.) Misconception of the intention of the legislative measures of the Church for the protection of the true text of the Scriptures.
- (2.) Bad success of rash and thoughtless attempts to take up the reading of the Bible as if it did not differ from other books.
- (3.) The antagonism of the fallen spirit of the world to the Holy Spirit that speaks in the Sacred Scriptures.
- (4.) Popular ignorance of the truth that the divine wisdom of the Sacred Scriptures is equally good for the present as for the future life.

Brief review of these hostile influences, as incapable of causing any legitimate hindrance to the revival of the zeal for studying the Sacred Scriptures.

THOSE who most sincerely and deeply lament the prevalent desuetude of the ancient love and zeal for cultivating a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, which to some extent is almost a characteristic mark, at the present time, of the children of the Church, will certainly be the last persons to seek to persuade themselves that they are under any illusion as to the reality of the cause for their regret. They know too well the inexorable force of the legal maxim, "*De non apparentibus et non existendibus eadem est ratio*,"—"That which fails to put in an appearance is reputed not to exist."

Happily, however, while it would be a very hazardous experiment to venture upon the course of calling in question the existence of the alleged prevalent desuetude, we are quite able to speak of it, generally, in the case of the children of the Church, with a most well-merited and

well-founded tenderness and consideration. Whatever the causes may be to which its existence might be found, on inquiry, to be mainly attributable, we can easily rest assured, prior to any investigation, that there can be nothing in them which can possibly exert any settled or permanent influence, or be in its own nature otherwise than either local or transitory. As for anything that could turn to the lasting prejudice of the deep-seated and indestructible attachment with which the children of the Church, in company with the whole of humanity that renders God thanks for the blessing of the Christian Redemption, must for ever cling to the sacred writings which have received the inspiration of God the Holy Ghost,-this is simply inconceivable. The recent Council of the Vatican in its fourth canon (de Revelatione) decrees, under the sanction of an anathema, that if any one "shall not receive as sacred and canonical the entire books of the Sacred Scripture, with all their parts, conformably to the decree of the Council of Trent, or shall say that they have not been divinely inspired, let him be anathema." This unrivalled prerogative of possessing the gift of divine inspiration could never at any time be conceived, as seriously failing to meet with from the children of the Church, the recognition and the reception proportioned to its incontestable intrinsic value. Much then as we may justly lament the desuetude of the ancient fervour and zeal for their study, the existence of which we are far from seeking to deny, we must be equally on our guard against the error of falling into any wilful exaggeration or over-statement as regards either its character or its extent. One proof in particular of their imperishable veneration for the Sacred Books that have received this prerogative of divine inspiration, which the families of the Church have shown a most remarkable constancy in manifesting, justly here claims our most sincerely affectionate acknowledgment. This is that which, for the want of a more commonly accepted name, we may describe as the devotion of the FAMILY BIBLE. It is, of course, to the art of printing in its present high state of cultivation, that we owe the existence of the large beautifully printed and artistically illustrated volume containing the collection of inspired books, which in their sumptuous binding constitute what so many Catholic families regard with the most sincere veneration as their sacred household treasure. THE FAMILY BIBLE. It must certainly be allowed to pass for a very true and very genuine prompting of the spirit of Christian piety which is seen so commonly to suggest, that the register of the growth and increase of the family should be religiously preserved in this FAMILY BIBLE. It is as if an expression were thereby piously given to the most Christian hope, that the volume which has been thus made

to contain the names of all belonging to the household, might be to its inmates, during their pilgrimage over this transitory life, the mirror or reflex of the Book of Life in the future world, emboldening them to hope, that to every name duly entered in its place in the perishable pages, a corresponding place will be assigned in the records that are eternal. It cannot indeed be said to follow as a matter of certainty, that the family which manifests this particular laudable mark of its own imperishable gratitude for the gift of the Sacred Scriptures, necessarily counts a large proportion of assiduous and devout readers of its various books among its members : but then certainly neither does the contrary follow. And at least we must willingly and gladly admit that so much true and genuine piety, so closely associated with the Sacred Volume, cannot prove otherwise than an excellent foundation on which a very commendable superstructure may come in time to be raised. And where such a foundation as this already exists, it cannot be too much to hope for, that the natural sequel of a sober and religious desire to seek instruction from the Sacred Books themselves will not be so very far distant. It may be doubtless perfectly true that the mere possession by itself alone of the FAMILY BIBLE is not absolutely the same thing as its diligent use and devout study. But if it is not the very self-same sacred fire vigorously burning, which burned brightly in Origen and in St. Jerome, impelling them to give their whole lives to the study of the Sacred Scriptures, at least it proves the presence of the still unextinguished embers of this sacred fire. And in times such as those now present. the distinguishing mark of which is their headlong rush forward into all the numerous paths leading away from the Holy City of divine faith, such embers may be well considered to have their priceless value. All experience shows how a fire may be recovered from its still unextinguished embers and brought to burn both brightly and to give out its accustomed warmth and light, when the means for kindling the new fire from entirely new materials prove for the time being to be quite out of reach.

This indeed is Solomon's wisdom, who says that "For him who is still joined to all the living there is hope : the living dog is better than the dead lion" (*Eccles.* ix. 4). It would indeed be an evil day for the Catholic religion if her families could ever come to abandon every outward manifestation of their veneration and value for the Sacred Books which have received the gift of divine inspiration. Then indeed the danger would become imminent, that they would find the general rush forward to the license of unbelief to have become too strong for their power to withstand and to refuse to be carried away with it.

Our particular purpose, then, in the present and the following essay, we may hasten to say, will be the endeavour, to the best of a very limited power, to procure all the revival which may be found possible of the zeal and devotion of the former times of the Church for the religious use and study of the Sacred Scriptures. And did any particular reason exist, in connection with this purpose, for making the alleged prevalent desuetude of their use, the subject of some extremely rigorous and minute inquiry into the causes which have conspired together to produce it, these might quite possibly be discovered to be both very numerous and very various. Such an investigation, however, to say nothing of the danger of certain inquisitive and incriminatory tendencies inherent in it, might very easily give occasion to questions of detail, the elucidation of which would consume much time to but slender adequate corresponding profit. It will therefore best serve the interests of our own particular purpose if we ask leave only to pass briefly under review those of the causes which may fairly lay claim to a leading share in producing the desuetude of which we complain.

One of these causes, then, which is certainly entitled to arrest our attention, takes its rise out of the stringent measures of defence and precaution to which it was found necessary to have recourse in order that due effect might be given to the disciplinary decrees which followed the Council of Trent. The Catholic Church, in virtue of her divine commission, is the keeper and custodian of the Sacred Scriptures. which otherwise would present to view the impossible anomaly of a most sacred treasure which God has given for the use of all mankind, but which He has left in their midst completely destitute of the Person of any known competent guardian who is responsible for its protection and safe custody. It is not that the sacred text can be in any sense supposed to derive its authority from the custody which is burdened with the duty of preserving and transmitting it intact and unchanged. The real source from which its authority proceeds is the Divine Fountain of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But taking into due consideration, that precious as the treasure may be, it has to be confided to the singularly frail security of the manuscript form to which it has to be committed, and that both the preservation and the mode of transmission of the treasure from place to place and from generation to generation is necessarily by the means of manuscript labour, it cannot but be easy to perceive, that the various nations and people of the earth would be left without any adequate guarantee as to what really was the Scripture which the Holy Ghost had inspired, unless the same Divine Wisdom which gave the precious gift to men had, at the same

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time when the gift was given, clearly signified who was to be the Person perpetually responsible for its safe custody. This is the force of the saying of St. Augustine, "Non crederem Scripturæ nisi me moveret auctoritas Ecclesia," "I could place no confidence in that which professed itself to be the Scripture, except I had the warrant of the Catholic Church for my receiving it as the Scripture." When all the various forms of Protestantism lay claim to the Bible as the foundation of their religion, they one and all fall into the logical error of the petitio principii, in assuming a particular book to be their Bible without their being able to produce any adequate warranty for its being in reality that which they assume it to be. Hence nothing can be more natural than the symptoms which the various forms of Protestantism are at the present time everywhere exhibiting, of their readiness to deny the gift of inspiration either to whole books of the Sacred Scripture or to portions of them, until at length the character of inspiration comes to be refused to the entire Bible. In this there is nothing which ought to furnish the least just cause for surprise if we take the necessary pains to reflect. If the acceptance of the various books commonly known as the Bible, as writings which have received the divine gift of inspirations, rests on no better foundation than the simple petitio principii of the particular persons who thus accept them that they are so inspired. there cannot possibly be a more easy or natural step for those who have no better ground than this for their accepting the books of the Scripture, than that by a change of mind they should pass to the contrary petitio principii, that they are not inspired. Such persons do not profess to be accountable to any power or authority external to themselves which has the right to determine what they ought or ought not to believe. Why, therefore, should they be bound to a fixed belief of any kind, either respecting the inspiration of the Scriptures in general, or of the inspiration of this or that book in particular?

No sooner then has the authority of the Catholic Church for the general doctrine of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures, together with her warranty for the particular text of them, namely, the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome's revision, been formally put on one side, than the first step has been taken in the path which leads in the end to the casting the entire collection of the Scriptures away in a settled spirit of profane hatred and aversion. This final consummation is, of course, by no means reached all at once the moment the first step has been taken in the path which leads to it. The feeling of veneration for the Bible is a very deep and profoundly rooted sentiment, and even long after the golden thread which unites it to the sole authority that is

competent to render it legitimate has been snapped asunder, it continues to live, and, like the strong man who has fallen overboard in his passage across the Atlantic, it battles fiercely for existence, and even under water it will struggle desperately for the last remnants of its life. But of course in the end resistance becomes fruitless. The authenticity and the inspiration of each book in succession is made the object of repeated attacks, every one of which effects some kind of breach in the walls of the citadel which it is found impossible to repair. The general result of these innumerable assaults comes to be, that the books of the Sacred Scriptures, having one after another had both their authenticity and their inspiration questioned with an unintermitting formidable array of seeming criticism and erudition, at last no one knows what to believe and what not to believe. Then by degrees the idea gains strength that their inspiration is quite an open question, and that it is perfectly legitimate to treat the Bible as on the same level with any other book. The next step is to cast to the winds all thought of its religious study, as connected with the duty of praving for the aid of heavenly light or guidance to arrive at the knowledge of the mysteries which its books contain; and this becomes the natural prelude to the final consummation, which is their unqualified rejection with the scorn and hatred proper to confirmed renegades and apostates.

Here it will be at once obvious in what way the children of the Church gain the immense advantage of being permanently secured against the danger of taking so much as even the first step in advance in the path which leads to the evil consummation above described. The anathema of the entire series of General Councils of the Church against the least formal denial of the inspiration of so much as any one of the books of the Scripture is their protection from the danger. But being liable to infirmity, inasmuch as they are children of Adam as well as children of the Church, it is of course quite possible for them to fall into the defect, more or less serious and lamentable as the case may be, of a temporary desuetude of the good and religious use of the great and wonderful gift of God. Nevertheless as their acceptance of this great and wonderful divine gift rests upon no such movable sandbank as their own particular petitio principii, but upon the series of successive decrees of General Councils, of which the Vatican Council is the most recent, all enforced by the penalty, terrible to those who have faith, of an anathema, there can be no possible formal rejection or contempt of the Sacred Scriptures, or of any portion of them, on the part of the children of the Church which is not at the same time a shipwreck of their faith. 'The Sacred Scriptures consequently can

never be anything different to the Catholic people of one generation or country than they are to another. They are once for all cast into their permanent mould, never to undergo the least shadow of change, though the world should continue to last for untold thousands of years. As such, they are the only really perfect form of an international literature common to all nations and people, being precisely the same to one nation and time of the world as to another. The only near approach which exists in the way of a rival to their international character is to be found in the chief classical works of the Greek and Latin languages, but, as needs not be said, these have no pretension to be their rivals in the one particular which is their sole and exclusive glory-their special inspiration from God the Holy Ghost. With the Catholic people consequently there is only room left for pleading, not the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures-this is a truth placed among them beyond the reach of any possible question-but for the better, the more religious, and the more widely diffused use of the great and wonderful gift which by the favour and mercy of God has been given to them. And here, as it must be easy to perceive, a plea directed to this effect, if conveyed in the particular idiom of Great Britain, is so only accidentally, in consequence of the reigning practical disuse of the Latin language for all current purposes. It would from its nature be quite as much at home, and probably find its application fully as well, in any other of the spoken languages which possess a current literature amongst which it could be thrown into circulation.

With reference then to the strangely mistaken and distorted notion, that the legislative measures of the Catholic Church with respect to the Sacred Scriptures have been directed to the discouragement and even suppression of their good and religious use, it will in an eminent degree form part of our purpose to enter upon such explanations as the space of an essay will be found to permit. If it please God, at least some portion of the extremely signal misconceptions of which these legislative measures have become the subject will be happily removed.

It should then, without fail, become as widely known as possible, that the very first in order of the public acts of the Council of Trent in the discharge of its mission "ad reformationem cleri et populi Christiani," for the reform of the clergy and the Christian people, stands the Decree concerning reformation, the first chapter of which is, "Of instituting public lecturing (lectione) upon the Holy Scripture." "This same Sacro-sanct Synod," so the decree runs, "adhering to the constitutions of Supreme Pontiffs and of approved Councils, adopting them and adding to them, to the intent that the treasure of the Sacred Books, which the Holy

Ghost has with the greatest liberality given to men, should not lie neglected, has ordered and decreed," &c. Here follow the several provisions which the various dioceses and their respective prelates are commanded to make, "ad ipsius sacra Scriptura expositionem et interpretationem," for the public expounding and interpretation of the Sacred Scriptures. The real mind of the Council as regards the use of the Scriptures must certainly be held to speak in the significant words "to the intent that the great treasure which is the gift of the exceeding liberality of the Holy Ghost may not be neglected."

Here then beyond question the voice of the Church is heard, expressing her clear positive desire, that the Catholic people should have every reasonable and possible facility provided for them, in order that all collectively, and each one in particular, may be enabled to attain to their proper measure of knowledge of the sacred treasure.

But the duty of the true Guardian of the treasure is not satisfied by the promotion of measures solely directed to the dissemination of a healthy knowledge of the sacred text among the people. The very nature of inspired Scripture implies, from the necessity of the case, that it should be a treasure preserved in the earthen vessel of a human language. This very mode of its preservation again is easily perceived to expose it to more than one very considerable danger. Human language itself is continually found to be equivocal and uncertain in its meaning. And when, in order to the preservation and transmission of the treasure, it has to be committed to writing, the written document in which it now becomes enshrined is quite easily seen to be incapable of preserving itself, and consequently to stand in need of the most vigilant and responsible custody. Being in its own nature a treasure intended by the Divine Giver for the use of men, it cannot be supposed to remain for ever confined to the single manuscript which can be pronounced absolutely authentic, in consequence of its remaining a sacred deposit in the hands of its chosen responsible guardians. Copies must be multiplied by the labour of the copyist, and here is a process by which it may easily be perceived to lie exposed to a twofold danger. Serious errors may creep in through the haste and incapacity of the transcriber, and what is worse still, it may become the victim of wilful change and falsification. Nor is this all. The Sacred Scriptures being intended by their Divine Author as an infinite treasure for the entire human family, and as mankind has forfeited its original gift of one uniform and universal language, and is now spread over the earth in tribes and nations, speaking a very great diversity of languages, the extension of its use to the different tribes and populations of the earth,

renders it necessary that the sacred treasure should be exposed to an entirely new risk, but nevertheless strictly incidental to its nature. This is the process of translation from the original languages of the Hebrew and the Greek into the various languages whose populations have grown into a social condition enabling them to receive and appreciate the books of the Sacred Scripture transferred into their own spoken idiom.

In this respect it is impossible to shut our eyes to a most remarkable fact in the course of human events, viz., that the sacred treasure of the books which have been invested with the prerogative of divine inspiration has been made the subject of a restless active agency of the greatest magnitude, which has completely broken loose and set itself free from all wholesome control on the part of the only lawful and authorised Guardian who is responsible to God for the due custody of the sacred writings, the Catholic Church.

Of this headstrong lawlessness in carrying away the books of the Sacred Scripture from beyond the control of their only lawful and adequate Guardian, no loyal son of the Church can possibly approve, or can possibly consent in any way to become its abettor or partaker, directly or indirectly, in his own person. This lawlessness has been repeatedly condemned and disallowed by the voice of successive Sovereign Pontiffs. Whether, however, this singular energy, in multiplying and disseminating all over the world printed copies of translations of the books of the Sacred Scripture into a great variety of idioms,when looked at as a really great event permitted under the providence of God,-may not be admitted to some share in the benefit of St. Paul's words, "Some preach Christ out of envy and contention; but what of that? Provided that Christ be preached, in this I rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice" (Phil. i. 18), is to be left to the discretion of the wise and the prudent to pronounce. It will suffice for our present purpose if we carry away a clear grasp of the truth, which no error or misconception should ever be permitted to dethrone, viz., that the Catholic Church acknowledges a twofold mission as regards the Sacred Scriptures. In the first place, she declares herself bound to use all possible diligence, that the sacred treasure of the Scriptures should not lie neglected, but should be accepted and looked upon by all her people as a gift of the goodness and liberality of God, which is to be used by them in a spirit of humble gratitude, and to be turned by each one to his own measure of profit and good account. Her coercive legislation comes in only in the second and the next place. And this has been mainly directed against the multiplication and the use of lawless and unauthorised translations, with their accompaniment of equally lawless

and untrustworthy interpretations. Bibles which the Church can neither stamp with her approval as certainly containing the true Word of God. or accompany with her own commentaries and explanation, as it must be easy to perceive, cannot have her sanction. But to forbid and prohibit the use of a mutilated and imperfect, not to say a spurious and counterfeit Bible, is a very different act from discouraging the due and profitable use of the Bible which she herself provides, and which she is able to stamp with her own warranty as the true inspired Word of God. Considering, however, the gigantic energy with which such a vast number of lawless and unauthorised translations have been multiplied, and the unavoidable opposition to them on the part of the true responsible Guardian of the sacred treasure, it becomes on the whole not difficult to understand, how the action of the Church in this respect has come to be the subject of a pretty general misconception, affecting even the minds of the Catholic people. Here then we can see a cause which may have contributed not a little to the growth of the desuetude of which we have so much reason to complain.

A second cause, which may also be allowed to come in for its share of our attention as favouring the growth of this desuetude, may be not unreasonably found in the prevalent practice, that has come to acquire a certain standing, of almost ceasing to speak of the inspired writings by the name of the "Sacred Scriptures." This name carries with it the true and correct notion of their consisting of a varied collection of distinct sacred writings, each of which has its own particular origin, date, and history, together with its own perfectly distinct character, all which is lost when we substitute for it the name "Bible." The word BIBLE naturally and properly conveys the idea of a single book, an idea which is apt to acquire still further confirmation from the by no means infrequent practice of speaking of the Bible as THE BOOK, meaning of course the Book par excellence. Here the most superficial analysis of the constituent elements that go to make up the commonly received idea of a book will tell us, that a book must be a something throughout homogeneous in itself, having a beginning, a purpose, and an end, all within the compass of what is moderately intelligible. Of course, as it must be superfluous to add, it also belongs to the nature of a book, which is to find readers, that it should be known to treat of a subject which, besides being level to their capacities, already possesses an interest for them. And, in addition to this, such a book should be known to deal with its subject in a sufficiently lucid and agreeable manner. Granted then the general currency of the above constituents of the idea of a book, and it cannot be difficult to foresee what the

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almost necessary effect of this idea of a book must be on the minds of those who, without the safeguard of any previous prudent and kindly warning, trust themselves to open a Bible for the first time with the intention of becoming its readers. The very first discovery that will be made respecting it in such a case will be, that its contents are all as widely as possible removed from the least approach to being homogeneous throughout. On the contrary, the more the various component parts of this supposed Book become known, the stronger and more vivid the discovery becomes that they generally differ from each other, not only in a very great number of the most important characteristics, but also that even each separate book differs in a singularly divergent manner from its neighbour. So that if the Bible has any real claim to be called a book in the ordinary accepted sense of the word, it is less like such a book, than any book they have ever either met with before, have ever heard of, or are ever likely to hear of or to meet with again.

The beginning, then, of an attempt to cultivate a taste for reading the Bible that is made in the manner described, it hardly needs to be said, is not one than can very easily promise a happy result. And accordingly the ordinary progress of every beginning made under such auspices to try to become a reader of the Bible is, commonly speaking, more unfortunate still. The next discovery that has to be made is, that not only does the supposed Book notably fail to show, in any of its separate portions, what the connecting link can possibly be by which its most strangely dissimilar contents are bound together to each other, but the more attempts are repeated to gain some knowledge of its actual contents,-the stronger becomes the impression upon the mind of a certain sense of awe and dread, that the book is totally unlike all other books. Its beginning is seen to be carried back far beyond the domain of all ordinary human knowledge, into the era when the world was in the state of chaos, previous to its preparation for any form whatsoever of animate life. It contains early records of the first origin and history of the human family which have not been explicitly preserved in any other known form, and which are otherwise only known in the way of very obscure and fragmentary traditions found dispersed among the various populations of the earth. It is seen also to terminate in a prophetic revelation of the unknown future, the mysteries of which remain for the most part an unsolved enigma, notwithstanding all the varied labour which has been employed in the attempt to decipher them. How then can it be possible to wonder if one and all the presumptuous and inconsiderate attempts that are made to rush upon the reading of

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such a volume are seldom known to end in any other way than in a most conspicuous failure.

However, notwithstanding that we may be most reasonably said to have here before us two extremely influential concurrent causes, which incontestably have not been without their important share in producing the desuetude of which we have to complain, I do not think that it will be the conclusion of any thoughtful mind that we have as yet come in view of the real root from which the desuetude springs. The widespread misconception of the intention of the legislative measures of the Church for the protection of her populations from the use of defective and unauthorised translations, and the extremely legitimate failures of all rash and unreflecting attempts to take up the reading of the Bible without the requisite safeguards and preparation, are no doubt causes in their degree; but taken by themselves alone, they are plainly inadequate to produce all the phenomena of the case that have become apparent. The true explanation of the desuetude of the religious study and reading the Sacred Scriptures, -possessing as it does so many striking features of resemblance with the lassitude and weariness of the Israelites in the wilderness with their manna that fell from heaven,-has certainly to be sought for in the operation of some active cause still more powerful than either of the influences above described.

St. Paul predicts the coming of a time when there would be a general lassitude and weariness of all really serious and wholesome truth, when, with prurient ears, men would heap up to themselves teachers for the gratification of their own desires, and turning themselves away from the truth, would betake themselves to fables (2 Tim. iv. 3). I do not think there can be much doubt that we are certainly the eve-witnesses of the prevalence of a general lassitude and weariness of sacred truth fully corresponding to the Apostle's words, the gradual rise and growth of which, however, it does not appear that it would be a very easy task to attempt to trace. The life of the general body of the Christian people exhibits a striking analogy with the life of the little human microcosm of the body of flesh and blood. In proportion as this becomes accustomed to various articles of luxurious diet and to a free and unrestrained indulgence in the use of stimulants, the stomach contracts a nausea for its ordinary solid and wholesome food. For the former it experiences an incessant craving, and from the latter it begins to turn aside with a certain loathing and aversion. In proportion, then, as the study and knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures falls by slow degrees into disuse, the growth of the contrary appetite and desire appears in its place. The human intelligence,

particularly when the means and opportunities for travel and intercommunication between people and people are constantly on the increase, acquires a restless craving that must be fed. In proportion, then, as the study and knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures gradually fades away, the eager desire of men to discover all the secrets connected with the visible world in which they live, and to possess themselves of the knowledge of all its component parts, usurps its place. In vain does the inspired prophet cry out, "O ye children of men! how long will ve be dull of heart? for what end do you love vanity and seek after falsehood?" (Ps. iv. 3). The fascination prevails. The Church, as a power which has received the mission to act the part of the Pastor to the Christian multitude, does not of course shut her eyes to the facts that are passing before her, and no one wishes to disguise from himself the truth that what is properly called the "spirit of the times," that is to say, of the world as it now lives and acts, is a very different spirit from that which lives and breathes in the Sacred Scriptures. The former is carried away by the incessant craving for change in the things with which it is surrounded; it is fascinated by fiction in the place of truth, and lives, as it were, spinning round and round in its vortex of pleasures, luxuries, and dissipations. The latter is satisfied to say, "Thy mercies are new every morning: I have said to my soul, The Lord is my portion, therefore I will wait for Him." The German poet Goethe, who may be taken as the polished specimen par excellence of the cultivated heathen of the present century, gives expression to his cry of lassitude and weariness with the spirit that lives and breathes in the Scriptures in the words, "Propheten rechts, Propheten links," "Prophets on the right and prophets on the left;" while if we seek for the reply of the Sacred Voice of inspiration to the spirit of the world, we find it in a passage of the Apocalypse, where the Divine Spirit says of the great city which appears as the very type and representative of this spirit of the world, "Rejoice thou heaven over her, and all ve holy apostles and prophets; for God hath given His judgment in your cause against her" (Apoc. xviii. 20).

Taking then mankind as they are, and even with the full knowledge that the children of the Church are an elect multitude, whose vocation it is, when they correspond to it, to walk by faith, and to be superior to the follies and weakness of the rest of the world who have not taken the same light of heavenly truth for their guide, we cannot fail to perceive in what way the reigning spirit of the world exerts its influence. It works and acts as a leaven in the midst of the Catholic people, in the form of a most real power antagonistic to the formation and develop-

ment of a solid and persevering taste for studying and reading the inspired words of the holy prophets and writers of the Sacred Scriptures. The people of Israel were a chosen race and a holy people, who were bound to the perpetual remembrance of all the great things the Lord their God had done for them, and who were commanded to write them on the threshold and doorposts of their houses, as also diligently to teach them to their children. Yet the opposite example of their heathen neighbours, with whom, contrary to the warning of Moses, they were perpetually forming friendships and alliances, over and over again proved fatal to their duty of allegiance to their own higher calling. Precisely parallel is the danger to which the children of the Church are at present continually exposed, lest through their numerous relations of friendship and acquaintance with those who do not hold their faith, they should in the end come to share in the prevailing lassitude and weariness of the spirit that breathes in the Holy Scripture,-which is the reigning characteristic of the society in the midst of which they pass their lives.

Here I think it will perfectly fall in with the scope we are pursuing if we pause to study a scene of contrast in which the eminently Scriptural spirit, that lived and was rife in the third and fourth ages of the Church, will be shown placed in juxtaposition with that which we find it scarcely possible not to be compelled to make the best of in our own nineteenth century.

Even the nineteenth century itself still retains sufficient sense of the majesty and manly character of the books of the Sacred Scripture, that it could not openly quarrel with the fact of their being still partially found to retain some kind of place in the education of male youth. Its sense, however, of the delicate refinement and exquisite culture which it judges proper for the education of female youth would of course be greatly offended by the notion, that the Scriptures were to be held to be the all-important and suitable literature for the formation of the minds of the young ladies of the nineteenth century, particularly if these were known to belong to the higher classes of social life.

A scene then taken from the life of the Church in the fourth century shall show us St. Jerome giving his extremely explicit advice to an anxious mother who has consulted him on the subject of the proper education she should provide for her daughter. Toxotius, the son of the matron Paula and brother to the nun Eustochium, has married a Roman lady of the upper ranks of society of the name of Læta, and St. Jerome has been requested to give in a letter to Læta his instructions for the best mode of bringing up her daughter Paula, then only quite a child. The peculiarity of this letter is that all the necessary,

and even the most minute, prescriptions are most freely given in it, and evidence occurs in the course of the letter to show that worldly extravagance and dissipation were just as much known at that time as now. The following, then, is the text of St. Jerome's rule for the curriculum of study which the young lady Paula is to follow when her years are sufficiently advanced :--- "In the place of jewels and silk finery, let her learn to love the books of the Scripture. Let her begin with the Psalter and find employment in singing its canticles, and let the Proverbs of Solomon be her preparation for her coming out. The Ecclesiastes may teach her how to trample upon the prizes of this world, and the Book of Job how to learn lessons of virtue and patience. She may then pass forward to the study of the Gospels, and never afterwards lay them aside. After this let her give her whole heart to drink in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles; and when she has enriched the treasury of her breast with this wealth, let her study so as to commit to memory the prophets, the five books of Moses, the books of the Kings, and the Paralipomena, as also the volumes of Esdras and Esther" (Epist. vii.). If it were here to be thought that St. Jerome must have been in some unusually Scriptural mood to have given such advice as the above. especially when he knew that it was to be applied to the case of a young lady living in the world's metropolis and belonging to the upper ranks of society, we may readily admit that he was in a Scriptural mood, if the expression can be permitted; but then this was the habitual mood both of St. Jerome and of his times. In the letter which St. Jerome writes to his friend Gaudentius on the similar subject of the education he ought to procure for his little daughter. Pacatula, he repeats the selfsame direction as to the use of the Sacred Scriptures. "At the age of seven let her learn the Psalter by memory, and up to the age of puberty let her make the books of Solomon, the Gospels, and the writings of the Apostles and the prophets her heart's treasure." But perhaps it will be said that those for whom such advice as this was given must have been known as leading very retired and mortified lives. Nothing whatever to this effect appears in the correspondence. On the contrary, the letters of St. Terome contain allusions to the great number of domestic servants and to a certain notable abundance of the opportunities for gay visiting and dissipation. Both young ladies are described as entitled to the care of a nurse or governess in constant attendance upon them as they grow up, and Læta, Paula's mother, is represented as living in the full vortex of the most polished society which the Rome of St. Jerome's day afforded.

No one then can have the least right to suspect the existence of any

concealed satirical design when we come to draw the contrast. The facts of the case have but to be left to speak for themselves. Rank in society is the same, literature and accomplishments of life are on a par; parental affection and the sense of duty and responsibility are perfectly equal; there is the same Catholic Church for both, the same faith, and the same ecclesiastical control; the religious communities undertaking the care of their school-years are similarly constituted, with the clear advantage for those of the nineteenth century of much superior retrospective experience and much longer and better matured traditions of practical management. With this quite unimpeachable resemblance. or rather apparent equality, of external circumstances, what does the comparison bring before us? The Paula and the Pacatula of the fourth century appear as taught by a wise and prudent rule of gradual progress, proceeding step by step from one book of the Sacred Scripture to another, till by patient perseverance in this course both young ladies are brought to make the greater part if not the whole of these books their heart's treasure. The Paula and Pacatula of the nineteenth century, with a possible exception in favour of one or more of the Gospels, know, for the most part, no more of the actual contents of these same books of the Sacred Scripture, which have become the heart's treasure of the earlier Paula and Pacatula, than they would have known had they been born East Indian Begums. But as the mind of youth necessarily craves for the possession of something which it can make its treasure, and as the "spirit of the times" does not permit the search for this treasure to be carried into the region vivified by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, the treasure must be sought for and found elsewhere. Accordingly we have the Paula and Pacatula of the nineteenth century continually writing letters home to their parents, importuning them for leave to have the same liberty as their companions to read the "Mill on the Floss," "Daniel Deronda," and other such fruits of the inspiration of the "spirit of the times," while the perplexed nineteenth-century superioress, when she is consulted by the anxious parents-some of whose advisers have already said Yes, and others No-what she has to advise on the question, as to whether the leave can be given, endeavours to observe a prudent neutrality. She suggests that perhaps it may be better in the particular case, if the leave is not too strictly refused, and falls back upon the almost forlorn hope as regards the young lady, "Ut satiata contemnat quam non habendo desideret." Subsequent satiety is to be left to work the cure, rather than that the immediate pining away for the poisoned cup is to be courageously opposed.

I think, then, that in passing under review the chief influences which

can be adjudged to have a ruling share in bringing about the existing desuetude of the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, few will venture to contest the truth, that the priority of power for evil among these influences must be conceded to that which we have here designated by the name of the "spirit of the times." It is this spirit, that is the real source of the evil. It is the parent of the lassitude and weariness of all serious truth, from a very perceptible participation in which the children of the Church in their several nationalities cannot pretend to any important exemption. Difficult, if not impossible, as it may be, to identify his spirit with any one thing in particular,-shy as it may certainly be known to be of committing itself to any particular tenets which it might be called upon to defend, and existing more after the manner of an epidemic floating in the air than as possessing any tangible shape,—it is nevertheless the primary source of all the mischief. We have an extremely similar phenomenon in the history of the Israelite people, which proved to be in their case, as it may also equally well prove in ours, the introduction to a very severe persecution. "In those days there went forth out of Israel certain sons of iniquity, who persuaded many, saying, Come let us go and reconcile ourselves to the Gentile people that live round about us, for nothing but all kinds of evil has befallen us since the time that we separated ourselves from them" (1 Mach. i. 12). This was the result of easy and familiar contact with the Greek literature and civilisation, and among its other effects, it led to the founding of an upper school in Jerusalem in complete accordance with the laws and ideas of the Gentiles. The writer of the second book of the Machabees gives a perfectly similar account of the disastrous results of the disposition on the part of the Jews to conform themselves to the "spirit of the times." Their lassitude and weariness of the restraints of the Mosaic law was such that "the very priests abandoned the service of the altar and the sacrifices, and hastened to enter themselves as candidates in the public games, so that turning their backs upon their own national honours, they esteemed the Grecian glories to be the best" (2 Mach. iv. 15); and to such an extent was this carried, "that scarce any one was found who had the courage to profess himself to be simply a Jew" (2 Mach. vi. 6). The "spirit of the times," how difficult soever it may be to say . distinctly in what it chiefly consists, where it lives and with what particular scheme of doctrines, if indeed it has really any such, it is to be identified, may be easily perceived to be an extremely subtle and pervading influence. And had not the inspired leader of the people

of Israel well known the power it was capable of exercising, he would not have laid such a marked emphasis upon his caution, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (*Exod.* xxiii. 2). Here then I think we find ourselves unmistakably in the presence of an influence and a spirit, that is in the most direct hostility and the most unquestionable antagonism to the spirit which lives and breathes in the Sacred Scriptures.

A fourth cause, which has also exerted its by no means unimportant share in favouring the growth of the desuetude in question, is to be found in the very general practical eclipse and obscuration in the minds of the people of an all-important practical truth-viz., that the wisdom which is the gift of God, the words of which abound in the Sacred Scriptures, has the promise of the life that now is, at least equally, with that of the world to come. The description, which Solomon gives of the divine gift of wisdom that he had received, savours of anything rather than simply and purely a spirit of supernatural direction. Its light indeed he speaks of as being inextinguishable, but then all good things came to him together with it, and he rejoiced in their possession. It was not simply to him an infinite treasure, but an infinite treasure for men and for their use. The Wisdom which is the artificer of all things, he says, was my teacher. It riches are sought for in life, he says, what is richer than wisdom which is the worker of all things; wisdom teaches sobriety and prudence, justice and virtue, than which nothing is more useful to the life of men. Therefore, says Solomon, concluding his review of the benefits gained from the divine gift of wisdom, I proposed to myself to bring wisdom to be the constant companion of my life; through wisdom I shall gain fame with the multitude, and young as I am I shall have honour from my elders. . . . The faces of the chief men shall be turned to me, when I am silent they will wait, when I speak they will look up, and when I prolong my words they will cover their faces with their hands, and besides this I shall have immortality and I shall leave an everlasting memory to those that shall come after me (Wisd. viii. 13).

If a diligent study of the wisdom which is found stored up in the Sacred Scriptures were more generally known to possess the promise of the life that now is, in the manner and degree above shadowed forth, it would be extremely reasonable to anticipate that the number of those who would become readers and students of the Scriptures, from their desire to profit by it, would not be long before it exhibited a corresponding increase. The wisdom of Solomon was certainly never spoken with

the intention that it should sink down to become the hidden treasure of the select few. It bears stamped upon itself the indelible character that it is the gift of God for all ages of the world and for all generations of men, "that astuteness may be given to little ones and to the young men knowledge and understanding" (*Prov.* i. 4). If therefore the study and the search after wisdom of this eminently practical kind,—to which so many choice fruits and advantages available for the needs and advancement in honour of the present life are annexed, as its proper and legitimate companions,—comes to fall into desuetude and neglect, ignorance of the advantages to be derived from its cultivation must certainly be held to rank, as holding by no means an unimportant place among the causes productive of the desuetude.

Pausing then to pass briefly under a final review the several causes of the reigning desuetude of the zeal and devotion for the study of the Sacred Scriptures, which our rapid survey has brought before us for consideration, and we look round in vain to discover in them any obstacles to a revival of the ancient Catholic zeal for this study, which with the least show of reason can be regarded as insurmountable.

Former epochs in the Church's history have borne distinguishing marks of the prevalence in them of a wide and generally diffused zeal for the study of the Sacred Scriptures. "What is that which shall be?" asks the wisest of men; "that which has been." The zeal and fervour for the study of the Sacred Scriptures, which has been well known as the characteristic mark of more than one epoch in the times that are past, may yet with the help of God become in the same manner the distinctive mark of the time that is future. And if rash and presumptuous attempts bring discredit upon the sober and religious study of the Scripture, upon what else that is holy and good would they not bring a like discredit? Then as for the antagonism of the adverse influence described as the spirit of the times, that is, of the world as it now lives and thinks, it falls to the ground before one little sentence from the words of inspiration : "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world" (1 John iv. 4). The spirit of the world is worth what the world is worth and no more, and the worth of the world may be measured by the words of St. Paul, "The form of this world passeth away" (I Cor. vii. 31). Even if the study of the Sacred Scriptures contemplated nothing but the rewards of the future life, it would still be the better choice. How much more then will it not be the better choice when we master the Scripture truth "that it has the promise of the life that now is as well of that which is to come."

The work of our preliminary investigation then being thus terminated, the pathway is clearly seen to be open to proceed in the next essay, to consider, what are the principal motives which ought to exert their influence over every Christian mind, in the form of a direct impulse, urging and persuading to an unremitting study of the infinite treasure which God has given to men. (2I)

ESSAY II.

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No. II.—*THE DIVINE GIFT OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES* AND THEIR RELIGIOUS USE.

THE STUDY AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES A SPECIAL SAFEGUARD OF DIVINE FAITH IN THE PRESENCE OF APOSTASY TO THE LICENSE OF FREE THOUGHT AND UNBELIEF.

Synopsis of Contents.

INTRODUCTORY.—The limited and partial service which it is in the power of the essayist to render to the cause of promoting the reading and study of the books of the Sacred Scripture.

- The remarkable coincidence of extreme simplicity of faith and profound knowledge of the Scriptures in rejecting the various current forms of deception that lead men away from faith.
- They differ in the point that simplicity of faith is very much less proof against deception.
- The very nature of the victory of faith over the world implies the use of the Scriptures.
- The right of the Church to teach never challenged when she shows herself powerful in the Scriptures.
- Universal motives for cultivating the study of the Scriptures.

Debt of gratitude to God the Holy Ghost for the gift of the inspired writings. The lesson of the scene of the Transfiguration. Ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ.

- Serious character of the above motives, which cannot be passed over with impunity.
- The extreme condescension of God the Holy Ghost in descending to speak through the lips of men and to make His Divine Wisdom apply to the present equally with the future life.
- If knowledge of its history and its literature is indispensable for the citizen of the human kingdom, the form of which passes away, how much more is the knowledge of the literature and history of the kingdom of which there is no end indispensable to its citizen.

I N the preceding essay our attention was mainly occupied with the work of passing under review the causes which could lay claim to a leading share in producing the prevailing desuetude of the study and knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, the existence of which

we were very far from seeking to conceal. Our purpose herein was to endeavour to ascertain whether any vestiges of a special design of Divine Providence could be discovered in connection with the growth of the desuetude, indicating that it might be the better course to leave it to pursue its own way undisturbed. No traces, however, of any such design were found either directly or remotely to put in their appearance. On the contrary, the Council of Trent was heard to speak in the most decided accents, signifying its profound solicitude "that the Sacred Books which God the Holy Ghost with the greatest liberality had given to men should not lie neglected." While the Council of the Vatican, when formally expressing its earnest desire for the "increase of the intelligence, the science, and the wisdom of the entire Church, as of all her several members," could never be otherwise understood than as giving utterance to the desire that the Sacred Books, which it proclaims as "having God for their Author," should certainly become the chief fountain from which this growth and increase of the intelligence was to be derived.

It thus became clear beyond the danger of dispute, that no obstacle was to be found of a nature to impede an advance in the path that had been struck. And as all people, the children of the Church forming no exception to the rule, are to be presumed to be well disposed by nature to hear of anything likely to turn to their advantage,—if great advantages could be shown as likely to arise from an improved study of the Scriptures, no objection could possibly be raised against the liberty to plead the cause of this improved study in the general hearing of all. For certainly,—if it has pleased God in His providence to annex very great benefits, both for the present and the future life, to the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures,—it could not but be good for all who thank God for the benefit of the Christian redemption, that a pleader should appear before them to draw their attention to the existence of these benefits, before the time for securing them for themselves had been allowed to pass by unused.

And here, even at the risk of appearing to suspect the danger of misconception where no such danger ought to exist, it may not be out of place to have recourse to a brief precaution. However highly we may by and by be found to speak of the great advantages which are the ordinary companions of a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures acquired by patient study, it may be well not to seek to hide the truth, that the discipline of the Catholic Church has never at any time judged it expedient to make the reading of the Sacred Scriptures the subjectmatter of any generally binding legislative enactment. The liberty of

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study to acquire a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures in the Catholic Church is almost in every case a privilege rather than a duty, except, of course, when it becomes an obligation of their calling to those who are students of theology by profession. The reason of this is plain. However excellent and meritorious the personal study of the books of the Sacred Scriptures may be, it can never lay aside its inherent character of a serious and burdensome toil for flesh and blood, as being that which can only be pursued subject to the condition pronounced by Solomon, "that whose adds to his knowledge also adds to his labour."

The Church consequently could never be supposed likely to make the path to heaven exceptionally hard and difficult for the immense multitude of simple and unlearned people, who will always form a large portion of her communion, by imposing the indiscriminate duty of reading the Scriptures as an obligation of religion. Hence nothing in the marvellous facilities which the art of printing has placed within the general reach of all, to possess themselves of a legibly printed copy of a sufficiently accredited version of the Scriptures, in some one of the current vernacular idioms, has drawn the Church from her rule of wise reserve. The Divine benefits are at all times to be sought for rather than to be imposed; for as St. Ambrose justly observes, "They are not brought to those who fall asleep, but to those who are on the lookout for them."

The real error into which the bulk of the Catholic people appear far more likely to fall, and where, consequently, they may the better derive profit from a word or two of timely warning,—is lest they may be beguiled into the thought,-that the just liberty which they enjoy from all strict obligation of reading the Scriptures, is their full discharge from the whole of their duty of a humble and grateful use of the Sacred Treasure which the exceeding liberality of God the Holy Ghost has provided for their good. If God the Holy Ghost has condescended to enter into the world of men in such a manner as that by the breathing His own Spirit into the writings of human authors, these works can now, to use the words of the Vatican Council, be accounted to have GOD for their Author, the whole body of redeemed mankind will certainly owe to the Divine Giver of so indescribably precious and gracious a gift, an imprescriptible debt of the constant, devout, and grateful use of His gift. He has beyond all question given His gift to be used, and therefore the religious and devout use of the gift is the sole form of gratitude to the Divine Giver that can with any show of reason be held to discharge the debt which the receivers incur for the gift.

Of course no one will think of holding the simple essayist, whose task does not go beyond the duty of pleading in the best manner his limits will permit, in behalf of as wide as possible an extension of the religious and devout use of the Sacred Treasure—responsible for attempting to portion out to the several ranks within the Church their respective measure of the general debt. It will suffice here that the existence of the debt be acknowledged in general terms. This being done—if the essayist is then able to lay before his own readers a certain sufficiently well-digested series of considerations proper to give an impulse to their own particular devout use and study of the Inspired Books, he may hope that the seed thus sown will for the most part fall into good ground. And when this has been completed, his power of rendering service to so sacred a cause will probably be found to have been taxed to its utmost limit.

Thus much then being premised, the task which the essayist proposes to himself to endeavour to accomplish need no longer suffer any further delay.

A first thought which will naturally occur to an observant mind here will be, how singularly an almost everyday experience verifies the common popular saying that "extremes meet" in the following very important respect. The simplest possible form of faith, so simple as to be almost wholly destitute of any acquired knowledge, unites with the profoundest knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures in taking up one and the self-same attitude of strong aversion, against all and each of the current deceptions which are seen at the present time to be leading men away from their duty and allegiance to the truths of a Divine Revelation.

Take, for example, the deception which may fairly claim to rank as the master-delusion of the present time, a deception which in one way or another circulates in almost all newspapers, lurks in nearly every review, and speaks and thinks at least in the principal popular characters of the current novels and romances. According to this widespread deception, the real freedom of the human soul is said to consist in its emancipation from all that is definite in the way of a creed to be believed, and from all that is fixed and determinate in the way of a rule of right and wrong which claims to exercise authority and control over human action. The most complete exemplification of this deception in any living person, if indeed such a person can be supposed to exist, would be the man who should have the hardihood to say, "I believe nothing, and I own no law or master over me; and besides this, I make a mock at all fear for the future." If any such

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person as this really exists, no one will doubt that he must belong to a very limited class. The words of Solomon are certainly true, "Because the sentence of God is not quickly pronounced against the evil-doers, therefore the sons of men perpetrate their wicked deeds without the least fear" (*Eccles.* viii. 11). And yet, nevertheless, no man, ordinarily speaking, entirely loses his fear of the sanction of human laws, or is ever wholly indifferent to the moral judgment of those among whom he lives, at least not until he has reached such an excess of depravity as would be virtually an exclusion from human society.

It may be consequently extremely possible, that the doctrines of free thought exist very much more in the form of a singularly widespread epidemic, tainting the atmosphere on a very great scale, rather than that they find many who are really firm and consistent in their adherence to them, and are prepared to carry them out to their ultimate issue. But however this may be, the man of simple faith and the profound student of the Scripture both perfectly coincide in the act of turning their backs upon them, and this in the most decided manner. The whole being and happiness of the life of the man of simple faith consists in his belief and acceptance of the truth of Christ's mission and redemption, and in the consciousness that he is living in the grace and peace of his future Judge. His mind could give no place to the thought that it was possible to escape from God, however much he might wish to do so. But so far from thinking that estrangement or separation from God ended in the acquisition of freedom, he would say, though without reasoning,-that such a condition might be properly called freedom, if it were freedom to be a houseless wanderer in the storm and the rain, and enslavement, to be the happy and prosperous member of a family in the midst of all the warmth and enjoyment of home. The deepest student of the Scriptures could add nothing to this in substance. The simple believer's conviction would be that of his faith, and the conviction of the student of the Scripture would equally be that of his faith, only of a faith in which a large accession of knowledge had been ministered, according to St. Peter's precept. The words of the simple believer to the advocate of the license of free thought would be, "I turn my back upon you and your ideas from an instinct within me which tells me that you are the victim of the worst possible deception." The student of the Scriptures would say to him, "I in the same manner turn my back upon you and your ideas, and my reason for doing so is, that I have before me a general consensus of all mankind, in every age and nation of the whole world, that is dead against you. The testimony of the Sacred Scriptures

respecting you is, that you are 'the fool that says in his heart there is no God' (Ps. xiii.). It also foretells of you, that however prosperous you may be for the moment, and however seemingly the favourite of fortune. your inevitable future, even as regards this life, will be, to wither away and to come to an end, that is, without honour, dving the same death as the beast that is without understanding dies, and leaving behind you a memory that will very quickly perish. As regards the hope of a future life here, you yourself make no secret of your having abdicated your title to it. When, then, you talk to me of the advantages and benefits of your freedom, my reply to you is, 'Poor fool! go to some one else whom you may have a better chance of deceiving and talk to him of your freedom. I have learnt from the words of One whom I am very little likely to desert to listen to you, that it is the "truth which makes free." To this truth I hope to cling during life, and to find my strength and consolation from it in death. What is your freedom but the denial of my truth? Poor fool ! to build your hope for life and eternity on a denial! Poor fool!'"

If we suppose the whole phalanx of the current deceptions brought in succession into the presence of the man of simple faith, and also of the profound student of the Scripture, the scene is only slightly modified according to the nature of the deception. Imagine the entrance of Immanuel Kant recommending his system of philosophy, which reveals to men the secret, not of the Divine Creator forming man from the dust of the earth, and of His breathing the living soul into the body thus formed. No :- but the far superior secret of the creature thus formed producing out of the working of his own mind his subjective Godwhat will be his reception? The man of simple faith at once makes the sign of the Cross and turns his back upon Immanuel Kant without a word. The man of the Scripture turns his back to him also, but if he were to condescend to speak, he would say, "Are you such a weak deluded simpleton as really to think I am likely to abandon the God who has revealed Himself to Moses and Elias, and who now as Christ is present to the end of the world with his Roman Catholic Church, to try to embrace the phantom of your diseased mind or of any other equally diseased mind like yours?" Bring Mr. Darwin into their presence, and the same scene in substance is repeated. The man of simple faith and the man of Scripture knowledge alike stop their ears against any other origin of man than that recorded by Moses in the Book of Genesis. Be the deceiver, in short, who he may, such and no other will always be his reception from the man of simple faith and the man versed in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures.

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However, if simple faith and habitual study of the Sacred Scriptures are so far seen to coincide, that whatever form of current error comes to strike itself against them, its wave is sure to find itself broken upon the rock on which they are built, we must be cautious how we fall into the error of supposing, that simple faith by itself and habitual study of the Sacred Scriptures can be by any means in the same degree coincident and on a par in other respects. And there is one point which now calls for our consideration, where the greatest possible difference is found to subsist between them.

Simple faith, destitute of its proper associate and companion of suitable and useful Christian knowledge, can never be allowed to pass for a legitimate and recognised condition of life for the Christian man, woman, or child. Where it is found existing, it exists either as the calamity which human sin and disorder has brought into the Church, and which is not to be traced to any immediate particular guilty cause; or it is the direct penal consequence of the omission to profit by opportunities of learning which were accessible, or to the similar neglect of corresponding duties on the part of the responsible instructor. Certain it is, that however superior simple faith, destitute as it may be of its proper companion of Christian knowledge, must always be to mere rude and profane ignorance,-nevertheless, to whatever cause it may be owing that faith exists in the state of destitution of its proper knowledge,-this very state of destitution of knowledge is a thing in plain, undeniable contravention of the order of God for His Church. The mandate of Christ to His Apostles and their successors for all times is "Go ye and teach all nations." The legitimate result of the faithful and efficient carrying into effect of this commission to teach, must of course be a very great increase of knowledge. But as the commonest everyday experience tells us that the zeal and capacity of the teacher, however great these may be, require corresponding good dispositions on the part of the learners, the Apostles may be observed to insist, in the most plain-spoken and urgent words, on all who are learners being animated with the proper sense of their Christian duty, impelling them to be industrious for their part in improving themselves by the acquisition of knowledge. In order to the Christian society being found in the condition of health and vigour contemplated by its Divine Founder, it is indispensable that the learners should be just as much on fire with the spirit of their vocation to learn, as that the teachers for their part should be animated with the warmth and fire of their vocation to teach. Hence it was that Moses gave to the people of Israel the earnest precept, "Beware that thou never desert the Levite all the days thou dwellest in the land" (Deut. xii. 19), which

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in other words is equivalent to saying, Beware thou never ceasest to be a learner in the school in which the Levite is the appointed instructor. And with these words of Moses there are numerous exhortations of both St. Peter and St. Paul which perfectly correspond. Thus St. Paul says, "Brethren, I would not have you ignorant," and then proceeds to enumerate in detail what the particular events are in the history of the dealings of God with men of which he wishes them not to remain in ignorance (I Cor. x. I). To the Philippians he writes, "This I pray, that your charity may yet more abound in knowledge and in all understanding" (Philip. i. 9); to the Colossians, "that you walk worthy of God, pleasing Him in all things, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Coloss. i. 10). St. Peter, again, speaks more definitely still, as the supreme legislator for the Christian Society : "But do you, using all diligence, minister in your faith virtue, and in your virtue knowledge" (2 Peter i.). From all which, and numberless similar passages of the Scripture which might be cited, it plainly appears that the state of ignorance can never by any possibility be a legitimate condition of life in the Christian society. And where it is found existing, it can only exist, ordinarily speaking, as has been said, as the penal consequence of sin and criminal neglect, of which either the times past were, or the times now present have been, guilty.

This brings us to the consideration of the all-important point in which the simple faith, that is without knowledge, differs from the faith which has become strengthened and confirmed by a mature and patient study of the books of the Sacred Scriptures. When simple faith is seen to turn its back to the various prevalent forms of deception, this is but the happy result of an impulse the force of which has not as yet been fully spent through familiar contact with the error. Let the contact but become constant, and in each successive collision with the error, the impulse for resistance becomes less and less able to withstand and less capable of maintaining its own ground. Eve in her simplicity trusted herself to abide the issue of a collision with a spirit experienced in rebellion and deception, and was very quickly overcome. And in this respect Eve's fate is but the first-fruits of thousands upon thousands of similar deceptions, where simplicity, destitute of its proper armour and defence of competent knowledge, has fallen a prey to one after another of the various reigning deceptions which have come upon earth, and have had each their longer or shorter duration and their greater or lesser number of victims.

The entire contrary is the case with the faith that is a patient and regular student of the Holy Scriptures, though even here the Book of

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Life has been known to become a stone of stumbling to the proud and wilful spirit. There is unhappily no gift of God of which human perversity may not make a bad use. Indeed, in the model example where the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures is shown to be the sovereign weapon of defence against deception, the Temptation of Christ by the evil One, Satan himself appears as perverting the inspired words to serve the ends of his intended deception. "Cast thyself down from hence ; for it is written. He shall give His angels charge over Thee, lest perchance Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Such were the words of the deceiver, and they were met and frustrated by the corresponding words, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Deut. vi. 16). In the Temptation of Christ by the evil One we may see reflected as in a mirror all the long succession of deceptions by which the enemy of man has sought to make the Christian people his prey; and in this temptation it is worthy of being carefully noted that the evil One only once ventures on the to him most hazardous experiment of cloaking his murderous design under the mask of a warranty from the Sacred Scriptures, while in each of his three attempts to deceive he is instantly foiled by the defence drawn from the Scriptures. In the temptation to induce Christ to use His Divine power to turn the stones into bread, he is silenced by the words, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Deut. viii. 3). In the second temptation he is baffled in the manner above described ; and in the third he is overcome and finally driven away by the words, "It is written, Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God. and Him only shalt thou serve" (Deut. vi. 13). In every case the Sacred Scripture is the weapon by which the deception is broken in pieces.

This of course is not an example without its application to every period and condition of the Church's passage through the present world. Every new form of deception, as it rises up and is proposed by the evil One for acceptance by the Christian people to their injury and ruin, is capable of being met by its corresponding antidote from the words of the Sacred Scriptures. And that it should be capable of being thus met at all times appertains to the vigilance and science of the defenders of the Christian cause. When St. John uses the words, "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith" (I John v. 4), he is to be presumed to refer to a faith which has been well exercised in using the only weapon that is proper to gain the victory, namely, "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (*Ephes.* vi. 17). The victory of Christ over the deceptions of the evil One by His use

of the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the type and pattern of all the subsequent similar victories that have been and yet remain to be gained by His Church.

Nothing then can be a point either more important in itself or which has a more intimate connection with our own present purpose than the truth of which we here come into full view, namely, that the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures is the really powerful defence, which the wisdom of God has put into the hands of the Christian people, against the errors and deception that raise their clamour on all sides and invite the simple and unwary to surrender themselves captive to them. It would exceed our limits to attempt to show how in all ages the chief practical answer of the Church to every form of challenge which has questioned her right to exist as a society and to collect the people of the earth into her sanctuaries, in order to teach them the way of life from her pulpits and her lecture-rooms, has lain in her being able to say, -" I am true the Guardian of the Holy Scriptures; I am the authorised Interpreter of its doctrines ; I am the Messenger whose office it is to teach the Christian multitudes and to feed them with the words of Divine Inspiration." When the Inspired Preacher stood before his people as one who was most wise, seeking for them words full of profit, and writing for them most just discourses replete with truth,who questioned his right to teach? When the Church, in like manner, stands before the world armed with the sacred words of Divine Inspiration, and when, on the pattern of the wisest of men, she discharges her office of teacher to the vast multitudes of the earth, finding for them words full of profit, and writing for them most just discourses replete with truth,-into whose mind will the thought then enter to question her right to exist?

But to proceed with the task that is before us. We have now to inquire, what motives of sovereign efficacy there may be, which can be brought under general consideration,—proper to have weight with all who are grateful for the blessing of the Christian redemption,—to prompt them to use their best diligence in acquiring whatever may be their particular measure of knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures.

And here the first and the chief sovereign consideration proper to exercise universal weight can be no other, than the thought of the debt of gratitude, which all humanity that partakes in the benefit of the Christian redemption owes to the third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity for His gift. To Him we owe the entire body of sacred literature, the various books of which, besides that in them is contained the sole complete record extant of the world in which we live, have received

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the gift of His Divine inspiration in such a manner that they can be said, in the words of the Vatican Council, to have GOD for their Author.

If that is true which is written in Ps. xciii. 12, "Blessed is the man whom Thou shalt have instructed, O Lord," it must be held beyond the reach of denial to be a privilege of the very highest order, to be permitted to become a reader and a student of the books which have God for their Author. The Church in the Nicene Creed confesses the third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity to be the Lord and Giver of life (vivificantem). "Give me understanding," says the holy Psalmist, "and I shall live" (Ps. cxviii. 144). The human understanding is a gift which comes to us by our natural creation for the purposes both of the present and the future life, with the condition annexed, that it is a gift which needs to be duly cultivated. Nothing can be more manifestly inconceivable than that the Divine instruction, which causes its recipient to be pronounced blessed, admits of being separated from the diligent and appropriate study of the inspired literature which has God for its Author. The person of the instructor necessarily supposes also the person of the learner, and learning and knowledge is in all ordinary cases the joint product of the care and solicitude of the teacher co-operating with the industry and assiduous application of the learner. Thus Timothy is proposed as a pattern for the imitation of all in their several degrees, because, as St. Paul says of him, "From thy infancy thou hast known the Sacred Scriptures, which are able to instruct thee unto salvation, by the faith which is in Jesus Christ." And then the Apostle proceeds to add. "All Scripture is inspired of God, and is to be used for teaching, for convincing, for reproof, and instruction in justice, that the man of God may be perfect, and furnished for every good work" (2 Tim. iii. 17).

From these words of St. Paul nothing can more plainly follow then that the Sacred Scriptures have not been intrusted to the keeping of the Church as a talent which may be safely laid up in a napkin and kept away from their proper use. On the contrary, use, religious, constant, and legitimate use of the Divine gift, has been, and must ever remain to the end of time, the invariable rule. The reigning high priest of Jerusalem readily granted the prayer of the Egyptian king Ptolemy for an authentic copy of the Sacred Scriptures as they then existed, transcribed from the copy preserved in the Temple. He even sent, pursuant to his request, the seventy interpreters acquainted with the Greek language, who were the bearers of the manuscript to Alexandria, where by their labour the Greek Septuagint version was at length completed. The letter of Jonathan in the Book of Machabees speaks of the holy

books being in their hands as a treasure which rendered them guite independent of the rest of the world (1 Mach. xii, 9). Christ Himself shows that He regards the Scriptures as in no sense possessing the character of a concealed treasure. He says openly to the Jews in the Temple, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life" (John v. 39), words which plainly approve of the constant use and religious esteem in which the Scriptures were held by the Synagogue, before they had become the treasure of the Gentile world through belief in Christ. And we have a remarkable testimony to a constant daily use of the Sacred Scriptures, which also meets with a very signal commendation from St. Luke, in a passage from the Acts of the Apostles. "But they who are of Thessalonica were the more noble, who received the word with great eagerness, daily searching the Scriptures whether these things were so" (Acts xvii. 11). If we wish to complete the testimony to the Sacred Scriptures being intended by their Divine Giver for constant and unremitting use, from the history of the Church and with evidence taken from the Christian times, we have but to point to the respective careers of Origen and St. Jerome, with innumerable other names which it would be tedious to enumerate.

The same truth appears in no less salient a manner when we look into the Sacred Volume itself. The inspired wisdom of King Solomon announces itself in the parables of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, as offered to men that they may know wisdom and discipline and learn to understand the words of prudence, that astuteness may be given to little ones, and to the young man knowledge and understanding (Frov. i. 1). The Spirit of Divine Wisdom thus appears as essentially a communicative Spirit. Its words are not only an infinite treasure in themselves, but an infinite treasure for men (Wisd. vii. 14). Divine Wisdom cries out close to the gates of the city and in the very gates themselves. "O men ! to you I cry aloud, and my voice is to the sons of men; my throat shall meditate the truth, and my lips shall detest the impious man" (Prov. viii. 4). "I learned wisdom without injustice," are the words of inspiration in the Book of Wisdom, "and I communicate it without envy" (Wisd. vii. 13); and if it were necessary to seek for further confirmation of the truth that the Divine Spirit which speaks in the Sacred Scriptures is essentially a spirit communicative of its gifts to men, we could not have a more convincing evidence than that which is afforded by the entire reign of Solomon. He holds the prerogative of occupying the post of honour among those whom God has chosen to be the channel for communicating His wisdom to men; and certainly no one could give greater proof of a large and most communicative mind in admitting

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others to participate in the benefits of his gift of wisdom. It is recorded that in his time there came from all people and from all the kings of the earth those who were sent to be learners and hearers in his school; and the visit of the Queen of the East to hear his wisdom is one of the best known and most familiar incidents of his reign.

Now this very circumstance, that the Divine Spirit of Wisdom which speaks in the Sacred Scriptures is essentially a Spirit communicative of its gifts to men, is one that makes a very significant appeal to our powers of reflection. A well-known writer, who, though it was his misfortune to have his lot cast in the Anglican schism, happily lived in its early beginning, before the tradition of the Catholic Spirit and theology had become extinct, was used to say to his parishioners, "Sermons are dangerous things, and none go out of the church but either better or worse. No one is careless before his judge, and the Word of God shall judge us."¹ If the Divine Spirit has such wonderful condescension for the children of men as to draw near to them and to be communicative of its gifts to them, there is a Divine purpose in this which is not to be frustrated and defrauded of its due effect. "And thus shall be my word," says God by His prophet, " when it shall go forth from my mouth it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish whatsoever I will, and it shall prosper in those things whereunto I have sent it " (Isaias lv. 11). Of this Word of God St. Paul bears testimony that in the mouth of its preachers it proved to some "a savour of death unto death, and to others a savour of life unto life" (2 Cor. ii. 16). Being the word of God, it cannot be spoken to no purpose. "We are," says St. Paul, "the good odour of Christ, both in those who are saved and in those who perish. The Divine gift to the whole human family of the volume of the Sacred Scriptures is a gift for an end in view, and this end in view is the amelioration and improvement, both for the present and the future life, of the condition of the receivers. "This is the will of God," writes St. Paul, "your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv. 3). If the gift of the Sacred Scriptures either lies neglected and fails to be applied to the purposes for which it has been given, or, worse still, if it comes to be misused, as we have an example of its misuse in the mouth of Satan the deceiver,the particular end of amelioration and improvement doubtless is defeated. -but not the general purpose of God, which has decreed that His word should never return to Him void. The Word of God is a "savour of life unto life," and also of "death unto death." Sermons, as George Herbert justly says, are dangerous things. If the merciful purpose of

¹ George Herbert of Bemerton, "The Country Parson," § vii., The Country Parson Preaching.

the gift makes shipwreck through either the neglect or the misuse of the receiver, the purpose of vengeance and retribution takes its place. Such is the condition annexed to the Divine gift. In the words of Solomon, Wisdom cries out, "How long, ye little ones, will ye love simplicity, and fools desire the things that are hurtful to them, and the unlearned hate knowledge?" But Wisdom then goes on to say, "Forasmuch as I have called and you have refused, and I have stretched forth my hand, and no one would regard, you have despised all my counsel, and my warnings you have neglected, I also will laugh at your destruction, and I will mock at you when that which you feared shall have befallen you. . . They shall eat of the fruit of their own way, and shall be filled with their own counsels" (*Prov.* i, 22).

If the Sacred Scriptures are the most gracious gift of God the Holy Ghost, given for the express purpose, that the condition of life of the receivers of the gift may be wonderfully ameliorated and raised in honour, both for the present as well as the future life,-provided that a due religious use be made of the sacred gift,-it follows that the failure of this due and religious use of the gift must necessarily in the same degree compromise the honour of the Divine Giver. And here it becomes us to beware, how we seek to hide from ourselves the allimportant truth, that such dishonour of God is never suffered under the rule of Divine Providence to remain without its retribution of disastrous consequences. The message of the man of God to the high priest Heli contains the Divine rule set forth in the most explicit manner : "I have spoken the word that thy house and the house of thy father should minister in my sight for ever, but now this be far from me, for whoever shall glorify me, I will glorify him, but they that despise me shall be ignoble" (1 Kings ii. 30). The Catholic Church has received from God the gift of the inheritance of the nations of the earth, and the Catholic people are found among all the various nationalities which occupy their respective portions of the surface of the earth. But in these various nationalities they are by no means found in an equal degree of peace, outward prosperity, and political and social honour. Here it is obvious to remark, that the Catholic people receive from God many sacred gifts, by the misuse of which they may bring down the anger of God upon themselves, and the Sacred Scriptures can only lay claim to their own proper place among these gifts. Long experience, however, among the nations of the earth has shown, that the religious and grateful use of the gift of the Sacred Scriptures invariably proves to be the direct path in which such honour and well-being in the present life as the existing condition

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of the world permits is most easily to be attained. And as the Divine Giver of the Scripture is Lord over the future world equally with the present, His Apostle is able to say with the greatest confidence, "Piety is useful for all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation" (1 *Tim.* iv. 8, 9). A similar long experience among the nations of the earth would bear testimony in an equal degree to the correlative truth, that neglect of the sacred gift of the Holy Scriptures brings upon the people who may be chargeable with it, the judgment of God, rendering them in a proportionate degree ignoble in the sight of the rest of the world.

A second motive of universal application, and of a nature proper to exert a somewhat similar sovereign influence in imparting an impulse to the religious use and study of the Sacred Scriptures, may find its expression in the following words of St. Jerome, which he has addressed to the nun Eustochium in the way of preface to his commentary on the prophecies of Isaias. "I herein discharge my debt to you, and through you to him (Pammachius), pursuant to the precept of Christ, who says, 'Search the Scriptures,' and 'Seek and ye shall find,' lest I should hear that said to me which Christ said to the Jews, 'You do err, not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God.' For if according to the Apostle St. Paul, 'Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, and he who is ignorant of the Scripture is ignorant both of the power of God and of His wisdom,' it follows then, that ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

A very striking light will be found to be thrown upon these words of St. Jerome from passing briefly under consideration the scene which took place upon Mount Thabor, where Christ exhibited Himself transfigured to His chosen three Apostles in the company of Moses and Elias, who were seen to be admitted to His most intimate counsels, having been heard conversing with Him on the death He was shortly to accomplish in Jerusalem.

It is here to be observed that it was reserved for three specially chosen witnesses to be present at this vision, of which again no mention was to be made to any one else until Christ had risen from the dead. The sight of the crucified Christ is placed without any reserve before all mankind, while the sight of the transfigured Christ in the company of Moses and Elias is a spectacle reserved for His chosen friends. From the sight of Christ exhibited as dying on the cross in the company of two thieves, the majority of His own disciples retire to a distance, thereby plainly showing how little able they are to bear to look

upon Him in such a plight and in such companionship. But when His chosen witnesses behold him transfigured and in the company of Moses and Elias, then they give the most evident signs, showing not only how satisfying to them is the vision of His glorious appearance, but also what a profound sense they have that He cannot be found in more fitting and appropriate company than in that of Moses and Elias. St. Peter on the Mount of the Transfiguration exclaims, "Lord, it is good'for us to be here;" and then, lest the vision should pass away and be lost, in his eager desire that it may be rendered fixed and permanent, he says, "Let us make three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." The words of St. Peter, as the spokesman of Christian faith for all ages and generations of men. declare it to be a privilege of an exceedingly high order to be the chosen of Christ to behold the vision of His glory, and to be admitted to hear His familiar colloguy with His trusted friends and servants Moses and Elias : "Lord, it is good for us to be here." "Hitherto," St. Peter appears to say in these words, "we have seen and known Thee only as Jesus of Nazareth, standing by Thyself, and, as far as we have known Thee, isolated and apart from all that has come to pass before Thee. Now we have before us the visible proof of the truth of Thy words, 'Amen, I say to you, before Abraham was I am.' Now we see that Thou art even better known to the world that is past and gone than Thou art known to us. Moses and Elias are not only known to Thee, but with them Thou conversest in a familiar manner of that which Thou hast not revealed to us. Now we see the truth of the words of the prophet who hath spoken of Thee, as He who should come forth from Bethlehem Ephrata to be the Ruler of His people Israel, but whose coming forth is likewise 'from the beginning, from the days of eternity'" (Mich. v. 2).

Doubtless nothing is more necessary for the Christian at every moment of the present life than to have continually present before his eyes the sight of Christ on the cross, so that he may learn to fix his mind habitually on the sacrifice of the Divine Victim, whose blood is the price of redemption for a lost world, "looking," writes St. Paul, "to the Author and Finisher of your faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame" (*Hcb.* xii. 2). "God forbid," again says St. Paul, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world is crucified to me and I to the world" (*Gal.* vi. 14). Christ on the cross between the two thieves is the spectacle which the wisdom of God judges proper to be exhibited without any reserve to the entire world; admission to behold this sight is thrown open to all alike, to the profane equally with the devout.

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"They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced" (Zach. xii. 10), are the words of the prophet, which have their standing fulfilment in the truth that Jesus Christ, hanging on the cross in the company of the two thieves, remains the fixed and irremovable monument of the work of God for the redemption of men, never to be taken away from before the eyes of all the generations of men who have yet to come and disappear from the earth. The vision of Christ transfigured and in the company of Moses and Elias, on the contrary, remains the privilege of the chosen friends of Christ, who give their time and their understand ing to the study and the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. The Jews were scandalised with Christ for the reason that He appeared to them to be alone, and His answer to them was, "I am not alone, but I and the Father who sent me" (John viii. 16). He who came to gather around Himself a new people zealous of good works could not permanently remain isolated and alone. The Church which He came to purchase for Himself would never cease to bear its testimony to Him, but then its testimony would not be older than itself. But considering that He who came to gather this people "of the acquisition" around Himself from all the nations of the earth bears witness of Himself that "before Abraham was I am," Christian testimony by itself alone, however in its own order appropriate and even indispensable, does not meet the entire exigence of what is required. An earlier order of testimony is needed, and this is the testimony of the Mount of the Transfiguration ; in other words, the testimony of Moses and Elias conversing with Christ respecting the death which He was to accomplish in Terusalem. It is this indispensable testimony which becomes the privilege of those who are learners and students in the Sacred Books of Moses and the other prophets. The King of the Prophets differs from all the other prophets in this respect, that the world before His Incarnation belongs to Him equally with the world which has followed it. He is, in the words of St. Paul, "The King of the centuries," "Rex sæculorum" (1 Tim. i. 17). The centuries which have followed His Incarnation are able to point to a vast array of testimony, all of which, each in its own order, bears its respective witness to their King. But this body of testimony is manifestly inadequate, for the evidence of the long array of centuries which preceded His Incarnation is indispensable before we can have the full and complete witness of the whole human family in each several generation to their common Lord and King. Take away the Sacred Scriptures, and the testimony of the human family before the cradle of Bethlehem, if not reduced to absolute silence, undoubtedly loses all clear and certain utterance, and finds

the most serious difficulty to emerge from the obscurity of legend and the labyrinth of fable. The Christ who is the true Immortal King of the centuries which preceded His Incarnation can only be certainly known as their King from the testimony of the Books of Moses and the other Scriptures. Hence the entire absence of all exaggeration in the words of St. Jerome, that "ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ," for without a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, Christ, the Immortal King of the centuries previous to His Incarnation, would remain practically unknown to us.

It will easily be perceived that the preceding reasoning in the cause of an improved application to the study of the Sacred Scriptures belongs. as there can be no good motive for desiring to conceal, to the class of knowledge which George Herbert would call dangerous. The moment that the truth has been fairly brought home and impressed on our minds, that the whole Church makes a solemn profession in the Nicene Creed that the Third Divine Person of the Holy Trinity has spoken through the prophets, -any formal indifference to the knowledge of that which the Third Divine Person has spoken through the prophets, necessarily begins to assume the character of the profaneness of Esau, whose sin consisted in his formal act of contempt of the privilege of his birthright. And again, if ignorance of the Scriptures is necessarily also, in one most important respect, "ignorance of Christ," this ignorance also, were it to be voluntary, without the plea of any extenuating circumstances, such as the absence of leisure, time, and opportunity, might also very easily come to be identified, to a rather dangerous degree, with the profanity of Esau.

But to pass from the preceding line of reasoning to another order of thoughts, which will probably lose none of their persuasive force because the character of dangerous knowledge will be by no means in the same degree conspicuous in them.

It has been shown, in what has been said, that the Divine Giver of the Sacred Scriptures has intended that His gift should be an infinite treasure for men. Whether then we consider the matter and substance of that which has been given to us, or the particular form under which it has been conveyed, we remain at a loss to know which is most worthy of our admiration—the wisdom with which the Scriptures are adapted to the ends intended by the Divine Giver, or the wonderful condescension by which they are both brought down to the level or our capacities, and, together with the most inexhaustible variety of riches, still adapted in every respect to the nature and powers of our intelligence.

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The Koran of the Mahometans may be easily seen to be the spurious counterfeit of a divine revelation, if for no other reason, at least from the circumstance that it begins and becomes complete in the career of one particular man, and this man only of one particular tribe of mankind, isolated by birth and language from communication with the rest of the world. The Mahometan Koran is a perfect stranger to the person of the "King of the Centuries," and in place of the Third Divine Person of the ever Blessed Trinity inspiring an uninterrupted succession of prophets, the sole ostensible medium of communication is an alleged spirit messenger, who has nothing in common with the world of men.

How different from this are the true Sacred Books which the Holy Ghost has inspired ! The Spirit which speaks in them is the Spirit of GOD, but the lips by which He speaks are the lips of men. And in that which is thus spoken there is such a surpassing condescension of the Divine Spirit to the circumstances of time and place, to local manners and customs, to the diversity of the various persons and their character, together with such a wonderful recognition of their mutual relations with each other, that however much the constant presence of the Divine Spirit is a truth to be confessed and honoured, we never through a long succession of centuries perceive the least mark of any violence having been done to the proper characteristics of the life that is essentially human, not even to the excluding its worst crimes, failings, and infirmities. We have always in the Sacred Scriptures the two elements, the divine and the human, not only side by side with each other, but blended together in such an unrivalled conjunction, that nothing short of a Divine Wisdom and intelligence could possibly bring this to pass. Such is the inexpressibly condescending character of the bounty of the Divine Giver, who has not been willing that any unnecessary barrier should be suffered to exist to the prejudice of the perfect suitableness of His gifts to the wants and capacities of His human family for whose use He has designed it. "This commandment that I give thee," are the words of Moses, " is not above thee, neither is it set far off from thee, nor is it placed in heaven, that thou shouldest say. Which of us shall climb up to heaven that he may bring it down to us? ... The word is very near to thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou shouldest do it" (Deut. xxx. 11).

If we were to be asked for an example of the inimitable blending of the human with the divine, which betrays in some unusual degree the workmanship of the "Finger of God," and forms the incommunicable glory of the books of the Sacred Scriptures, I think we might very properly select the Song of Solomon. Here certainly is an instance in

point of the most wonderful victory of the Spirit of Divine Wisdom over the things of men. Under the veil of a very full and minute description of the perfectly human charms and delights of the bridal chamber. the inspired words of Solomon reveal the incomprehensible love of Christ for His mystic Spouse the Church; the Divine Spirit giving us herein a singularly convincing proof of His wonder-working power. in rescuing that side of human life from its subjection to weakness and infirmity, which more than any other lies under the penal sentence of the court held in Paradise, and in claiming it, after it has been thus rescued, for the service of the very highest mysteries which can be clothed in human language. Again, when the same Divine Spirit, in the same gracious manner, descends to the still more familiar life of the market place, of the streets, and the public assemblies of the citizens, calling upon all to listen with the greatest attention, saying, "I am about to speak of great things, and my lips shall be opened to give utterance to the things that are right" (Prov. viii. 6), there meets us precisely the same wonderful blending of Divine wisdom with what wears a purely human aspect. It abounds in the most admirable cautions and directions for the guidance of the present life, joined with the corresponding wisdom that reveals the profoundest secrets of the Government of God. Thus we have proceeding from the same Divine Source, the revelation of the hidden secret of the counsels of God : "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, even the impious man for the evil day" (Prov. xvi. 4); with such sagacious maxims simply proper for the present life as that: "The buyer says, It is naught, it is naught; but when he has gone away he will boast" (Prov. xx. 14); or the still more practical rule of worldly caution ; "As the man who lays hold of a dog by the ears, so is the impatient man that passes by and is mixed up with strife that belongs to another" (Prov. xxvi. 17). "The wisdom which comes down from above, descending from the Father of lights" (James i. 17), is quite evidently not an austere but a playful wisdom, to which nothing belonging to the world of men is alien. "I was with him," are its words, "setting all things in their order, and each day was to me a day of delight, disporting myself for all time in His presence, and playfully passing through the entire world, it being my delight to be with the children of men" (Prov. viii. 30). Seeing then that the Divine Wisdom exhibits itself as thus gracious and condescending, we surely cannot but have the more reason to desire to study its precepts and to listen to its voice, saving to us, "Now therefore, my children, hear me : Blessed are they who keep my ways: give ear to discipline; be ye wise,

and cast it not away. Blessed is the man who hears me, and who keeps his watch daily at my doors" (*Prov.* viii. 32).

But as it would be quite unreasonable to expect that the limits of a single essay could possibly be compatible with an exhaustive treatment of all the various motives which call for a zealous use and study of the Sacred Scriptures, and as our essay has already reached its utmost permissible length, we must ask leave to bring it to a conclusion, with the addition of one more extremely real subject of thought. We shall, doubtless, easily remember the passage in the Nicene Creed in which the whole Church professes her constant faith in One "of whose kingdom there shall be no end." Of this kingdom of the Second Divine Person of the ever Blessed Trinity there is also, in a certain sense, no beginning, "For His coming forth," in the words of the prophet, "is from the days of eternity." If the reign of Christ can be said, in a relative sense, to have any beginning, this is not because the Divine Power itself which reigns has had any beginning, but because the human creation, which furnishes the subjects of His kingdom, has had its beginning in time, at a certain date from which the reign of the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity may, in a relative sense, be permitted to be computed. Of this reign of the Second Divine Person over His human creation, the Scripture text, speaking of the Divine Wisdom which is manifested in its government, says that "it reaches from end to end in its strength, and orders all things in sweetness" (Wisd. vii. I).

Nothing could be less exposed to the danger of cavil and controversy, than the proposition that no citizen of any one of the known kingdoms of the present Europe could have the least pretension to occupy an ordinary honourable public social position among his fellow-citizens with credit, if he were in any degree conspicuous for his ignorance of the national history. For the citizen of Great Britain or of France, or of any other kingdom, the social and political history of his country is a department of knowledge, the want of which becomes simple disqualification for public life. Why should the same rule not hold good as regards the knowledge of the history of the kingdom of the Second Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, ruling over the children of men with a "wisdom that stretches in its strength from end to end, and disposes all things in sweetness"? Not one of the kingdoms of the children of men can possess any other than a partial and limited sovereignty, which, the moment that a certain frontier-line is passed, ceases to be. Every known human kingdom has had its more or less recent beginning, and not a single one of them can presume to say of

itself that "it can have no end." But the kingdom of which the Nicene Creed speaks not only knows no limit of duration in point of time, but no limit in actual extent. For it, there is no frontier-line where its power ceases. The Head of this kingdom has given a commission to His servants to go to all the nations to teach them His doctrines. "Thy kingdom," says the Psalmist, "is a kingdom of all the centuries. and Thy dominion is from every generation to generation" (Ps. cxliv. 13). If the kingdoms of the children of men have their history and their literature, ignorance of which is impermissible in the case of any of their citizens who aspire to the privileges of their citizenship, will the kingdom which has no frontier limits to its power, which is without beginning as it is without end, be destitute of its literature,-ignorance of which will be at least equally impermissible to its citizens? It will certainly not be destitute of its literature : for the words of the same Creed go on to speak of the Third Divine Person of the ever Blessed Trinity, who is the Lord and Giver of life, as one who "has spoken by the prophets." How shall a literature which can but lay claim to a human origin, and which can present neither adequate guarantee of its veracity or pledge of its indestructibility, which, taken at the best, only ranges over quite a limited portion both of time and space, put itself into comparison with the books which have God for their Author? The Books of the Scripture are the same alike to all the nations of the entire earth, as being the voice of the Divine Wisdom that reaches from end to end in its strength, and orders all things in sweetness. This is the wisdom of which the wisest of men has said, that he loved it and searched for it from his early youth ; that he sought to take it to himself as a bride, and became enamoured of its beauty. This is the wisdom to which he gives the testimony that by it he was able to command the respect of the crowds, and, young as he was, to receive honour from his seniors. "By this, moreover," are his words, "I shall gain immortality, and I shall leave an eternal memory to those who shall come after me. Kings to be dreaded for their power shall fear when they listen to me, and of the multitude I shall be held to be courageous and valiant in war. Going into my house, I shall find rest in its companionship; for to live together with it is without bitterness, and its presence knows no wearisomeness, but gladness and rejoicing" (Wisd. viii. 10).

That among the inhabitants of the earth there can be found those who spontaneously turn away from the "infinite treasure to men" which the wonderful liberality of God has given, preferring to it all the various kinds of beggarly elements of a world the fashion of which passeth

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away, is one of those sad proofs of the fallen condition of humanity of which the words of Divine Inspiration alone can be trusted to speak. "Man, having been constituted in honour, has not understood his honour, but is compared to the beasts that are without understanding, and has become like unto them" (*Ps.* xlviii. 21).

POSTSCRIPT.

One brief remark remains to be made, which is not without its importance. The preceding Essays are written in the idiom of Great Britain. It is the misfortune and not the fault of the writer that they are written in a national language. Had there been in existence a language of universal currency, which would have reached the class of readers dispersed in their various nationalities whom he seeks to benefit, he would have gladly adopted it. Two things conspired together and were even indispensable to the victory over the world of the doctrines preached by the Apostles. First, truth, and secondly, international preaching of the truth,-the truth was nationally preached by inspired prophets, with the result that the truth was then received with derision and the prophets were stoned. The same truth was preached by apostles internationally and under an international commission, with the result that the truth was then received with submission and its teachers with respect and joy. Nothing can be a more plainly observable fact. than that in precisely the same proportion as our attempts to enforce Christian truth have been seen to seek and cultivate a purely national application, these attempts in every nation are received with a continually increasing derision and contempt. The present writer cannot alter circumstances by the force of which, the use of a national idiom unavoidably limits the circulation of truth, which it would be his desire to preach internationally were this in his power; but if the truth that may be contained in the above Essays should meet, among any nation or people of the entire earth, with any zealous friend who may desire to translate it into another idiom, the permission to do this, where requisite, will be most readily granted on its being asked.

The writer also would earnestly desire that all into whose hands the present Essays may come, might take pains to consider the signs which are apparent at the present time, indicating that the Providence of God over His human creation is in many important respects overruling and breaking down the barriers by which nations and populations have hitherto been kept confined to themselves. The study of

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living spoken idioms has spread in a wonderful manner among the principal nations. Intercourse by travel and correspondence has multiplied beyond all calculation, partly through the natural operation of the existing International Postal Union, as well as by means of the marvellous increase of railroad and steamboat facilities for transmission and moving about. Nations are thus being carried out of their previous isolation by the force of circumstances such as these; and if the dreadful vice of national "egotism," which is capable of becoming in numerous ways a most serious hindrance to the Christian religion, has shown itself at all times insensible to the call of the Pentecostal grace working in the Church, God, even in the way of His natural providence, may now be observed working counter to this vice. We may see, moreover, that the spirits who love the works of darkness, and seek to promote political disorder and revolution, to the extent even of being ready to conspire against the lives of monarchs and of men in authority, are able to form International Associations for the promotion of their designs by the aid of common counsels and combined resources. How much more then ought not the strength and resources of international combination to be at the service of Christian truth, which is the one only cause in the world that is really common to all the populations of the earth without a single exception.

Should, then, to repeat once more what has been said above, the Christian truth which may be contained in these and the following Essays meet with any sympathetic mind in another nation, the dearest wish of their writer would be fulfilled, if this sympathy were found to lead to the formation of some active resolve to be instrumental in promoting their translation into the idiom proper to that particular nation.

ESSAY III.

THE PREMOSAIC SABBATH;

OR,

THE LAW OF THE DIVINE LEGISLATOR DIVIDING HUMAN TIME INTO WEEKS OF SEVEN DAYS,

COMPRISING

SIX DAYS OF LABOUR AND A SEVENTH OF REST, AND SANCTIFICATION OF THE DAY,

COTEMPORARY WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE CREATION.

GOD, the Creator of the Visible World and of the Race and Family of ADAM, manifests Himself to His intelligent Human Creation, from its First Beginning, as the SUPREME LEGISLATOR, ordering the Course of their Days according to a Division of Time, of which HE HIMSELF in HIS OWN PERSON Places the Pattern before them, in His SIX DAYS of LABOUR and in His Rest on, and Benediction and Sanctification of, the Seventh Day.

PART I.—Read before the London Academia of the Catholic Religion. Tuesday, January 16, 1881.

Contents.

Acknowledgment of the very general absence of a definite recognition or fixed belief as to the reality of any Act of Divine Legislation, cotemporary with the beginning of Creation, dividing human time into weeks of seven days, six of which were appointed for labour, and the seventh for rest and sanctification of the day. The consequent ignorance of the bearing of this Legislation upon the approaching controversy with the prevailing Scepticism.

A general synopsis of the principal questions of Theology, Philosophy, and History, that naturally group themselves round the primitive Divine Law of the division of time into weeks of seven days.

The Council of Trent's testimony that the Christian Religion is a religion of Law and Legislation.

Grounds for asserting the recent notable growth of Scepticism and unbelief as a phenomenon characteristic of the present times, and as specially to be known for its general repudiation of the binding force of Divine Law.

Outline of a supposed conference with an inquiring but reasonable sceptic, to illustrate the impossibility of satisfactorily proving the existence of the Divine Legislator to him, without the evidence of the Law giving six days to labour and appointing the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, cotemporary with the beginning of Creation.

A remark, in the way of digression, on the importance of always insisting that the Christian Religion is the Religion of a Divine Legislator.

A German witness to the necessity of being specially armed for the controversy with the prevailing scepticism.

The verdict of the members of the Academia asked for on the general line of the argument.

THE QUESTION OF THE PREMOSAIC DIVISION OF TIME INTO WEEKS OF SEVEN DAYS.

THE question about to be proposed as the subject of a careful and patient investigation is one the importance of which, it has to be admitted, can by no means be said to be generally appreciated in its true light. The social phenomena which, as I shall have to contend, are calculated to make us feel and comprehend this importance, are very possibly of too recent date, as regards their appearance, to have allowed the requisite time for our attention and reflection to have been sufficiently given to them. I have, consequently, no alternative open except honestly to confess that the importance of the subject I have to treat is, up to the present moment, not as yet at all adequately perceived and understood. Hence it is that I seek the occasion to lay before you the reasons which appear to me proper to establish its character of actual present importance as a real question of the day, and to ask your attentive hearing and eventual verdict upon them.

The actual point under consideration, indeed, is almost as plain and straightforward a matter of fact as it well can be. It is the question— Whether God did or did not enact and promulgate, in the beginning of the world, the law appointing six days for labour with the rest and the sanctification of the seventh day, as a rule of life to be observed by Adam and Eve, and by all descended from them to the end of time? The misfortune is, that the fact of this enactment and of its promulgation in the manner necessary to give it the force of a recognised Divine law, by which all generations of men are to remain bound to the end of time, has been made the subject of a sufficient degree of dispute and cavil (apparently the inseparable concomitant in this world of all Divine truth), as to avail to inflict a certain unavoidable hesitation upon the immediate clear assertion of the truth. The time, indeed, we may reasonably hope, cannot be far distant when the hesitation, which

almost every day suffers some decrease, will be fully and completely removed. Indeed, we may hope, that the day is almost at hand when the continually increasing body of evidence will enable us to assert as an undisputed fact, that the Divine Creator enacted at the very beginning of His Creation His law of six days of labour, followed by the rest and sanctification of the seventh day founded on His own example, and that He promulgated this law in the person of Adam for the imprescriptible observance of all mankind descended from him, to last till the end of the world. We have seen in our own time the state of doubt entirely removed from a similar truth-the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. And it can scarcely be necessary to remark how acceptable a conclusion it must, in the nature of things, be to every reflecting Christian mind to be able to recognise the oneness and sameness of the Christian law of six days of labour, followed by the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, with the similar act of the Divine Creator manifesting Himself as the Founder of this same law from the first beginning of the world.

Here I almost imagine I listen to an objector raising his cavil to the effect, that before the doubt as to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin was formally set at rest, the entire Church had been agitated with the sound of debates respecting it for many long centuries of time. But as regards the question of the primitive law of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, we look round in vain, such an objector would urge, for any signs of a similar importance being attached to it. If it be true that the "voices of the judges actually vary in the gate" with reference to it, is it not perfectly certain, he would say, that they are quite welcome to go on varying, and that no one appears to attach such importance to the point in dispute as would warrant any pains being taken to obtain the decision by which it would be set at rest? It may be true, or it may not be true, that the law of six days' labour and the rest and sanctification of the seventh day dates from the beginning of the world ; only, as no one perceives the force of the reasons calling for the removal of the doubt, to what good purpose disturb the minds of men by raising a question concerning it? There is a most excellent rule of law, " Quieta non movere," "not to disturb the things that are at rest," that appears to apply to the case. Why therefore seek to move this particular question of the "Premosaic Sabbath" from its state of nearly immemorial rest?

To such an objector I think the answer should be as follows :--If the culpable ignorance and the degrading indifference of mankind could be at any time properly made the measure of the value of

religious truth, this is a principle which would affect, to their lasting injury, all the important truths of Divine revelation, quite as much as it affects the particular question of the primitive law of six days' labour and of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day. Or rather it would be nearer the truth to say, that could a free and unrestrained course be given to such a principle, it would suffice to remove the last trace of the light of Divine revelation from the midst of men. Man's weariness with the doctrines of his Divine Instructor would become the reason for their being withdrawn from him, and for his being left perfectly free to seek his ruin in ways of his own choosing. The unconcealed distaste of the Israelites for the manna that fell from heaven, in short, would, on such a principle, have called for, and have justified, their being left to die of hunger in the wilderness.

Happily for the safety of the human family, and for the permanency of their belief in the truths of a Divine revelation, all generations are so invincibly alive to the feeling of a jealous zeal for the honour of the Most Blessed Virgin, who was chosen from all eternity to be the Mother of the King of the Prophets, that belief in divinely revealed truths is always safe *in radice* wherever the Mother of God receives her due meed of honour. Hence, though levity and thoughtlessness, or, what is worse still, the blindness of which gross stupidity and crass ignorance are the natural parents, may for the moment completely undervalue the truth that GoD from the beginning of the world is the Author of the law of the division of time into six days of labour with the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, ignorance in those who honour the Mother of God always remains a vice that can be cured, on the proper remedies being patiently and diligently applied.

I am afraid, then, there is but one reply to be made to my objector: If you think that there is *primâ facie* a valid objection to the raising a question respecting the premosaic Divine law of six days' labour and the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, on the ground of the prevalent ignorance touching the benefits to be reaped from its decision,—understand that it is only as the penal consequence of this same ignorance that there comes to be any doubt at all as to the fact of the Divine enactment of this law from the beginning of the world. Remove this ignorance, and the state of doubt regarding the truth of the law will cease. Remove, in the same manner, the like ignorance as regards the benefits flowing from its certitude, and they also will become equally apparent.

The following, indeed, cannot lay claim to any other character than that of a very incomplete synopsis of the various extremely grave ques-

tions belonging respectively to the several domains of Theology, Philosophy, and History, that naturally group themselves round the above alleged act of the Divine Legislator in making and promulgating His law of the division of time into weeks of seven days from the first beginning of creation. But, incomplete as it is, it may still serve the purpose of convincing the thoughtful reader, what a vast extent of deep and widespread ignorance remains to be removed, before the truth as to this primitive law of the Divine Lawgiver can be said to have been placed in its just and proper light before those upon whom the most serious reasons connected with the stability of their faith impose the duty of considering it.

I.—Theology, among other numerous questions, will have to be interrogated:—

- (a) What is the sum total of the evidence, after all has been put together, compared, sifted, and examined, which is to be gathered from the Sacred Scriptures as to the alleged act in question of the Divine Legislator?
- (b) What on the whole, when the several discordant voices of the various interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures have been duly weighed and examined, can be said to be their prevaling, even if short of their unanimous, judgment?
- (c) Whether the law of the division of time into a week of six days of labour with the rest and sanctification of the seventh day does not bear such strong internal evidence, confirmed by such important external testimony, of its being indispensable to the life of man, that it would utterly overthrow the attribute of "perfection" in the work of the Divine Legislator,—could its enactment and promulgation be supposed to have been delayed for two thousand years to the time of Moses, being even then found to be restricted in its operation to a comparative handful of people?
- (d) Whether if the attribute of "perfection" were once formally overthrown in the case of a single act of the Divine Legislator, the obedience of men could be justly demanded for any other similar act of His legislation?
- (e) Considering that the Christian Religion, which enforces everywhere the duty and binding nature of six days' labour and of the law of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, is known as the religion of the "*Christus Reparator*" who has given to His Church the commission "omnia instaurare in

Christo " (*Ephes.* i. 10), whether it does not overthrow the character of the "*Christus Reparator*" that His Gospel should appear as originating for the first time, *de novo*, the law of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, in the place of rehabilitating and repromulgating the original but long-forgotten law of the Divine Legislator of the first week of Creation?

(f) If the record in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, of God having rested on the seventh day from all His work, and of His having in consequence blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, has not the force of law, requiring men to order their lives upon the similar pattern of six days of labour and a seventh of rest and sanctification,—to what other purpose has such a record any place in connection with the history of the Divine Creation in a book divinely inspired and specially designated to teach men the truths of God ?

II.—Philosophy, among the numerous questions which belong to its province, will have to be interrogated :—

- (a) Considering the Revelation contained in the Sacred Scriptures as to the probation of their loyalty and obedience, by which the entire angelic creation was tried, and through failing in which, a third part of the heavenly host lost their principality, whether it is not eminently according to the analogy of the Divine Creator's Government that He should subject His *entire* human creation, and this *from the beginning*, to a rule of probation specially adapted to their particular condition?
- (b) Considering that the end of every discipline of probation is to test the willingness of the persons subjected to it, to remain in a state of contented voluntary dependence upon the power imposing the probation,—whether the law of the labour of six days, followed by the obligatory rest and sanctification of the seventh day, does not recommend itself to every thoughtful mind, as a rule of life eminently proper to teach men their dependence upon their Divine Creator, and to test their willingness to acknowledge that they are not their own but His creatures ?
- (c) Considering that the Divine Creator is eminently merciful, and full of tender consideration for the much greater infirmity of the human creation of flesh and blood, as

compared with the Angels,—whether the lifelong probation of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day does not commend itself as a most suitable rule of mercy from the beginning, as compared with the sharp and decisive test to which the angelic creation was subjected?

- (d) Considering that the Divine Creator did not create the family of Adam solely for the end of multiplying and replenishing the earth and subduing it to their wants, but to know Him, to serve Him, and to love Him, and to be happy with Him for ever in another life,—whether it would not totally overthrow the wisdom of God, and His care for the family He had created, if He had not *from the first beginning* set apart a distinct portion of their time for the purposes of religion and sanctification?
- III.—History, i.e., that of the inspired Books of the Hebrews, and the general historical tradition, both written and unwritten, of the Gentile world, will, amongst other questions, have to be asked :—

(1.) As regards the Hebrew Writings.

- (a) What records are found in the Sacred Scripture of the actual fact of the division of time into weeks of seven days, and of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day previous to the "memento diem Sabbati sanctifices" of Mount Sinai?
- (b) If the dearth of positive testimony to the observance of the law of the seventh day previous to the time of Moses has not a parallel in the similar long silence of the Scripture respecting the subsequent actual observance of the Mosaic Sabbath, and in the still more remarkable total silence, as regards the existence of the various arts of life, such, for example, as those of writing and keeping accounts?

(2.) As regards the Gentile historic tradition.

- (a) Whether the Gentile literature preserves any written record of the reckoning time by weeks of seven days and of a sacred seventh day, either as directly connected or not with the memory of the Divine formation of the world in six days and its completion on the seventh?
- (b) Whether the traces of the actual observance and sanctification of the seventh day can be discovered in the records and traditions of any Gentile people or kingdom?
- (c) Whether any reasonable account of the origin of the week of

seven days can be discovered in history, except the primitive Divine law of six days' labour followed by a seventh day of rest and sanctification?

I think the objector above referred to will not have been able to give even the most cursory attention to the foregoing synopsis before he becomes thoroughly ashamed of his objection, and before he is forced to acknowledge the existence of a most lamentable general ignorance as regards this alleged act of the Divine Legislator, cotemporary with the completion of His creation, which the cause of truth certainly requires that all possible diligence should be used to remove.

Nevertheless, however legitimately the subject of this primitive act of the Divine Legislator at the beginning of His creation may be held to belong to the solicitude of those who undertake to elucidate Divine truth in general, I have to comply with a particular condition before I can properly occupy your time with it. I have to point out to you the existence of distinct and peculiar reasons, which, over and above its importance on the ground of general truth, combine to invest it with the more special character of a "question of the day."

I shall be able then to make this appear the more clearly if I may be allowed to lay my thesis before you in the following concise terms :----

In consequence of the widespread and continually growing apostasy from all belief in Divine revelation, which (apostasy) is now showing itself in nearly every class of society throughout many nations, the question of the premosaic Sabbath or week of seven days claims a supreme importance in the controversy with every class of sceptic and infidel,—of the nature, reason, and force of which it concerns in the highest degree all who desire to become defenders of the Christian cause to acquire a right understanding.

Here it will be at once perceived that we shall require a basis on which our argument will have to be constructed, and we shall, consequently, best consult for the success of our undertaking if we go at once to the Council of Trent in search of what we require. I proceed then to cite the words of a doctrinal Canon of the Council, No. XXI. of those which follow the VI. session "de justificatione," as follows :—

Canon XXI. Si quis dixerit, Christum Jesum a Deo datum hominibus fuisse ut Redemptorem cui fidant, non etiam ut Legislatorem cui obediant, anathema sit.

Here then is the doctrinal basis, which the superstructure to be raised upon it will quickly be seen to need for its foundation. To us Christ is the Divine Legislator, whom all men are summoned to obey, and His

religion requires to be preached and taught as a religion of legislation and government. It is of incalculable advantage to us to find such a basis ready-made to our hand. When a teacher comes armed with the power to say anathema to you if you refuse to surrender to his doctrines, controversy is plainly out of the question to all those who believe in the reality of his powers : and his words in consequence, with them, have at once the force of law.

Accepting then this foundation which the Council of Trent thus provides for us, we may proceed to the step next in order, viz., to take a nearer survey of the new phenomena which have recently begun to manifest themselves. Is it then really true, we must ask, that they are, as has been assumed, of a nature to place beyond the reach of doubt the fact of this widespread apostasy from belief in a Divine revelation, which is alleged in the thesis to characterise so many of the various ranks and classes of the outer world ?

Here I think that, even apart from the testimony presently to be cited in the words of a General Council, I should readily carry your assent on other grounds to the proposition, that a most rapid progress of thought in the outer world is daily to be observed moving in the direction of the apostasy in question. Not only are all the doctrines which are distinctively Christian seen to be treated as mere open questions, but no one expresses the least surprise at coming in contact with an open denial of the existence of God, so far at least as God claims to be everywhere known as a Legislator, whose laws have been promulgated in a manner to demand the obedience of men. The express words, however, of an Ecumenical Council which has met and passed its decrees within our own very recent recollection can form no mean testimony to the grim reality of the phenomena that now challenge our attention. Its testimony, then, is found in the preamble to its decrees, our brief citation from which runs as follows :—

"Relictà autem, projectàque Christianà religione, negato vero Deo et Christo ejus, prolapsa tandem est multorum mens in pantheismi, materialismi et atheismi barathrum, ut, jam ipsam rationalem naturam omnemque justi verique normam negantes ima humanæ societatis fundamenta dirucre connitantur."

"In this way, after the Christian religion has been abandoned and cast away, and after the true God and His Christ have been denied, the minds of many have come to sink so deep down into the pit of pantheism, materialism, and atheism, that to the extent of turning themselves against even right reason itself, together with every established rule of rectitude and justice, men are now found uniting together

in a joint effort to destroy the very foundations themselves of human society" (Conc. Vatic.)

No one indeed, I think, will be in the least degree disposed to dispute the statement that we ourselves cannot help daily witnessing, in the society that falls under our own observation, a certain marked boldness and self-reliance on the part of the atheists and unbelievers in manifesting themselves and their disbelief in public life. It may very possibly be quite true that we have no good reason for judging that the actual number of the atheists has increased in anything like the same proportion with the boldness and audacity of their principal representatives. The words which Isaias has spoken of Moab may most probably be quite true of them, "His pride and his arrogance is greater than his courage" (*Isaias* xvi. 6). Nevertheless as long as there is an undoubted truth of experience in the words of Horace—

"Qui sibi fidit Dux regit examen"—(1 Epist. xix. 23)—

even if this singular growth of the audacity of their principal spokesmen does not reveal quite the same actual increase of the number of their supporters as we might at first have been led to suppose, there can be little room to doubt but that it portends their very considerable increase in the future.

We may, then, I think, quite apart from the laying claim to the gift of a special prophetic insight into what has yet to come, reasonably foresee that the chief weight of the controversy and of the battle of the future will be with the multitude of those who are rapidly throwing off the yoke of all revealed religion, to give themselves up to all the various forms and schools of thought into the arms of which modern unbelief is seen to throw itself.

As, however, I have no title to occupy your attention with the subject of this continually increasing unbelief on any merely general grounds, we must pass on to the business of my particular thesis. In this I have undertaken to exhibit to you the secret where the force of the appeal to the Divine institution of a Premosaic Sabbath will lie, when we find ourselves plunged into the controversy with the sceptics, which, if it be not rather actually present, we certainly see looming before us in the proximate future. And to this end I will ask leave to set before you a sample of a supposed conference, which we will imagine to take place between a Catholic speaker on the one side, and one of these sceptics, either present or future, on the other. The manner in which the premosaic Sabbath will then be seen to enter into the conference will exhibit to you what the actual place in the controversy is which I contend is to be claimed for it.

It will conduce to the clearness of this part of my task if you will allow me here myself to personate the speaker on the Catholic side, and I shall stipulate for nothing more than that my sceptic colleague in the dialogue is to be a man of unimpeachable honesty of purpose, and possessed of a fair-judging, natural understanding, which has been cultivated with the full measure of the customary high-school education. I need not add, that he is to be entirely free from any of the crooked perversity which often leads men to take a pleasure in becoming their own worst enemies.

In dealing, then, with a man of this stamp, I should lose no time in putting before him the doctrine of which we have been speaking, viz., that the religion of Christ claims to be regarded as one of legislation and government, and that its Founder, Jesus Christ, calls upon all mankind to receive Him as the Divine Legislator for the whole human race. You should know, sir, I should go on to say to him, what the Christian doctrine teaches respecting this Divine Legislator for men, whom we are all bound to obey. As regards the human nature in which He has made Himself familiar with men, as bearing the name "Jesus," and as the Son of the Blessed Virgin Mary, His public manifestation of Himself in this human nature, of course, dates from the first year of the Christian era (A.D.) I. This year (A.D.) I, however, is in no sense the beginning either of His existence or of His experience with men as their Legislator. If His Christian Gospel, as preached by His own human lips, dates from the manger of Bethlehem, His office as Legislator for mankind dates from a time at least as early as the first origin of the human race in the beginning of creation; and this office He has never ceased from exercising. If His assumption of His human nature has caused Him to be known by the new name of JESUS, He has not, on this account, assumed any new office of Legislator which He did not possess from the beginning. Satan indeed has been a homicide from the beginning, and such he will ever remain. Christ, though it is only from a certain date that He has become the GOD-MAN, has for ever been the Legislator of men from the first beginning, and as such will remain their Legislator to the end of time.

I apprehend, then, my honest and right-judging partner in the dialogue will now say to me:—At any rate, sir, I must admit that you put before me a plain and intelligible account of your doctrine. Of course, when you speak of a Legislator for men, who has never ceased

to exercise His office of Legislator for them, you speak of some visible exercise of His office, with the principal known details of which I must presume you will be able to make me acquainted. And, again, if you can do this in a satisfactory manner, you will in this case undoubtedly compel me to admit that you have shown cause for instituting a most serious inquiry.

I should never for a moment, he will continue to say, think it was a proposition that could be defended that human society is in any sense capable of existing independently of laws. Legislation it must have, and if such legislation is to be of any avail, it must be such as can be reduced to the form of a code which can be administered by suitable legal tribunals. All men of sense and understanding will say, Give us laws, just and good laws, if we can obtain them, but in any case laws, and on no account let us have either the mere disorder of anarchy or the blind terror of despotism. If, then, the legislative action of your alleged Divine Legislator is neither some intangible mythical fiction or a something so recondite as to be incapable of being made known except only to its own peculiar adepts, but, on the contrary, supposing it to be a something which can be perfectly well made level to the comprehension of such a man as I am, we may then fairly hope to be able to come to some intelligible conclusion. More especially will this be the case if you can point out to me any one or more of His laws that I can study at my leisure, with a view to form an estimate for myself as to the likelihood or unlikelihood of their proving beneficial for human life. Or, again, if you can show me how I can trace their actual working in such a manner that I may arrive at a prudent judgment of them from their visible results. If I can have the necessary evidence put before me which is found fully to bear out your case, what I might actually end by doing is perhaps another question; but I should be obliged to admit that it would be very wrong of me then not to surrender. I conform willingly enough to human laws, though I know very well how numerous their defects are, simply because common sense tells me of their absolute necessity to human life. With the requisite proofs, then, before me of the Living Person of the Divine Legislator as manifesting Himself in the tangible reality of His laws, and as further vouched for by the visible practical utility and beneficence of those of His laws which I shall have had time to examine, it would be nothing but sheer impiety, or, worse still, malignant pride and arrogance, on my part not to surrender to His authority and not to accept His legislation.

Here I must ask to be allowed a very brief digression. I suppose

some one to say to me, Are you not a little unreasonably sanguine, if you suffer yourself to imagine that the ordinary routine course of theology, as this now commonly exists, would enable the speaker on the Catholic side to give the sort of sceptic you have been describing the kind of satisfaction which you evidently show you consider that he has a perfect right to expect, and which you more than imply that you are yourself prepared to place before him? I think I may perfectly well answer here, that there can be no objection whatever to make the honest admission that the ordinary routine of a theological course, as this now exists, would fall notably short of enabling its pupils to give the supposed sceptic the satisfaction which he is now understood to be expecting; but at this there can be no just call for the expression of any surprise. The necessity for standing up to confront the present class of sceptics is of much too recent growth for it to be reasonable to expect, that we should be all at once prepared for an emergency that takes us so much by surprise. It must be the duty of the times that are coming to construct the armament which the new and peculiar kind of warfare will be found to require.

To return then to our sceptic, who was represented as waiting to have the long line of evidence which he had asked for laid before him, and quite possibly in no such over-docile state of mind as is likely to take anything for granted without the requisite proof being clearly laid before him, or to pass over anything that might be brought before him without a careful scrutiny ;—we have to ask, how is he to be dealt with?

Should then any of those here present entertain in their own minds their private latent misgivings that it might not prove such a very easy or simple task, to produce and lay before this sceptic the complete body of evidence which he has been supposed to require for his satisfaction, they may be rather taken aback by my now proposing to them to proceed at once to take for granted that all which can be required has been gone through, and that it has turned out so far to our sceptic's complete satisfaction. Perhaps they might wish to say to me, that they should like to know something more of the manner in which the sceptic has been satisfied. In this case, however, I am afraid I should have to reply, How can it be possible to find the time necessary for so great and so extensive a digression? My undertaking is to exhibit the indispensable need of our being able to appeal to the fact of the Divine legislation of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day dating from the first origin of the human creation. The value, however, of this appeal does not consist in our being able to claim its truth as an isolated fact, standing in a species of naked and solitary majesty by itself. It depends on its being seen as occupying its legitimate place at the fountain-head, so to speak, of a long chain of similar manifestations, of which it is the crowning initiatory act; and in such a sense the crowning initiatory act as to communicate its divine stamp and character to all the rest.

To make a long story brief, then, and to bring the case we have supposed within the compass of our limits, we may now imagine our sceptic standing at the gate of the Garden of Eden, in the main quite satisfied with all that he has learned respecting the previous successive manifestations which the Eternal Logos has made of Himself as the Legislator of mankind in the world's history. He has come to perceive the effect of the mission of the Hebrew people throughout the Gentile world, partly by the infiltration of the Mosaic laws into the codes of law of the Greek and other cities, partly by the influence of the Greek translation of the Sacred Scriptures upon the literature and philosophy of Greece, and partly again by the influence of the Hebrew Republic and the academical character of its city Jerusalem under its kings. He has taken note of the career of Moses as the trusted envoy and plenipotentiary of the Divine Legislator. He has seen the call of Abraham bear its witness to Him, and has traced His action in the preservation of Noah and his household, and in the act of judgment exercised through the waters of the Deluge on all those to whom Noah had raised his voice in vain as a preacher of justice. In a word, our sceptic now stands at the gate of the Garden of Eden, and he requires but one more signal manifestation to put as it were the finishing touch to his accumulated convictions. He wishes to see the Divine Legislator manifesting Himself as showing a supreme legislative solicitude for the good estate and well-being of the family of Adam, which He has blessed and commanded to increase and multiply from the very first beginning of their creation. He wishes to see that the garden of Paradise itself, or at least the beginning of the world, is the scene of an act of legislation in which he can trace the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Legislator enacting and promulgating a law which is to remain in force for all generations of men to the end of time, and which is to be the fountain of untold benefit and benediction to all these generations of men in perpetuity, so long as there are men living on the earth to enjoy its advantages and its blessings.

It need not be said that the only law which would answer to such a description as the above will be the law of the division of time into weeks containing six days of labour, followed by the rest and the sanctification of the seventh day.

It is, of course, not for a moment to be denied but that the char-

acter of the Sovereign Legislator appears in an extremely visible manner also in the special command given to Adam not to eat of the fruit of the particular tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and still more does the character of the Legislator appear in the narrative of the judicial proceeding against the three who were concerned in the transgression of the command—Adam, Eve, and the Serpent. Here, however, is a special act of the Legislator which regards the particular persons who received the command, and which is not seen to go beyond them, or to be extended to their descendants otherwise than in the form of the well-known penal consequences of Adam's sin which have passed on to his posterity, namely, the sentence of death, the disabilities of the state of his fallen nature, and the general necessity of penal labour as the condition of earning a subsistence by the produce of the earth.

The broad feature which distinguishes the particular legislative enactment of the division of time into the week of six days, with the rest on and sanctification of the seventh day, consists in the wise and fatherly solicitude which it evinces on the part of the Divine Legislator for the social, family and personal well-being and happiness of the whole of His human creation. That which the mind of the sceptic will require to have pointed out to him is, that the law is one which has for its end, not only the glory of God, but also the good of the entire family of Adam, from the very first beginning of their creation. Such a law, to be worthy of the Divine Legislator, must have existed from the beginning, and Moses can only have received it as an integral part of his mission to reestablish and rehabilitate, among the particular Hebrew people, the several provisions of the eternal and immutable law of God, which the other inhabitants of the world were now rapidly forgetting. And when Christ, the promised Repairer of the ancient ways, rehabilitates and restores it to honour and observance among all the nations of the world, His act, in this respect, can only be that of republishing through His Gospel the self-same law which He Himself enacted and promulgated for all mankind in the first week of His creation.

From the above, then, we come clearly in view of the conclusion at which I seek to arrive. The truth that the visible world is the work of a Divine Creator properly becomes known to the mind of the sceptic from his observation of the visible beauty and the marvellous order of all created things, combined together, as they alone could be, by the work of a Divine and omnipotent intelligence. In precisely the same manner, the truth that the world of men has been set in order and has received its code of laws, by which vice is separated from virtue, justice

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from wrong, and sin from merit, by the hands of a Divine Legislator, by whom it continues to be upheld and governed,-can only be properly and reasonably made clear to the mind of the man who doubts this. though not perversely, by his being put into possession of the knowledge of His known and intelligible acts of legislation. If the Divine Creator is rightly known by His works of creation, who can doubt, that the Divine Legislator is not equally rightly known by His acts of legislation, which must consequently bear upon them the visible stamp of their perfection equal to that of the works of creation? No rational mind, consequently, could ever be likely to dispute over such a manifestly self-evident truth, as that it will be simply impossible to put forward a complete and satisfactory catena of the works of legislation of the Divine Legislator until we are in a condition to claim, in the face of every half-informed and perverse caviller, the crowning initiatory act of our catena of the Divine acts of legislation,-namely, the Divine enactment and promulgation of the law of six days of labour, and of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, in the first week of the world's existence.

It will, of course, here be quite natural for an objector to say, that the proceeding above described savours very much more of being a thing deriving its origin from some very exalted region of the imagination, rather than a thing belonging to the domain of sober reality. Sceptics, it may be alleged, are only in the way of most rare exception either as patient or as equitable as the specimen delineated, while the spokesman on the Catholic side appears as one who is in possession of an order of knowledge that is in no sense either current or commonly accessible. To this, however, no reply can be more obvious, than that any such objection is simply beside the question that is before us. I have undertaken to show, by the example adduced, that when you confront a sceptic with the doctrine that the Christian religion is a religion of legislation and government, and when, in support of your doctrine, you proceed to produce the historical proofs of the visible action of the Divine Legislator in the course of the centuries of human history, your catena of proofs remains defective and incomplete so long as it continues without the crowning act of this legislation, in the law of the six days of labour followed by the rest on and sanctification of the seventh day, which law, as regards man, is to be held to date from the first beginning of the human family. You cannot, as I contend, attempt to satisfy a really thoughtful sceptic until you are able to say to him, "Sir, behold the Divine Legislator commencing the work of legislation for His human family from its very first beginning, during the first week of its existence.

Carefully study and examine it, and see if you can either conceive or discover a more perfect law than that which procures for all, without any exception, the enjoyment of the seventh day as a day of rest from labour, and as a day to be devoted to the joys and benefits of the religious worship of God in common. How could you ever, for very shame, I should say to any would-be defender of the Christian cause, dare to speak to an intelligent sceptic of the absolute perfection of the Divine legislation, except you are able to say that the law of the sanctification of the seventh day dates from the beginning of the human family? Whether you choose, or do not choose, you have to account for it, and to defend it as a law of the Divine Legislator, which exists and is now in force. Where then will you find even the ghost of an adequate defence for it, if you have to confess that the Divine Legislator was compelled to try a preliminary experiment with His law upon a small and particular handful of people, before He could so much as venture to trust Himself to the farther experiment of imposing it upon other populations through the Christian religion ?

If I may be permitted here to say more explicitly, what my reflections have led me to think, respecting the growing needs of the warfare with all the various kinds of sceptics whom we are sure to meet with as time advances, I should be tempted to urge, that we cannot put forward too frequently and too urgently before them—the character of Divine legislation and government which is inherent in the Christian religion. I should venture to give the counsel that the particular doctrinal Canon of the Council of Trent above cited will be found one of our very best and strongest weapons, quite as much of aggression as of defence. I think, also, I need hardly add that the lesson which the entire history of the conquest of the world by the armies of Rome teaches us, is the immense advantage of the well-disciplined carrying the scene of war into the enemy's territory.

Analyse every single one of the known forms of human unbelief, and however they may be found to differ from each other in the theories by which they endeavour to give an account of the origin of the visible creation, whose order, harmony, and beauty they cannot refuse to acknowledge, and you will always find among them the presence of one point for which they all invariably agree to stipulate in common. This is, that God is not to be confessed as One who has the least inherent right to interfere in His own Person in the present world as a Legislator for the life of men. What, then, can be more evident, than that the battle for all time turns on this one point, "Is God, or is He not, in His own Divine Right, the Legislator for the life of men?"

It is only when the sceptic, to whatever school he may belong, has been brought to abandon and abjure his denial of God as the Legislator of men, that then, and then only, he can possibly be considered as being on the way to learn the faith of the Church.

Surely we can never expect to prevail over this growing unbelief of the outer world (rather it must be much more likely to prevail over us), except we set ourselves most seriously to the task of studying how we may best succeed in bringing those who are the living unbelievers to acknowledge the Person of the Divine Legislator and to promise conformity to His laws. I am far from thinking we have in this as easy as we have an urgent and a necessary labour before us. It is no slight or off-hand matter to be able to put before all the various class of sceptics such perfectly well-reasoned and well-digested motives for acknowledging the Divine Legislator as will prevail with them to accept His mild and sweet yoke. St. Paul says of us that we discharge the office of ambassadors for Christ (pro Christo legatione fungimur, 2 Cor. v. 20). The manner of executing the ambassador's office must always be very materially affected by the character of the persons to whom he is sent and the circumstances in the midst of which they live. And of course, in a parallel manner, as it must be superfluous to say, the qualifications of the ambassador himself require to be determined by the same rule. If, then, the progress of events is daily more and more calling upon us to be able to confront, and where possible to prevail over, the growing unbelief of the society in which we live, it will surely be a contending for little else than an evident truism, to insist that this necessity brings with it the need of a special addition to our theology, by which we may be better armed for the new duties and functions of our approaching embassy to this prevalent unbelief.

What I have here said I admit to be somewhat beyond my strict and proper undertaking, but I think I may presume on your permission to cite a passage from a living German writer in the way of proof that similar ideas are no strangers to the Catholics of other countries.

F. Stiefelhagen, a priest and rector of a high school in the town of Eupen, in the province of Treves in Prussia, in a learned volume treating of the theology of the Gentile world before Christ has the following :---

"There remains one more point to elucidate, and this is, the heathenism of the present new fashion, which, to distinguish it from the former historical heathenism of past times, may be called the *artificial or self-made heathenism* of the present time. This heathenism is in reality nothing else than a formal APOSTASY FROM CHRISTIANITY. Its parent

is the same Anti-Christian spirit that more or less has infected all our sciences with its poison. In comparison with this heathenism, the ancient historical heathenism is a soft and innocent lamb."

This writer, then, after pointing attention to the many dangers to the cause of the faith that arise from the quarter of this recent self-made "heathenism," goes on to say—" But such as is the attack, such also is the defence. According to the order of Divine Providence, all the various manifestations of antagonism from without are designed to serve the internal purpose of strengthening and sharpening the weapons of the Christian religion for the warfare of its preservation. Theology (Dogmatik), which must always stand in the front rank of the fight, will not be able to strike the enemy down to the earth in any other way than by first becoming possessed in a deeper and more decisive manner of its own Divine strength. In order to the victory that has to be fought out, it has to bring forth and to display before the eyes of the world, in a perfectly self-possessed spirit of fortitude, its whole strength, its spotless beauty, and the invincible order of its Divine legislation" (himmlischen Gefuges).

Thus we may see how a precisely similar order of ideas can rise up spontaneously and independently in another country. Manners, customs, ways of life, and language may be entirely different, and yet the embassy for the one Christ may speak in accents that are in spirit one and the same, and which prove to be in one place the complete echo of what they are in another.

Our subject has made a demand upon our time to an extent which has been quite unavoidable. Had, indeed, time permitted, I should have much wished to have been able to combine with it a few remarks upon that which most naturally and properly moves with it side by side. I mean the inevitably injurious influence which constant and familiar social contact with this growing unbelief has already exerted, and, as the course of events still more unfolds itself, will continue to exert on our own Catholic people.

As this, however, is plainly impossible, and as my particular pleading has come to an end, it only remains for me to ask for your verdict on that which has been laid before you.

The case, as I have endeavoured to set it before you, rests on two main premisses :---

I. The doctrinal Canon of the Council of Trent, which defines the Christian religion to be a religion of legislation and government, the Founder of which is to be acknowledged by all as the Divine Legislator of the whole of mankind. II. The principle of right reason, commending itself to the common sense of mankind, that among the various ways by which the Person of the Divine Legislator may be effectually preached and made known, none is better calculated to carry general conviction than the rendering the knowledge of His various acts of legislation and government as generally complete and as accessible to all as this can be effected by human industry and perseverance.

How do you say then, gentlemen? Have I shown cause to your satisfaction why we should seek with all possible industry and perseverance to be able to maintain and firmly hold the two following positions?

- Position I.—That we cannot have a complete and satisfactory catena of the manifestations which the Divine Legislator has been pleased to make of Himself as the Legislator of men without the crowning act of His enactment and promulgation in the beginning of creation of the law of the division of time into a week of six days of labour, and a rest and sanctification on the seventh day.
- Position II.—That in view of what may be reasonably foreseen as our approaching stand-up conflict with the continually multiplying forms of scepticism and unbelief, we require the speedy production of such an adequate investigation of the subject and of a suitable argument founded upon it, as would avail to enable us, in our controversies with the present ever-multiplying forms of scepticism, to claim the above-mentioned act of Divine legislation as a sufficiently valid and established truth of Christian history and theology.
- Note.—It may be added that the members of the Academia who were present signified their general concurrence in the argument, and bore their testimony to the general consensus of all the more recent school of Scripture interpreters, that the progress of discovery tended to place the fact of the premosaic Sabbath beyond the reach of doubt.

ESSAY IV.

THE PREMOSAIC SABBATH.

SEQUEL TO ESSAY III.

The signal importance for every Christian of a correct knowledge of the above Law of the Divine Lawgiver, in order (i.) to the firmness and stability of his own faith in Divine Revelation; (ii.) to his competence and courage in rebuking the derision of an openly scoffing infidel; and (iii.) to his ability to render effective charitable aid towards removing the doubts of those who are sceptics more through the misfortune of their education than by their own fault.

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THE PREAMBLE.

THE preceding Essay is to be reputed to have led us on so far forward in the study of our subject, namely, "the first crowning act of the Divine Legislator of mankind, dividing human time, at the first beginning of His creation, into a week of seven days, containing six days appointed for labour in the natural order, and the seventh for rest and the sanctification of the day in the supernatural order," that we find ourselves brought into the presence of the following extremely serious truth.

The proper line of proof of the existence of an All-wise and All-perfect Creator of the visible universe is to be found, agreeably to universal consent, in the testimony which this visible universe, in its perfect harmony of movement, as also in the marvellous mutual connection of its several parts with each other and with the general design of the whole, bears to the power and wisdom of its Divine Creator. Pari ratione, it is equally to be said, that the proper line of proof of the action and existence of the Person of the Divine Legislator of men, which alone is fit to be laid before the judgment of any right-minded and intelligent inquirer, is an intelligible catena of the principal acts of His legislative intervention in the affairs of men, collected and gathered out of the general stream of human history. No rational mind can reject the truth, that in the same manner as the Divine Creator manifests Himself to His intelligent creatures in His works of creation, so the Divine Legislator equally manifests Himself to His intelligent subjects, whom their creation has made dependent upon Him, in and through His known acts of legislation on their behalf.

The preceding Essay, however, has shown us that we can have no such complete catena of these acts of the Divine Legislator, except the crowning act of this Divine legislation above specified is seen to stand at the fountain-head. And this brings us face to face with another equally momentous consideration, which absolutely refuses to be put on one side.

God and imperfection are incompatible ideas, which absolutely exclude each other. God is either the All-wise and the All-perfect Legislator of men, and men are to be called upon to surrender themselves to obey

His laws because He is the All-wise and the All-perfect Legislator, or, if this cannot be said,—then men are to be held discharged *in toto* from their duty of surrendering themselves to His legislation. There can be nothing to cause any surprise in such a proposition as this. For since the total abandonment of the polytheistic pantheon, where can any possible place be found for the introduction of some half-perfect god, who could be brought in at a subsequent stage of human history, to claim the submission of men to his acts of legislation and their acceptance of the mission of his prophets and apostles?

The consequence of this truth, again, is one which can call forth no reasonable surprise. If the thought of a Divine Legislator necessarily excludes the admission of any the least imperfection, it follows that His legislative care must then comprise all whom He has created from the first moment of their creation. The All-wise and the All-perfect Legislator cannot be conceived as abandoning those whom He has created for a life of dependence upon Himself, for any particular period of time. Still less can He be conceived, as it were, awaking at the expiration of such subsequent period, to begin to make a discovery of the need in which His dependent creatures stood from the beginning of His legislative intervention. If mankind, then, is to be required to acknowledge and to surrender to the laws of none except the All-perfect and the All-wise Divine Lawgiver, this Divine perfection inexorably requires, that God should manifest Himself to men as their Legislator from the first beginning of their creation.

From all which it must further follow, that there can consequently be but one true interpretation of the text Gen. ii. 2, 3: "Complexit que Deus die septimo opus suum quod fecerat, et requievit die septimo ab universo opere quod patrarat, et benedixit diei septimo et sanctificavit illum, quia in ipso cessaverat ab omni opere suo quod creavit Deus ut faceret," namely, that those words contain the inspired record of the All-Wise and All-Perfect Legislator having manifested His first crowning act of legislation in behalf of His intelligent creatures, who have been created dependent upon Him from the first beginning of their creation.

It may be here said, or, if not said, the feeling may still possess a certain strength without finding words in which to clothe itself,—that however great the difficulty may be to discover either a ground or a motive for controverting what has been advanced in the foregoing brief preamble of our Essay, it contains truth if you will, but still truth to which pious ears have been for a long time almost total strangers. There can, however, be no difficulty whatever in making an acknowledg-

ment to this effect. Indeed, an extremely plain and obvious reason exists to be given in explanation of the fact how such comes to be the case.

When sceptics and unbelievers were comparatively few in number, and the few who were such saw in the condition of the Christian society in which they lived, and which was necessarily opposed to their unbelief, urgent reasons of prudence obliging them to seek for concealment rather than notoriety,—all was peace and quiet. The general multitude of the believers were able to regulate their lives by the light of the tenets of their faith in conformity with which they then lived, undisturbed by the sight or the sound of the unbelievers' rejection and contempt of their religion. Whenever profound peace has reigned for any great length of time, experience shows, how easily weapons of war can come to be forgotten, how lances can lie by stored in the armoury, swords grow rusty in their scabbards, and helmet and shield become covered with their deposits of dust. Let, however, war come to be an immediate prospect, and let the alarm be real, and at once all is changed. Whatever there is of value known to be within the invader's reach and to be exposed to his gripe, all is either hurried off to a place of safety, or the best practicable provision is at once made with all possible speed for its protection and security. A like analogy holds good in the things of faith. The approach of the unexpected enemy upon the territory consecrated to faith and religion not only compels the having recourse to the armoury to recover the use of the long-forgotten weapons. but it may also urgently necessitate the devising and the employment of new and comparatively untried methods of defence.

There has, doubtless, never been a time, from the first moment that the faith of Christ was preached, when the preservation of this faith to the end of life, has ceased, under first one form of trial and then another, to be the appointed burden of the Christian calling. St. Paul at the end of his stormy and laborious career thanks God for the grace which has enabled him to "fight the good fight" and to "keep his faith." In a word, the task of preserving the faith of Christ will continue to be the standing probation of Christian life for all time. And if one period differs from another in any notable degree in this respect, this can only come to pass, because time and the ever-varying circumstances of human life may have largely superseded formerly existing features in the general discipline of the state of probation, and have introduced in their place other features of the trial of which we have comparatively much less experience.

One main purpose of the preceding Essay, then, was directed to the

bringing forward the requisite proofs of the fact, that the possibility of an important change in the nature of the general rule of the probation of faith, indicated in the preceding paragraph, had already assumed the shape of a highly formidable reality. Numerous symptoms were shown to be by no means wanting to make it almost more than evident that this reality was on the high road to become much more formidable still. Among these were, the comparatively sudden international outburst of an arrogant intellectual unbelief and the hitherto unprecedented fact of the apparition, in the face of day, of open and avowed unbelievers rising up throughout the various Christian nations as occupiers of professors' chairs in established seats of learning. Already have these men shown themselves able to command the ear of the international world by their words and their writings, as also to form pupils who have worked their way to the possession of legislative power. Thus the old immemorial rule, under which Christian life has to the end of time to bear its irremovable burden of being subjected to a discipline of the probation of its faith, is seen to enter upon an entirely new phase. Faith in Christ and love and respect for the Sacred Scriptures, from having occupied the post of honour, find, so to speak, the tables turned upon them, and their immemorial credit with the multitude is at least so far impaired, as to give rise to the question how soon it may not come to be almost entirely overthrown. The former self-concealing company of the unbelievers now puts itself forward as the dominant class, perfectly able to stamp faith and submission to a Divine revelation with the character of a thing that is mean and out of date, while it is seen haughtily to arrogate for itself in the face of day the supposed dignity of FREE THOUGHT and LIBERALITY. The consequence of this necessarily is, that the Christian society comes into the danger of finding itself sinking down daily more and more into the condition of the army of Israel under Saul, when the Philistine giant, Goliath of Gath, for forty days upbraided them, challenging them to find a man able to enter into single combat with him.

Here there will be no difficulty in picturing to ourselves how well calculated such a challenge, remaining day by day unanswered, must have been to make the hearts of the Israelite soldiers grow less and less, and at length dwindle away down to something inexpressibly mean and pusillanimous. Day by day passed and saw the general Israelite terror and humiliation increase, and so greatly, that not even the public proclamation of a royal reward availed to produce a man from the ranks of Israel who dared to think himself able to measure swords with the blaspheming adversary who daily defied them. Who is there

who will not easily perceive how the same analogy cannot fail to hold good as regards the Christian army? If it should be destined to remain its standing condition, in the various social circles in which its members move, to have to submit themselves in their various nationalities to the unrebuked, dominant and contemptuous bearing of the now continually increasing number of the infidel despisers of a Divine revelation,—how can the heart of the Catholic people fail to sink down into a certain dreadful meanness and pusillanimity, and how can their faith fail in consequence to become exposed to a very serious new form of trial?

The preceding Essay, then, has had in view a double purpose of the wisdom and charity that constitutes the real wealth of the Christian The Christian can never be permitted to forget-(i.) That he society. has become by grace the inheritor of the promise made to Abraham. that "his seed should possess the gate of his enemies," and that it is promised to him, in the language of the Psalmist, "that he shall not be confounded when he speaks with his enemies in the gate" (Ps. cxxvi. 5); and (ii.) that St. Peter requires him to be at any time "ready, for the satisfaction of whoever may ask, to render a reason of the hope that is in him" (1 Peter iii. 13). The proud, arrogant, and disdainful unbeliever, the blaspheming Goliath of the present time, ought, properly speaking, always to be sure of meeting with the Christian David, quickly to bring down his pride. While the more right-minded unbeliever, who in the secret depth of his soul is conscious of the misery of his unbelief, should in like manner be always able to meet within the Christian society the kind and charitable guide of his way, by whom he would find himself gently and pleasantly led into the presence of the Divine Father and Legislator of the human family. And here let no one indulge in an extremely misplaced cynical smile, as if the humiliation of the Christian society in the presence of the Goliaths of the nineteenth century must be the certain standing necessity, while the victory of the Christian David remains the similarly necessary utopian dream. The living members of the Christian society are doubtless sufficiently children of Adam to preclude the fond thought that all indiscriminately are to be expected to realise the highest ideal of Christian perfection. The testimony of experience has never failed to bear its witness to the constant presence in the Christian society of the class to be described, in the words of Virgil, as the

"Animos nil magnæ laudis egentes."

-Æneid, v. 751.

The Christian David may consequently, it is quite true, be the very great

exception, but we may nevertheless remember, for our encouragement, that in the challenge given by Goliath it sufficed for one such David to make his appearance in order to the most complete victory being gained by the entire Israelite army. In the same proportion, then, as the voice of truth continues to make itself heard, Christian Davids may, when least expected, be found to rise up and to continue to surprise the camp of the unbelievers by the unforeseen discomfiture of their champions and the dispersion of their hosts.

The explanation above given may again be summed up in a much briefer form still, by simply saying, that new dangers and new forms of attack require new precautions, increased vigilance, and possibly even new means of defence on the part of those who are conscious that they have a treasure to guard. And thus we now find ourselves brought to the point, where we have to begin in earnest to deal with the real burden and business of our Essay.

Here, however, an obvious rule of justice entitles us to claim, as previously in Essay II., that the demand to be made upon the simple essayist should not exceed the measure of that which an Essay may be reasonably called upon to attempt. No one could with the least justice ask the essayist to stand forward in his single person and undertake to supply the controversial needs of the whole Christian society in their inevitable collision with the camp of the unbelievers that is spreading itself through all the Christian nations. The one company is known to make a public profession that their life is a continual discipline of the probation of their faith in a Divine Legislator, and of their duty of obedience to His known laws. The other company is equally known as publicly repudiating this probation, some in open derision, and others simply in a state of doubt, fluctuating between the extremes of heedless indifference and secret terror. Between two opposite camps of such acknowledged magnitude, the simple essayist obviously cannot be expected to play the part of the ambassador. If any portion of such a duty should fall to his share, this can only be within a very circumscribed area, and to an extremely moderate and limited extent. But nevertheless if, within this circumscribed area, there is room for entertaining the thought that a service may be rendered, the limited extent to which it admits of being rendered is not to be suffered to stand in the way of the effort being made. The essayist's readers may be but few, but, few as they may be, the occasion may still come in their way, when it will serve their turn to find that they have been shown, how the real living blaspheming Goliath of the nineteenth century is to be effectually confronted, especially if it should happen to

them to have to perceive, that it is expected of them that they should play the part of David and run to the encounter. Or, again, what would seem to be the much more probable contingency, if the opportunity for an extremely true and real work of Christian charity should cross If they should happen to meet with some well-intentioned their path. and right-minded sceptic, whose scepticism is notably less due to his own guilt than it is the calamitous fruit of the general wreck and confusion of truth in the midst of which his mind has been formed to its maturity. The essayist in such a case may quite possibly succeed in putting his readers upon the track by which such an inquirer may be most gently and effectually brought back to the acknowledgment of the Person of the All-perfect Divine Legislator, Teacher, and Redeemer .--- To aim, then, at the rendering a limited twofold service of the above kind, we may thus joyfully accept as the real burden of our Essay, and without further delay at once proceed to the work of striving to accomplish our aim.

To dispose, however, first, as briefly as may be, of the always possible contingency of the encounter with the living specimen of the nineteenthcentury Goliath. The point here chiefly to be taken into consideration is that the truth which this enemy has most at heart to deride, is the public confession that the whole Christian society rejoices to make, in the face of day, of its willing subjection to the well-known and welldefined laws of the Divine Legislator. What is the full and entire truth as regards this open and public confession? The whole Christian society, then, acknowledges, and by no means simply in the retirement and under the protection of the sanctuary of religion-this would obviously be a something totally inadequate-but openly, in the publicity of the market-place, of the assemblies, of the legislators, and of the halls of justice and science, that collectively and individually they are the lieges of a Divine government and the subjects of a particular known Divine code of law. They publish their belief that this code of law is one which has been adequately revealed and proclaimed to all mankind by its Divine Author from the beginning of the world ; that, for its better preservation, it was subsequently repromulgated by the same voice of God Himself speaking from Mount Sinai to a particular chosen people. After which it was committed to writing by the finger of God on tables of stone, and delivered over in this form to the responsible custody of the Hebrew prophet and legislator Moses. For years afterwards this written code of Divine Law was preserved in the uninterrupted custody and tradition of the chosen Hebrew people, up to the time when it was sanctioned afresh and republished to all the people and tribes of the entire earth, by the Divine Legislator Himself, assuming a human nature from the Most

Blessed Virgin Mary and showing Himself to His creation as the Man Christ Jesus. It is this same law of the Divine Lawgiver which the entire Christian society of the whole world acknowledges to constitute their state of probation, as well collectively as individually. They also further acknowledge that it will furnish the rule for the future judgment of the Divine Judge, according to their obedience or disobedience to which, their future life will be continued either in the eternal rest and happiness of heaven, or in the equally real and eternal pains of hell. It is, then, this public confession of the person and the law of the Divine Lawgiver, which the Goliath in question makes the butt of his impious derision, and which, again, is the subject of the doubts of the less hardened and less guilty sceptic. We have now to see in what manner the narrative of the encounter of the Israelite David, with his adversary the Philistine Goliath, furnishes the clue to let us into the secret of the manner in which both respectively may best be dealt with.

The weapon which David employed against his adversary, it is to be noted, was no work of a human hand. The precision with which David handled his weapon, as likewise the material instrument, the sling, which, wielded by David's arm, sent the stone forth on its errand of victory, can alone be said to have been his. Not so the stone which struck the arrogant adversary in the forehead and brought him down at the feet of his stripling but believing assailant. The stone was one of five that had been selected by David from the watercourse, in which, by an immemorial and unobserved wear and tear, it had been smoothed and rounded to serve the needs of his encounter.

In the event of the Christian David, having to step forward to the encounter with any one in particular of the various Goliaths whom the new-born surging tide of unbelief has emboldened to make the Christian's confession of his state of probation the butt of their blaspheming ridicule, he may find it serve his turn to say very quietly to him, "Arrogance was not found to help your prototype the Philistine Goliath to a victory. He fell before a little stone that had been worn round and smooth in the immemorial roll of the watercourse. And there is a truth which in like manner has been worn smooth in the immemorial current of the life and tradition of all the nations and all the people of the entire earth before which you have to fall. This is the confession of a Divine Law and a Divine Legislator, which is cotemporary with the first creation of the human family, and which at no period of the history of mankind ever has lacked, or ever can lack, its living witnesses. This is the stone worn smooth and round in the current of the life of men which is to be your death. It is the voice of all genera-

tions, coming from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and it speaks your condemnation. Daring and impious as it is your perverse choice to be, your arrogance will do nothing to cancel the universal verdict that stands against you. Neither will it avail to hide from you the truth that, if you persevere to the end in your evil way, it will be the precursor to you of the voice of the Divine Judge, who will Himself speak the words against which your resistance will be vain. He will say to you, 'Depart from Me, thou accursed man, into the everlasting fire, that has been prepared for the devil and his angels' (*Matt.* xxv. 41); and into this fire you will have to go."

THE CONFERENCE BETWEEN A BELIEVER AND A SCEPTIC.

§ 1. The general decadence of faith, added to defective education of youth, tends to produce sceptics who are such more by their misfortune than by their fault.

Very different from the case of the mere blaspheming Goliath above described, is that of the honest-minded and respectful but still doubting sceptic delineated in outline in the preceding Essay. To him our very best attention is now to be given for the remainder of this Essay, as being one whose case merits the utmost possible charitable consideration. For however culpable in itself the condition of the sceptic may be, when regarded from a general point of view, the particular state of doubt which we have attempted to describe may, as we have all along contended, most reasonably be deemed to be very much less due to the man's own fault than that it is the unhappy fruit of the calamitous surroundings of his previous life.

And here an extremely obvious reflection naturally suggests itself, which is not without an eminently practical bearing upon the subject we are treating. God has formed His human creation in the order of nature, prior to the same rule which He has appointed also to hold good equally in the order of grace, that they should be born and grow up as members one of another. No man consequently comes into the world and takes his place in it in perfect independence of the circumstances and persons in the midst of which his faculties of mind and judgment are step by step to be insensibly formed, up to the time when they will, in a certain sense, reach their maturity. It is, as constant daily experience is present to bear witness, the prerogative only of a very limited number of chosen minds to be able and willing to strike out and to pursue consistently a course for themselves. Hence the deep reason for the command which Moses gave to the Israelite people, who were

chosen by God for the exalted distinction of setting an example to all the other people of the world : "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Exod. xxiii. 2). The ordinary condition of humanity inclines men to forego their own individuality and to follow the multitude ; and hence the Book of Wisdom says, that it was a special act of the wisdom of God which selected the Patriarch Abraham to be a chosen, signal example raised up against the contrary conduct of the multitude of his own time. This (Wisdom) when the nations "began to combine together in the consent to do wickedly, knew the just man and kept him faithful to God" (Sap. x. 5). And hence also it is that the Christian people, whose special calling it is to oppose their own chosen example of being, in the words of St. Peter, "a spiritual house and holy priesthood" (1 Peter ii. 5), to the contrary wicked example of the outer world, are said by St. Paul "to be blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii, 9). Their blessing of course consists in their being found faithful to God in the following out their special and peculiar Christian vocation. But then as this vocation is to confront the fallen and perverse example of the outer world with their own higher Christian rule of life, and as this formed the special vocation of Abraham, who, in this respect, is the prototype of all the Christians,-hence the peculiar force in St. Paul's words above cited, "Therefore they that are of faith shall be blessed with faithful Abraham." They shall, that is, find their benediction in faithfully copying the indomitable patience and fidelity with which Abraham stood forth and confronted the general consent of the nations of his time to act wickedly, viz., by his own entirely contrary example, the rule and form of which he had received from the command of God.

This characteristic of the human creation, the consequence of the Fall,—namely, that vigorous and prominent examples of virtue and religion are the necessary and indispensable "salt of the earth," without the checks and restraints of which the multitude, yielding to its own fallen and depraved bent, is certain to fall away from God,—has the following practical bearing on our subject. If "they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham," in the respect of their opposing to a fallen and perishing condition of humanity, after the pattern of Abraham, their contrary good example, which is the destined salt of the earth,—the counterpart of this is, the opposite bad example of those who are the pests and poison of social life. In view of these conflicting examples, the one for good and the other for evil, St. John's words are spoken, "In this are manifest the sons of God and the sons of the devil" (*John* iii. ro). Great and signal examples of faith and

religion like that of Abraham will, by the grace of God, be sure to have their imitators. The multitudes of the Christian people again, when they find themselves thus led and encouraged by men of the stamp and character of Abraham, will then acquire a fresh spirit and will step forward boldly to confess their faith. But to this there is likewise a counterpart truth of experience. When Atheism and the denial of God are able to speak in the face of day from the professor's chair backed with the diploma of the civil power, and when those who have imbibed in their youth the poison thus publicly administered, grow up to take their place in filling the various departments and social functions of the civil state, and when they enter its legislative assemblies to claim their share in framing the public laws-then against the force of the examples, which are in their own nature the "salt of the earth," stand the contrary examples, which are equally in their own nature its "poison." Human society in its various nationalities becomes flooded with the spokesmen and representatives of all the various forms of human thought in which Atheism and Impiety either seek a specious disguise or a direct and open mode of manifesting themselves. The Gospel parable of the Tares and the Wheat then becomes realised on a widespread international scale, and both the good and the bad are, according to the precept of Christ, to be left to grow together till the harvest, in which all nations equally will be comprised. It has already been said that of the multitudes who own, through their profession of faith in Christ, the obligation that is incumbent upon them of following the good examples that are the "salt of the earth,"-all are very far from being found to be heroes on the side of their faith. And to this again there is a correlative counterpart of truth. Of the vast motley multitude with whom the contrary bad examples are chiefly in honour, it is to a corresponding degree true, that all are very far from being altogether as bad as the particular examples which they have chosen for imitation or by which they allow themselves to be unconsciously influenced. Hence we are able to come to the practical conclusion in which the remainder of our Essay has its own especial interest. The naturally right-minded sceptic, delineated in outline in the preceding Essay, as so far superior to the general run of the class to which he belongs, and particularly to its prominent patterns, whom St. John would call the "sons of the devil," can thus properly pass for a very true and real phenomenon of social life. And certainly, as such, who could be more worthy of all the charitable pains which a fairly well-instructed disciple of the school of faith can find time to bestow upon the endeavour to reclaim him to the belief in God and His law?

§ 2. The effort to teach another brings a treasure of knowledge to ourselves.

And here there occurs a thought upon which we can at all times fall back to derive the greatest strength and encouragement from it. Charitable labour of this kind can never by any possibility be fruitless and remain without its own immediate reward. It is indeed by no means whatever certain that the reward will consist in the happy success of the charitable effort made to reclaim the particular sceptic to his duty of belief in God and conformity to His law; but if this particular reward should be missed, it will be impossible that the effort should fail in another highly important and most beneficial respect. The very effort made in behalf of the obdurate and impenitent sceptic who cannot be taught his duty, will bring to the charitable disciple of the school of faith who has made the venture, the certain reward of a valuable accession to his own knowledge and experience. There is no better way of gaining a treasure of knowledge for ourselves than through the labour spent upon communicating knowledge to others. And the good Christian soul who in a spirit of faith and charity, which has been learnt in the school of Christ, makes the effort above described, fulfils to his own signal benefit, in the most admirable manner, the precept of the Apostle of "bearing fruit and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. i. 10).

With a man, then, of the naturally fair and upright judgment we have supposed, it could not but be perfectly reasonable on our part if we were to speak to him in the following strain :---

§ 3. A preliminary mutual explanation.

A very little reflection, sir, ought easily to confirm you in the perception of the truth, that the mind which has once been convinced that the external order and harmony of the creation bear a testimony of irresistible force to the supreme wisdom and intelligence of the Divine Creator,—finds itself naturally carried forward to the kindred conviction, that the Divine Creator will not fail to become the Legislator of the intelligent creation to which He has given the boon of their life and intelligence. Why should He give them the gift of such a suitable, well-ordered and well-furnished abode as we find the present world to be, and afterwards refuse them the further gift of such an elementary code of Divine Law as would adequately provide for the permanent peace, charity, and mutual good order of their society? The Supreme Intelligence cannot be conceived as doing anything that is imperfect; and, as has indeed been already intimated in the preceding Essay, the

man of ripe experience and practised judgment in the ways of mankind cannot possibly admit into his mind any sort of doubt as to the absolute need in which human society stands, that it should be held together and maintained in a state of peace and public order by the means of reasonably just and wise laws efficiently administered. It is, again, a truth, it may be further urged, well known to every practised observer of the ways of men, that however much the details of legislation in a complex state of society may be subject to perpetual change and modification from the action of the living legislative assembly, law in substance is a legacy coming down from past and remote times. And hence the labour of tracing laws to their source nearly always brings the inquirer to the law of nature, which is only another name for the law of God. When, therefore, we grant a beginning in time of the race of man from the hands of a Divine Creator, we grant a beginning to which everything in the shape of precedent, experience and pre-existing legal tradition is completely wanting. Just brought into being by the fiat of the Divine Creator, the human society thus formed exists entirely deprived of the light of the knowledge and experience which afterwards, in the nature of things, the preceding generation will begin to transmit to its successor. The newly formed human society is in consequence easily perceived to depend entirely upon the care of its Divine Creator, for its necessary outfit in the first elements of the social and political legislation which our own experience sufficiently proves to us to be indispensable to the well-being of human life. We may, therefore, for the above excellent reasons, which we shall credit our right-minded inquirer with every favourable disposition to accept, invite him to concede the truth,-that the doctrine of a Divine Legislator for mankind is both contained in and naturally follows from the doctrine of the visible world being the work of a Divine Architect and Builder.

To the above appeal I think our inquiring friend may very reasonably be supposed to reply as follows, and we shall, I may assume, readily discover in his reply that which ought to command our very best and most attentive consideration. "When I surrender myself then," will be his words, "to accept the doctrine of a Divine Creator, I have been moved to this act of surrender by the sight of the visible creation that is spread out before me. If you were to cite to me the words of David's Psalm, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament telleth the work of His hands' (*Ps.* xviii. 1), I am able perfectly to accept their truth, though quite unable to exercise any act of judgment as to the weight and authority of Divine inspiration that you would claim for them. The works of the visible universe are before me as real witnesses, to my mind, of the Supreme Power which alone can have set them in their order, and alone can be now able to maintain them in it,-and that I honestly admit the force of their testimony, is evidenced by my surrender to it. But when you appeal to my right reason, as you are pleased to do, to acknowledge the further truth that the doctrine of a Divine Legislator is contained in that of a Divine Creator, here again I do not directly dispute what you advance, but I beg you to observe that you are now bringing in an entirely new order of proceeding. The question with me is not what further truth I am to be called upon to admit as the consequence of my already admitting so much. What is now before my mind belongs to the same order of reasoning as that by which I have been convinced of the existence of the Person of the Divine Creator. The visible works of the creation have been to me the sufficient witnesses of the Person of the Divine Creator. I do not in the least rebel against your appeal to what you are pleased to treat with as my right reason. On the contrary. I am able and willing to agree with you, that it is eminently according to right reason that the Divine Creator should, as you allege, manifest Himself to His intelligent creation as their Legislator. I readily admit, without the least temptation to cavil, that the newly created condition of His intelligent creatures must necessarily place them in a state of entire dependence upon the legislative solicitude of their Creator, but all this does but make my case so much the stronger. I find myself brought to the knowledge of the Person of the Divine Creator by the spectacle of His works of creation, and I now desire in like manner to be brought to the knowledge of the Person of the Divine Legislator by the testimony of His works of legislation, displayed before me in some corresponding practical way. according as the nature of the case may admit of this being done. If the Divine Creator is to be known by His works of creation, it must be at least equally according to right human reason that the Divine Legislator should be capable of being known and studied in His works of legislation. Show me, therefore, how I am to proceed in order to be able to gain this analogous knowledge of the Person of the Divine Legislator from the study and examination of His works of legislation, corresponding to that which I believe myself to have gained respecting the Person of the Divine Creator from the study and contemplation of His works of creation."

To such a plea of our friendly inquirer there can, I think, be but one reply possible, namely, that it cannot be conceived how words

could be spoken in more perfect accordance with right human reason, leaving us only one thought open, viz., what can be the best way of making the attempt to satisfy so eminently just and reasonable a demand?

§ 4. Review of the reasons why the knowledge of the acts of the Divine Legislator belongs to a different order from the knowledge of the works of Creation.

The nature of the subject, however, as it will occur to no one to dispute, may be readily seen to oppose itself to all hasty and inconsiderate attempts to rush blindly into depths that require to be first warily and carefully sounded. And as a mark of respect justly due to the eminently reasonable character of the request that has been made, some extremely important preliminaries, I think, present themselves for consideration before the final reply is attempted to be given.

First, then, I should say, we have to take into account the essential difference which distinguishes the two separate orders of witnesses and their respective testimony. The works of the visible creation are displayed before the view of all the living creatures who have received the gift of sight, whether they possess or not the further gift of the intelligence which enables them to understand the true drift and purport of the testimony. Whereas the law, which is the work or product of the legislator, is exclusively a thing recondite in its nature, manifesting itself solely to the human intelligence, and this exclusively in such a way, that before the law can acquire permanent and durable manifestation, it must have been digested by the lawgiver and clothed by his act in a definite form of the particular speech or language which serves as the medium of mutual communication between the human persons who are its subjects. Hence the study, the custody, preservation and administration of human law has from time immemorial been treated as a work to be committed to the care of men who have followed the study of law as a profession. As human language is the indispensable vehicle of the acts of the legislator discharging his office in behalf of men, the administration of human law has found out, in progress of time, the necessity of employing the art and the materials of writing. And thus it is that law has, under all forms of civilised society, manifested its tendency to become the parent of learned corporations, who have found their occupation in its codification, its study and its administration ; while archives, archive keepers and their written documents for its preservation have naturally and almost necessarily followed in their wake. Of all which things, however, it has but to be said, in the words of Solomon,

"that nothing is permanent under the sun" (*Eccles.* ii. 11). All these things are the works of the hands of men, and they partake in the necessarily fugitive character of the source from which they proceed.

When the question, then, comes before us in a form that solicits a definite reply, as to what has become of the various acts of the Divine Legislator, respecting which, reasoning on à priori grounds, we can entertain no doubt but that they must have been given to the human creation by their Divine Legislator, who is also the Divine Creator, two contingencies present themselves before us for careful consideration before we can proceed to give any distinct reply ;—when it will quickly be perceived how entirely these contingencies are of a nature completely to govern the reply which is expected.

The first of these contingencies is, that the acts of the Divine Legislator, notwithstanding their having been in all respects such as the condition of the newly created human family required for the well-being of their social existence, and such as would, had they been preserved, have borne an irreproachable testimony to the perfect wisdom and goodness of the Legislator, have nevertheless, through the sin and neglect of those to whom they were given, perished from human knowledge. This has come to pass through the total loss of the original records in which they existed from the beginning, and which are now irrecoverable.

The second of these contingencies is, that the Divine Lawgiver Himself, witnessing the ruin and destruction coming upon His creation by reason of the sins and unfaithfulness of the human family, in not either obeying or preserving the memory of His laws, may have judged the calamitous state of the world to be such as to call for and to justify a particular and special act of His direct intervention, in order to preserve for mankind the knowledge of His acts of legislation,—the same being, through the sin and neglect of men, in imminent danger of being otherwise completely lost.

In the first of these contingencies, we shall still reasonably expect that it will be an absolute impossibility that the memory of the Divine Legislator's acts of legislation ever could be so completely obliterated from the memory of the human race, as that no trace of them should survive. The original written records may doubtless have perished and have disappeared, but the recollections of the Divine Legislator's acts will beyond all doubt continue to live in the oral traditions of the various people dispersed over the globe. And again, among whatever people of the earth any ancient records, monuments, or remnants of surviving literature have been preserved, we may here also expect to come across vestiges of the acts of the Divine Legislator, which will be found to be both better defined and more complete in proportion to the known antiquity either of the people or the language in which they are met with.¹

It is the second contingency which brings us to the consideration of the work that the Divine Legislator intrusted to the diligence and fidelity of His servant and prophet Moses. It is through Moses and his work that the acts of the Divine Legislator first come to acquire the particular evidence of the written history and documentary record that has come down to us, committed as this has been since the days of Moses to the care of an imperishable living human custody, which has never from that day to this failed or faltered in its jealous preservation of the treasure intrusted to its keeping.

§ 5. The eminent place occupied by Moses in the work of God for the preserving mankind in their obedience to His laws.

The answer then to be given to our inquirer will be gathered without difficulty from the foregoing. The supposed contingencies are simple truths of the history of the past, and the acts of the Divine Legislator are seen to be thrown open, in the writings of Moses, to the study and knowledge of whoever is able and willing to bring to the task of their investigation, the necessary industry and the requisite trained powers of mind. That God is "unknowable" is literally nothing else than the perverse proposition of those who do not, for reasons of their own, desire the knowledge of His ways. There is a dim and confused, but nevertheless an universal, testimony borne to Him by the orally preserved traditions of all the various people dispersed all over the earth, and the surviving vestiges of His laws and government are to be found in every ancient literature fragments of which have come down to our times. But it is in the writings which Moses has left behind him that we come to acquire the first clear and certain written records by which the Divine Legislator has endowed His human creation with the means of coming to the long-looked-for knowledge of His character and His acts of legislation. The work inaugurated by Moses has, step by step, been further built up and extended by the similar works and mission of other prophets and servants of God sent to the Hebrew people. And, lastly, the

¹ The vast and extensive mine of such testimony to the acts of the Divine Legislator which still remains to be explored may be reasonably conjectured from the marvellous increase to our knowledge which our own times have seen to have been so unexpectedly obtained, from the comparatively recent discoveries of the clue to deciphering both the cuneiform tablets of the ancient Assyrian Empire, and the hieroglyphics and written papyri of the ancient civilisation of Egypt.

permanent work of restoration and rehabilitation of the original acts of the Divine Legislator has been finally completed, enlarged, and extended to all the nations and people of the entire globe by the Divine Legislator Himself coming upon earth in His assumed human nature, in which He has sent His apostles and His Church to continue His work to the end of the world.

Our inquiring friend, on receiving the above reply, may now be supposed to say to us, "It is impossible for me to avoid perceiving the immense extent of that which here appears to be staked upon the credibility of the peculiar mission intrusted to the prophet Moses. I may, therefore, be allowed to ask in brief, on what particular line of evidence would you be disposed to ground the claim of Moses to be universally regarded by all the nations of the earth as having been intrusted with this same special mission from the Divine Legislator to become the registrar and archive keeper of His acts of Divine legislation?" And to this the reply in brief would be, "The Hebrew people scattered throughout the world are the singular and indestructible providential testimony to the truth of the Divine mission of Moses." 1

To which our friend may again be understood to rejoin by saying, "I am a man of the world and not a theologian, and I perfectly comprehend that our conference is not to be allowed to run out to any interminable length. Let us therefore, for the sake of keeping within the limits of what is practicable, allow the question respecting the credibility of Moses, with all that may be said either for or against it, to rest for the present on the peculiar witness of the Hebrew people. The point that I particularly desire to test, is, the value of your claim that

¹ Nothing can be more remarkable in the economy of the redemption of man than the incontestable truth how almost infinitely great is the issue which, by the direct disposition of Divine Providence, is staked upon the credibility of the mission and the testimony of the single prophet Moses. Christ describes Himself as coming upon a mission which is both the sequel to that of His predecessor Moses, and the credibility of which is inseparably conjoined with that of His predecessor. "If you do not believe," He says to the Jews, "what he has left in writing (illius litteris), how will you believe my words?" (John v. 47). And in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham is represented as finally replying to the rich man's appeal that some one might go to his brethren from the dead, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead" (Luke xvi. 34). The reason is not difficult to perceive. The Christ of the cradle of Bethlehem and the Divine Legislator of the first beginning of the human family are no other than one and the same Divine Person, and the intervention of the Divine Legislator in His own world for its preservation is either a credible or an incredible thing, but whichever it may be, it is either one or the other in its entirety. The intervention cannot be in part credible and part incredible. "Si illius (Moyseos) litteris non creditis quomodo verbis meis credetis?"

the division of human time into weeks of seven days is an undoubted law of the Divine Creator, enacted and promulgated to His human creation from its first beginning. I pray you, therefore, to lay before me, in the sort of concise but adequate manner which you think will best meet the needs of the case, your statement of the ground on which you claim this law as certainly contemporary with the beginning of creation."

§ 6. A preliminary understanding indispensable before the evidence of the Premosaic Week and Sabbath Day can be produced.

Here, again, the words of our supposed inquirer are manifestly such as to claim our warmest sympathy and applause. He addresses us a perfectly plain and intelligible request, and he gives proof of a desire to be satisfied with a similar plain and intelligible reply, from which as far as possible all side issues that might lead to useless and unnecessary prolixity are to be excluded. To such a request it ought to be a pleasure to have to reply in a kindred spirit of equally brief and practical rejoinder.

Nevertheless I think a very little reflection is all that can be needed to convince us, respect being duly had to the importance of the question under consideration, that the case is one where, according to the words of the proverb, the greater haste is likely to be attended with the worst speed. With every reasonable desire, then, to make progress and to economise time, there is not a little to be gained by some judicious preliminary elucidation of the matter to be dealt with.

In the case, then, before us, we have first to consider whether the essential difference is duly present to our minds that distinguishes a law of the Divine Legislator, by which His human creation is to be bound in perpetuity to the end of time,-which is never to yield, never to undergo the least substantial change or modification, which, in a word, is to stand good for all time as the reflex of the absolute immutability of its Divine Author,-from the local or temporary law of some particular national ruler. In the case of the human law, almost any ordinary and commonplace evidence could readily be accepted as capable of resolving the doubt which might attach to the reality of the law, while with the act of the Divine Legislator the case is easily seen to be entirely different. Here more than one totally distinct order of consideration claims our most serious attention, all of which are entirely wanting to the ordinary human law. For example, evidence of the obedience paid by the subjects of the alleged human law may be most naturally expected to be forthcoming in case of need.

While if the similar question were to be raised as regards the Divine law, alleged to be cotemporary with the beginning of the creation, it is at once obvious that we can have no similar well-founded expectation, that the particular evidence of its having been observed will be certainly found in the extreme scantiness of the early records which have survived the wreck and disorder of the past.

To this is to be added the consideration, that the prophet Moses, as we have already acknowledged, stands by himself as the sole historian who can be cited to bear any direct witness to the alleged Divine Law. And before his testimony can be prudently brought forward, it must be necessary to have something like an explicit understanding to what authority the appeal will lie in the event of the words of Moses not being found to possess that explicit character which cuts off all possibility of dispute.

And lastly, in the case of an alleged act of the Divine Creator binding His human creation in perpetuity by a law applicable to all alike, there properly enters the consideration of the intrinsic character of the law. Whether the requisite proof can be produced of its perfect agreement with the known attributes proper to the Supreme Authority from whom there is no appeal, and whether by its easily perceptible, wise, and merciful adaptation to the life of the human family, it bears in this respect the necessary testimony to its Divine Author?

Before making the attempt, then, to comply with his most reasonable request, we may, I think, very properly say to our inquirer, "You will scarcely fail to perceive how greatly it may both save time, and likewise conduce to a happy result, if you would yourself consider what has now been brought forward, and proceed to say what you would be disposed to accept under the circumstances of the case as a fair and satisfactory solution of your inquiry."

§ 7. Acceptance of the proposed threefold line of proof, (viz.) :-

(1.) The testimony of Moses, confirmed by the Scripture and by the voice of its interpreters.

(2.) Ex post facto evidence of the obedience paid by mankind to the law from the beginning.

(3.) Intrinsic beneficence of the law.

Let us now suppose our friend to reply as follows, and then, I think, no further obstacle will lie in our way. He will say then to us, "I pride myself at least upon the desire to be in all things practical and disposed to listen to reason. It is of course extremely reasonable, in

the case of any question being raised regarding the reality of a particular act of legislation, that the evidence of the law having been accepted and obeyed by its subjects should occupy a certain primary place in the removal of the doubt which may hang over its reality. Consideration, however, being had to the circumstances you have referred to, which must have largely caused this kind of evidence to be irrecoverably lost, I shall undoubtedly hold, that equity unquestionably requires that the fragments of evidence which may be presumed to have survived the general wreck, if they can be recovered, are to be accepted as the representatives of a very great deal besides which has perished ;—and if they are found to be to a fair degree both various and explicit, then they must be held to have removed the last remains of doubt.

"Next, as regards the evidence of Moses, equity here will beyond question require, that Moses can only be held to give his testimony solely and exclusively as a prophet of God, speaking to those who are already in the secret of the manner in which prophets speak and are to be understood. In the event, therefore, of any question arising as to the value of the words of Moses, the appeal will lie exclusively to the similar words of his brother prophets, and to the writings of the men who have made the words of Moses their lifelong and professional study.

"And, lastly, as regards the proof of the Divine origin of the law to be derived from its intrinsic characteristics, I unreservedly admit its relevance and necessity. Perhaps these may have already recommended themselves to the mind of some enemy who can see merits in the law while he hates the thought of the Divine source from which it is alleged to proceed. Testimony of such a kind as this, I may venture the suggestion, ought at least to be quite unsuspected.

"On the whole, then, fully as I appreciate the merit of brevity, I do not consider that we have indulged in a single unnecessary word. I now perfectly understand that I have to accept the evidence of Moses as strictly to be interpreted according to the school to which he belongs as a prophet of God; that I am not to expect more than fragmentary evidence of the alleged law having been accepted and obeyed from the first; and if the kind of evidence I have suggested can be produced as to the beneficent character of the law, I shall be the first to welcome it and to acknowledge its force. Proceed, then, I entreat you, with your undertaking, upon the foregoing sufficiently explicit understanding, and whatever be its results, you will at least have earned a most wellmerited title to my lasting gratitude."

The foregoing preliminary understanding being thus secured, no

further difficulty appears to stand in our way. It only remains, therefore, briefly to recur to a previous request, that the limited powers of an essayist to render justice to a public question of such combined moment and extent should be equitably considered. So that, without his giving rise to any undue expectations, he should have the requisite freedom granted to him to earn—as far as he may prove himself able —the praise given to the woman in the Gospel: "Quod hæc habuit fecit," "What this woman had in her power, she hath done" (Mark xiv. 8).

§ 8. The Mosaic record of the Primitive Divine Law (Gen. ii. 2, 3).

The first, and the really direct proof, then, in the case of the alleged Divine Law which we have to bring forward, is the passage in the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, which runs as follows :---

"And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And He blessed the seventh day and sanctified it: because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made" (*Gen.* ii. 2, 3, Douai version).

Reasoning from the principle above considered, that the very next act to be expected from the Divine Creator after the complete formation of His intelligent creation will be, that He should proceed to legislate for the religious, social, and political well-being of their life upon earth, there appears on the face of this record only one interpretation of it that is possible. It must be held to record the justly anticipated act of the Divine Legislator, enacting and promulgating for the observance of men His law of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, exempting this day from the general rule of the command previously given "to subdue the earth," and setting it apart for the exercises of religious worship. The only two grounds for raising any difficulty or objection to the acceptance of this interpretation would appear to be, the saying, (1.) that the alleged record of the Legislator's act might have been more explicit and more exclusive of doubt; (2.) that the evidence of His law having been acknowledged and obeyed by mankind might have been more ample and satisfactory than what is currently known.

Here a very little reflection will suffice to show that neither of the two grounds of exception above mentioned can be of any avail whatever for the purpose of justifying a formal denial of the reality of the law. The utmost that can result from them, even taken together, is a certain *primâ facie* reason for demurring to recognise it. This demurrer, so far as the first ground of the exception is concerned, we may now seek to remove as follows. The second ground will in its proper time be made the subject of a separate inquiry.

(1.) First, then, to deal with the difficulty on the score of the extreme brevity of the words of Moses recording the alleged Divine enactment of the law. Rightly considered, no argument whatever against the law arises from this brevity, but quite the contrary; it will be easily seen to be in itself the ground of an invincibly strong reason for the law. On the supposition that the reality of the law and the fact of its general recognition was quite familiarly known to both Moses and his cotemporaries, nothing can appear more appropriate than this same brevity with which Moses is here seen to record the act of God that serves as the foundation of the law. On the contrary hypothesis, that no such law had ever been given to mankind, the record in question would then appear to be without any bearing whatever on human life: and being in this case calculated only to confuse and to mislead, it could not possibly have had any place at all given to it.

(2.) As the evidence of Moses is not that of an ordinary witness, but of a prophet of God, his testimony obviously cannot bear any interpretation which would turn out to the direct dishonour of God. But it may be easily seen how any interpretation of the words of Moses contrary to the reality of the law must necessarily turn to the inevitable dishonour and discredit of the Divine Legislator. For if the law is known to be generally beneficial to the life of men, and yet was not in force from the beginning, then the Legislator incurs a manifest discredit on the ground of having withheld His beneficial law for so long a time without any apparent reason. And if the law is not beneficial to the life of man, then He is seen to incur another kind of dishonour from His being now perceived to enforce upon all people without exception, through the Christian gospel, a substantially similar law, notwithstanding its being known entirely to lack the character of beneficial legislation.

(3.) It is a direct argument for understanding the words of Moses above cited, as the formal record of the alleged law, that this interpretation alone shows God to be perfectly consistent with Himself. The law assigning to man six days of labour and a seventh of rest and sanctification is preceded in the record of Moses by the narrative of the Hexameron, or the six days' Divine work of preparing our planet for the abode of man, and of His rest from His work on the seventh day. By this law, then, man is called upon to order his life upon the pattern given to him by His Creator. And how consistent God in this appears with Himself is shown by His teaching men in the Sermon on the

Mount, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect,"—and by what He says to His apostles after His act in washing their feet, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do" (*John* xiii. 15).

(4.) Another equally irresistible argument for understanding the text of Moses (Gen. ii. 2, 3) as the record of the primitive Divine Law arises from the nature of the ten commandments delivered from Mount Sinai. These commandments are the eternal immutable law of God proclaimed to men from the beginning, and subsequently accepted by all the Christian nations as the law of God from the beginning, without even introducing any change into the form in which they are recorded by Moses. The only thing that is new in them is, the special title by which God now for the first time claims the obedience of the people of Israel, as the "Lord their God, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage." If the labour of six days and the rest and sanctification of the seventh day is a peculiar Hebrew law, we should then have to say, that the command to "honour father and mother," the transgression of which was punished in Cham, and the prohibition to commit murder, which was punished in Cain, were also peculiarly Hebrew precepts.

(5.) A still further reason for the primitive antiquity of the law under consideration is the double identity of both the Lawgiver and the law, as manifesting themselves respectively at the beginning of Creation and from the summit of Mount Sinai. Indeed, not only is the law of Sinai itself precisely the same law with that of the beginning of the world, but the grounds assigned for the law are the same, viz., the obligation of man to copy His Maker's pattern in His labour of six days, and in His rest and sanctification of the seventh day.¹

To this reply on our part our inquirer may now be reasonably presumed to say by way of rejoinder : "All so far proves to be quite satisfactory. *Primâ facie*, I allow there is undoubtedly a strong case enough to show that the words of Moses are incapable of any other interpretation than that they contain, as you contend, the record of the primitive enactment and promulgation of the law that is in question between us, and this notwithstanding the marked brevity of the form by

¹ Some of the more recent interpreters of the Scripture seem to have betrayed a disposition to pay very much more attention to the conclusions of the so-called "science of geology" than it would at all appear that this "science" is justly entitled to claim. Its pretension to be called a science, it should not be forgotten, is founded on nothing better than a limited number of studies of the outer crust of the earth, which, for the present, at least, bear far too slender a proportion to the whole to constitute anything that can with truth profess itself to be a "science." That the phenomena as hitherto

which this is done. However, as our stipulation has provided for an appeal to lie to the writings of the school to which Moses is held to belong, as also to the general body of the recognised interpreters of the words of Moses, in the interest of the further elucidation of our subject, I should be glad if the contemplated appeal were to be carried into effect, that I may learn in what it will result."

To this I should certainly say that only one reply on our part can be entertained as admissible. By all means, we should answer; the appeal is one to be prosecuted, and this with the utmost possible care and impartiality. It is only a matter for sincere regret if the limits of our conference inexorably require, that the little which restricted space permits to be brought forward should be allowed to stand for a great deal, which, however closely it belongs to our subject, it is unhappily quite impossible to produce.

§ 9. Confirmation from the Scriptures.

The single example, then, which our time permits, of the manner in which the appeal, carried to the general body of the sacred writings, confirms the preceding construction of the particular passage of Moses

known are reconcilable with the Mosaic narrative is maintained by many competent authorities, but just as much disputed by others, and the dispute may be said to be still in progress.

It may, however, be in place here to give a brief reason why this "so-called science" can be allowed to pursue its way without its being the occasion of any trouble or concern to the interpreters of the Scripture. These latter appear not to have paid a sufficiently accurate attention to the circumstance, that the work of the "Hexameron," as described by Moses, is not at all to be understood as a work of creation in the primary sense of the word "create," i.e., " bringing into being out of nothing," but only as the setting in order that which already existed by a previous act of the Divine Creator's power, and the production of the omnis ornatus by which this planet was prepared and furnished for the abode in it of the race of Adam. For all that human knowledge can know with any certainty to the contrary, our planet previous to the work of the "Hexameron," may have gone through a quasi eternity of retrospective existence, the records of which are perfectly known to God, but absolutely unknown and unknowable to the race of Adam. Nothing consequently can well be conceived more complete than the ignorance of the race of Adam touching the previous history of the planet which furnishes them their present abode. Without, then, in any way questioning the legitimacy of the studies of the outer crust of the earth, or seeking to depreciate the various attempts made to divine its previous history by the process of induction from what may be observed-still, so long as the retrospective history of the planet is completely hidden from human knowledge, the true key to the meaning of whatever phenomena geologists may discover must always be hopelessly wanting. To turn away, then, from accepting the record given us by Moses is thus to throw away the limited knowledge which God has been so good as to give us, only to remain in the state of total ignorance, for which the hazardous guesses of the geologists will prove a very indifferent remedy.

shall be cited from the Gospel of St. Mark. It is where Christ Himself, having occasion to speak of the Sabbath, shows plainly that there is no question before His mind of a merely national Hebrew observance, but of a Divine Law, made and promulgated from the beginning, and consequently binding upon all mankind. "And He said to them, The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath." A merely national observance imposed upon the Hebrew people for a reason peculiar to themselves could by no possibility have been spoken of as a something said to have "been made for man;" and this is further confirmed by the words which immediately follow: "Therefore the Son of Man is lord also of the Sabbath" (*Mark* ii. 27). Christ, speaking as the Son of Man, could not, as must be obvious, consistently with the title He assumes, the "Son of Man," claim anything less than His supreme sovereignty over a law embracing the whole of mankind.

§ 10. Confirmation from the Interpreters of the Scriptures.

Next, as regards the appeal to the general body of the interpreters of the words of Moses in all questions respecting the acts of God, we are quite prepared beforehand to have to meet with the contradictionem linguarum, the strife of contradictory voices. Unanimity here may be almost said to be foreign to the very nature of men. A careful observer, however, even here will scarcely fail to detect a rather striking testimony to the truth of the law being a primitive enactment, from the perfectly different characteristics that are noticeable in the respective voices and in the manner in which they speak. Not only are the testimonies which are borne to the primitive antiquity of the law overpowering in their numerical majority, but all these deliver their testimony with a precision and a conviction of the truth of their words very different from the faltering and hesitating tone of their opponents, the highest aim of whom appears to centre in the hope of being able to render doubt legitimate. Here, however, for the sake of brevity, we must be content to refer the reader who is desirous of judging more at length of the manner in which these various authorities commonly deliver their testimony to the citations subjoined in the note below. The two samples which we now produce, as those that may be considered respectively typical of the earlier school and the present living school of interpreters, are selected (1.) from the wellknown Commentary of Cornelius à Lapide on Gen. ii. 2, 3, and (2.) from the almost similarly well-known, at least to English readers. Dictionary of the Bible edited by Dr. Smith.

"In the third and most obvious sense," writes Cornelius à Lapide,

;

"God from the beginning of the world, on this first Sabbath-day, sanctified it, that is, actually instituted a festive day, and required it to be observed by Adam and his posterity as a day of sacred rest and the worship of God, principally calling to grateful remembrance the benefit of His own creation and that of the whole world, first completed on that day, from whence it appears plainly that the Sabbath was a holy day instituted and decreed from the very beginning, and not for the first time by Moses (Exod. xx.), but long before, that is, from the origin of the world, viz., this same first Sabbath-day of the world." The same truth, according to Cornelius, is gathered from Exod. xvi. 25 and other passages. Cornelius à Lapide, Commentary (Gen. ii. 2; 3), &c. Next to come to our citation from Dr. Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. In the time of the Antonines the Roman law divided time into the week of seven days, assigning to the days the same names that still remain in use; on which the writer of the article "Week" points out the providential purpose served by the Roman law in preparing the nations to observe the week of the Christian religion. "That week," he goes on to remark, "which is grounded on no worship of planetary deities, nor dictated by the mere wish to quadripartite the month, but based on the earliest lesson of revelation, and proposing to man his Maker's model as that whereby to regulate his working and his rest; that week which once indeed in modern times it has been attempted to abolish, because it was attempted to abolish the whole Christian faith." This faith, the writer goes on to say, will ever keep its ground, as being bound up with the universal law of the Sabbath, and sharing therefore in its invincibility and perpetuity. (Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, Article "Week.")1

¹ Menochius (Gen. ii. 3).—" Sanctificavit," & ... "Divino cultui segregavit seu dedicavit, exemplo quietis suæ venerabile reddidit et inviolabili præcepto servari statuit."

Johannes Clericus.—"Benedixit."—"Hinc sequitur, quum Deus, Sabbalo benedixisse dicitur, intelligi, Deum voluisse eum diem festum haberi et hilariter transigi." (Both the above, notwithstanding, hesitate directly to say that the law was binding upon Adam.)

Martini (Gen. ii. 2, 3) says that the words of Moses point to a primitive Sabbath. Bible de Vence (Gen. ii. 2, 3).—" Per tal modo la sanctificazione del settimo giorno ascende fino al origine del mondo." (Italian translation.)

Osiander, Dr. Lucas.--- "Er sonderte ihm aus von den anderen Tagen, die zur täglichen Arbeit verordnet waren, und heiligte denselben Tag zum Gottesdienst."

§ 11. Reasonableness of the demand for ex post facto evidence of the general obedience paid to the Law.

Our inquirer may now be supposed to say to us, "A reasonable and fair-judging man has no ground for raising any further question as to what ought to be held to be the true interpretation of the passage Gen. ii. 2. 3. It is evident that, brief as may be the words of the Mosaic record, it is impossible rightly to understand them in any other sense than as the testimony of Moses to the primitive antiquity of the Divine Law, appointing for all time the week of seven days, with its six days of labour and its law of the rest and sanctification on the seventh. We therefore now come, in the order of the progress previously agreed upon between us, to the work of testing the truth of the testimony of Moses which speaks for the primitive Divine enactment of the law in question, by the evidence of the law itself having been able to command the actual obedience of men. I shall not be so unreasonable as totally to deny, in the abstract, the possibility of the law having been really made, and of its having obtained a proportionate amount of the obedience of mankind, without its being at the present moment very easily possible to prove this from the evidences which have survived the wreck of time. But taking into consideration the two distinctive characteristics peculiar to the law in question, viz., the majesty without a parallel of the Lawgiver, and that which is equally without a parallel, except in the case of other laws proceeding from the same source, the absolute universality of the law, binding all mankind alike from the first day of the creation to the end of the world, it appears to be an inconceivable thought, that mankind can be at the present time without some very considerable body of evidence capable of proving the actual obedience that has been paid to the law. I cannot pretend to be able to speak with any positive authority, but it

Rosenmüller .-- "Faustum et felicem, augustum et insignem inter cæteros hunc diem esse voluit ac præcipuo eum honore ac favore dignatus est."

F. C. Cook (The Holy Bible with Commentary, Gen. ii. 2, 3).—" The natural interpretation of these words is that the blessing of the Sabbath was immediately consequent on the first creation of man."

Clarke, Adam .-. "Without the consecrated day religion itself would soon fail."

Matthew Henry .- "Sabbaths are as ancient as the world."

Bishop Patrick.—" I cannot agree that the Sabbath was not instituted till the time of Moses. God from the first would keep up the memory of the creation."

Delitzsch and Keil.—" We must conclude, then, that on the seventh day, on which God rested from His work, the world with all its inhabitants attained to the sacred rest of God."

rather appears to me, as if such a law of the Divine Creator as that which we are now considering, binding as it is said to do the world of man from his first to his last day upon earth, ought to be able to command in some visible and intelligible manner the testimony of the whole race of men from the first to the last, in every century and every generation, from the beginning to the end. And indeed the more the subject is duly weighed, the more I should be inclined to the thought, that at least a fair amount of evidence of this universal and uninterrupted obedience to the law ought to be forthcoming, —and that certainly such evidence alone as this can be really commensurate with the force and dignity of the law."

To such a representation as the above on the part of our interlocutor, I again think that we can only very cheerfully return an answer in the affirmative. His reasoning must certainly be admitted to be eminently just, and we can but willingly acknowledge that the sole testimony which can be in its own nature really commensurate with the dignity and binding force of the law is an uninterrupted chain of evidence. gathered from the whole of mankind, showing that there has never been a time known, when the law of the Divine Legislator was not confessed and obeyed. The possible practical difficulty of gathering together the requisite evidence, I certainly think, ought not to be allowed for a single moment to interfere with the acknowledgment of the truth, that nothing less than the testimony of the actual obedience of the whole of mankind in all generations is due to a law of the Divine Creator which is binding upon all men from the beginning to the end. It is, of course, guite true, that we know from unquestionable experience, in what way men are quite capable in every generation of the act of refusing their obedience to the laws of their Creator. And hence, between the growth of such disobedience and the desuetude and neglect of the law which naturally follows in the wake of disobedience, added to the loss of the records which would have borne their testimony to the obedience to the law where it still survived, nothing is more possible than that the evidence we desire to recover will prove to be less ample than we could wish. This, however, only renders the prospect of success in the search a little discouraging in the outset, but it must by no means be allowed to become any obstacle to the search itself being made.

I should propose, then, that we make an effort to meet our friendly inquirer's very reasonable challenge in something like the following strain.

The question, I should say, is now to test the truth of all that has

been above said by a recurrence to the *ex post facto* evidence of an obedience having been paid by mankind to the law of their Creator, which, without losing sight of the possibility of even a very large amount of disobedience and consequent desuetude, shall nevertheless appear, to some reasonable and intelligible extent, proportionate under the circumstances of the case to the dignity and universal binding force of the law.

§ 12. Nature of the evidence proving the universal obedience paid by mankind in general to the law of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day.

The first really clear and precise record, then, that we possess of the law which we are considering having been publicly and formally recognised as a law handed down by tradition is found in the obedience exacted by Moses and rendered to it by the whole Israelite people in the wilderness on the occasion of the manna being first given to them from heaven. The account is related circumstantially in the 16th chapter of the Book of Exodus, in which, as we shall presently have to show, the command of Moses appears as the call given to the people, to make use of their restored liberty to return to the old traditional observance of their race, which had suffered a certain desuetude under the oppression of their Egyptian masters.

From this day forward the Israelite people can be seen to have in the main never ceased to set before the nations of the world their example of obedience to the Divine Law. And when the popular ignorance is corrected, which fails to discern in the Israelite observance of the week of six days of labour and a seventh of rest and sanctification, its twofold character, viz., of their witness to the Divine Law which was promulgated at the beginning of the world, and of their special duty of setting before the other nations the good example of their own observance of it,—we begin to perceive the first elements of the universal testimony of all mankind to the law, for which we are now seeking. The peculiar providence of God is seen to have scattered this Hebrew people all over the earth in order that the force of their particular example in keeping the law of the Sabbath might be as widely as possible spread throughout the world.

To the force of the Israelite example, great as it is, in consequence of their dispersion all over the earth, is to be added the still greater force and the more widely spread presence of the Christian example. But here a brief word of explanation is needed. The Christian week of six days of labour and of the rest and sanctification of the seventh

day is proved to be a simple continuation of the previous law, by the fact that in all the Christian nations the obligation of observing it is taught in the words of the Decalogue of Moses without the introduction of a single alteration into them. The change that has taken place leaves the substance of the law entirely untouched, and consists in the substitution of a new and stronger ground for the observance of the law. It is no longer now the rest of God from the works of the Hexameron which is commemorated by the Christian seventh day, but the greater Divine work of man's redemption, perfected in the glorious resurrection of the Divine Redeemer from the dead. The entire substance of the law remains unchanged; what is new is that the Lord's Day, or the first in the succession of the seven days of the week, has by the authority of the Divine Legislator Himself succeeded to the place of the former seventh day.

Thus far, then, we seem to come to some fair extent in view of at least a partial world-wide testimony of the race of Adam to the primitive Divine Law of the week of seven days. Their observance of it is seen to put on a well-known, world-wide, and explicit form, at least from the date of Moses, to which time as it advances only adds fresh strength and consistency. The law has met with disobedience and rebellion in every age of the world, but this disobedience and neglect, which is found in the present day equally with the past, has been met on the part of both the Hebrews and the devout Christian people, with a marked determination to oppose to it their contrary example of the honour and obedience due to the law.

What seems, then, to be still wanting, before we shall be able to make the recurrence to the *ex post facto* evidence of the obedience paid to the law as complete as the condition of the testimony which has up to the present moment been rescued from the general wreck will permit, is to carry a search through the period intervening between Adam and Moses, to try what evidence this will yield to us of the actual obedience which was then paid to the law.

§ 13. Proofs from the narrative of Moses of the obedience paid to the primitive Divine Law appointing the week of seven days.

And here the whole interval between Adam and Noah almost falls out of the question. It is variously computed, in general terms as a duration of from 1500 to 2000 years, and, nevertheless, our sole record of the events which occurred in it, exclusive of that which specially relates to the persons of Adam and Noah, is contained in two solitary chapters (iv. and v.) of the Book of Genesis with a portion

of a third. Yet even in the first of these there occurs mention of a fact which may with extreme probability be regarded as containing an ex post facto testimony to the law. Cain the husbandman, and his brother Abel the shepherd, both offer their respective offerings, the first the fruits of his husbandry, and the second the first-fruits of his flocks, on a given day which is the same for both. This day is said in the Vulgate version to be "after many days" (post multos dies), in the Septuagint to be simply "after days" (uel' nuégas), while in the Hebrew the more natural value of the phrase is "at the end of days." We can only explain the coincidence of the act of sacrificing in the case of both brothers falling on one and same day, by the supposition of the occurrence of some one common festival, the observance of which was obligatory upon both. Though we are not borne out in positively concluding that this day must necessarily have been the Sabbath-day, nothing seems more natural at that early period of mankind, before a calendar of festive days could have been very easily formed, than that the brothers would choose a Sabbath-day for their simultaneous sacrifice

Passing over, then, this period of the world before the Deluge, of which so singularly little remains on record, we advance to the history of Noah, and here we come upon the clearest possible trace of the division of time into a week of seven days. When the waters of the Deluge were subsiding, and Noah, to test how far they had subsided. sent forth a dove from the Ark, the bird, finding no resting-place, returned to the Ark, and Noah, stretching forth his hand, brought her back into it. It was now necessary to wait a certain time before repeating the experiment, and just as we should say at the present moment, "Let us wait a week and then try," Noah waited his week, and on the seventh day, when the week was up, the dove is sent out again. The dove now returns in the evening with an olive branch covered with green leaves. Noah, however, still has his doubts that the surface of the earth is not sufficiently dry for his purposes, and he thinks it necessary again to have patience, and to wait some days longer. The time then that he waits is now, for the second time, another week, and on the seventh day, when the week is up, he sends forth the dove, which after this does not return again (Gen. viii.)

Again, in the narrative of the marriage of Jacob with Rachel, Jacob proposes to Laban, her father, to be his servant for a week of years. "I will serve you," says Jacob, "for your younger daughter, Rachel, seven years." At the end of the seven years the marriage festivities are prepared and the marriage takes place, only Jacob in the morning

discovers that the elder sister, Leah, has been given to him, and not his intended bride, Rachel. On his remonstrating Laban answers, "Accomplish the *week* of this marriage, and I will give thee Rachael also, for whom thou shalt serve me another seven years." What is particularly remarkable here is that the week of seven days appears as a mode of dividing time so familiarly known and recognised that it has acquired and now possesses a proper name of its own, as a division of time which is currently accepted, viz., $\epsilon\beta\delta\delta\mu\alpha\epsilon$, or the term of seven days.

It would certainly never occur to any man of ordinary sense and powers of reflection to trace the operation of a cause less than a Divine command, on his coming to the knowledge of the simple division of time into weeks of seven days having obtained such a hold over the minds of men, as to be perpetuated without effort in different parts of the world from one generation to another. We are, however, now to examine an instance which will bring before us, not merely the general recognition of the week of seven days as a familiarly known division of time, but the seventh day of the week as formally claimed, in virtue of a Divine command, for the appointed day of rest and sanctification.

This is the example already referred to as related in Exodus xvi. The manna is there said to have fallen on the sixth day in a double portion, and when the leaders of the multitude came to Moses to report what had happened, Moses calmly answered, "This is what the Lord hath said, The rest of the Sabbath is sanctified to the Lord to-morrow." This event, it is to be observed, took place in the middle of the second month from the deliverance of the people out of Egypt. while the Divine Voice which proclaimed the ten commandments from Mount Sinai did not speak until some days of the third month were already past. Here, therefore, we plainly come upon the evident traces of the original Sabbath-day of the Divine Law of the beginning of creation. There is nothing in any degree whatever calculated to convey the idea of an entirely new and hitherto unknown law. Nor, indeed, can it be held to be reasonably possible that had the law been entirely new and unknown it would have been introduced solely under the force of the circumstances which required its observance. Such a law could never have been left on the part of the legislator, supposed to be engaged in promulgating for the first time a new enactment of such immense importance, so entirely denuded of the necessary efforts proper to impress on the minds of the subjects the serious nature of their duty to observe it. Exactly the same order of thought is to be found in a German writer, who has written, as a jurist, a learned pro-

fessional legal treatise on the Mosaic law. "Some recent writers," he says, "it is quite true, wish to look upon the Sabbath as simply a new law originating with Moses. But it is impossible to overlook the truth, that just as little here as in the preceding passage, or, indeed, anywhere else, is the law of the Sabbath brought forward in a manner to give the idea of its being an entirely new observance, as is clearly the case with all the other festivals. . . It belongs, in company with other precepts, very much more to the class of commands to which an ancient holy origin serves as a basis" (J. L. Saalschutz, Mosaischer Recht, p. 389).

Thus the *ex post facto* testimony, as collected from the books of Moses, even if we might have desired that it should have been more ample, still, as far as it goes, most fully confirms the assertion of the primitive Divine origin of our law. A greater abundance of the evidence might have been more pleasing and agreeable, but its conclusive force would scarcely have become the greater. One single fact, for which no other reasonable explanation can be given than that it owes its existence to the particular Divine Law in question, is, strictly speaking, all that is required.

§ 14. Reasonableness of the demand for evidence that the Gentile nations knew and observed the Sabbath.

Our sceptic friend, then, may now be supposed to say to us, "I can have no objection to grant you the force of the evidence gathered from the particular records preserved by the prophet Moses, but I do not think that justice to the general nature of the ex post facto testimony to such an important law as that which we are considering can be adequately satisfied by that which, however valuable and to the point in itself, as far as it goes, is only a particular branch of the general body of the evidence which we have a species of right to look for. Your particular witness, Noah, for example, who is brought forward to depose to his own familiarity with the law we are considering, and to his own obedience to it in the Ark, is understood by you to bear the relation to all who were born from his family of their prophet and teacher. The law, therefore, which he himself obeyed and religiously observed in the Ark, as the primitive law of God the Creator, would not fail to be inculcated by him as a solemn duty of religion to all his immediate descendants as long as he lived. Both the memory, therefore, and the religious observance of the law would be certainly handed on by tradition to those who came after, and would be religiously held in honour, so long at least as the memory of their patriarch and teacher, Noah, continued to be preserved. When to this is added the char-

acter of tenacious conservatism which is known to characterise the Asiatic races generally, it is certainly reasonable to conclude that, if we have rightly understood the example of Noah in the Ark, numerous generations which came after him must have learned from him the division of time into weeks of seven days, with the religious duty of the rest and sanctification of the seventh day, and numerous generations after Noah must have continued at least so long in the observance of that which he taught to them, as that traces of its observance among them are justly to be expected to be still extant."

Here again I should say that there can be but one reply to be given to our interlocutor, which will be to acknowledge in the most ample manner the justice of the representation which he makes to us. The law of God, promulgated from the beginning of creation, to become the trial and touchstone for all time of the obedience of the entire race of Adam, cannot be conceived as having passed out of the memory of mankind, without having left its traces in the records of the various Gentile populations, and therefore, we most joyfully accept the challenge to go in search of these presumable vestiges of the law, and to produce them after they have been found.

§ 15. General testimonies to the belief that all the Gentile nations in the beginning observed the Sabbath.

And here the first evidence we meet with is the general sentiment, which has widely obtained throughout the Christian world, that the division of time into the week of seven days, with the rest of the seventh day, comes from the primitive law of the Creator promulgated at the beginning of the world, and that the law was observed by the "Sons of God" in the world before the Flood, and afterwards for several generations by the descendants of Noah. Nägelsbach, the author of a learned Biblical Encyclopædia in the German language, says, "The majority of the Christian Fathers, as also the chief part of the older orthodox theologians, held the opinion that the Fathers and the Patriarchs before Moses observed the Sabbath" (Real Encyclopädie, art. "Sabbath"); and Bishop Patrick in his Commentary (Gen. ii. 2) writes, that when the Christian Fathers say the Patriarchs did not keep the Sabbath (Sabbatizare) as the Jews did (Tertullian ad. Jud. c. 2, 4), their real meaning is, that they did not keep it to the same strict letter of the law as it had been imposed upon the Jews who had been slaves in Egypt.

Huetius in his learned volume (Evangelica Demonstratio) says, "There is a striking passage of the Rabbi Gedalia (in Catena Cabalæ), in which he declares, that it was generally acknowledged among all the

Gentile people that the whole world celebrated the Sabbath-day, in confirmation of which assertion he refers to Josephus (c. Apionem);" and subsequently Huetius adds, from his own knowledge, "We undoubtedly know for certain that very many nations held the seventh day to be sacred, and considered that on this day the creation of the world had been completed" (Prop. iv. c. xi.)

Philo-Judæus may also be cited in the same sense. He distinctly affirms the Sabbath to have been esteemed to be sacred by all people as the $\tau o \tilde{v} \times \delta \sigma \mu o v \gamma \epsilon \nu \epsilon \sigma \sigma \sigma$, the birthday of the world, and that it was religiously observed by so many different people, that it might be truly called the $\epsilon \delta \epsilon \epsilon \tau \eta \pi \delta v \delta \eta \mu o \epsilon$, the world's festival (*De Opificio Mundi*).

Thus far, then, passing in review the wide-spread impression which has taken possession of far too many minds, and which is found much too widely diffused over various regions and times of the world not to be founded on facts so well known as to be incapable of being treated as doubtful, the general verdict appears satisfactory. But we still seem to want to be able to trace the actual observance of the Sabbath home to the records of some particular nation or nations of antiquity, where the obedience paid to the law is both found in full life and vigour, and at the same time outside the reach of any suspicion of its having been borrowed by imitation from the Hebrew people.

§ 16. Particular testimony from the Egyptian and Assyrian records.

The recent progress in the study of the antiquities of Egypt, which country appears to have possessed an advanced civilisation at a very early period of its foundation as a kingdom, bears a very clear testimony to the fact that the Egyptians were familiarly acquainted with the division of time into weeks. Dr. Max. Uhleman, in his work on Egyptian antiquities (Geschichte der Ægyptologie, p. \$2), says that the week of seven days was known; and Samuel Sharpe (Egyptian Hieroglyphics, vocabulary on the word *Year*) finds the word, which he reads UAKS, and of which he says the probable meaning is WEEK. He considers the seventy days appointed for the time of mourning in Egypt to be an indication of the Egyptians being familiar with the practice of reckoning time by weeks. Traces of the rest of the seventh day being known in Egypt, however, appear to be a discovery that still remains to be made.

But if this is all that can be as yet gathered from the records of Egypt, the progress of discovery in the deciphering the tablets containing the Assyrian cuneiform writings has brought results to light which are very much more explicit. Here we come upon evidence of the rest of the Sabbath being the law of the entire Babylonian and

Assyrian people. Mr. George Smith, of the department of Oriental antiquities in the British Museum, in a volume published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, "Assyria from the Earliest Times to the Fall of Nineve," pp. 13, 14, has the following passage: "Various feasts were appointed, but the most remarkable were the 'Sabbaths,' which were in use among the Assyrians as well as among the Jews. . . . On these Sabbath-days extra work and even missions of mercy were forbidden, certain foods were not to be eaten, and the monarch himself was not to ride in his chariot. The enactments were similar in character to those of the Jews."

Again, from papers which have appeared from time to time in the Transactions of the Biblical Archæological Society of London, the closest analogy is traceable between the religious traditions of Assyria and the early chapters of the Book of Genesis. Mr. Sayce (vol. i. p. 301, of the year 1872) points out the analogy between the tree of life in Paradise and the sacred tree of the Assyrian sculptures. Mr. H. F. Talbot, F.R.S. (vol. ii. p. 58), draws attention to the parallel manner in which the number seven was regarded as a holy number by both the Assyrians and the Jews.¹ But by far the most remarkable piece of evidence, which the cuneiform tablets of the Assyrians furnish, to prove that the Assyrian Sabbath was directly derived from the primitive Divine Law, handed on by tradition from the Ark of Noah, and not from any communication with the Hebrew people, is contained in a tablet giving the Assyrian account of the creation. Mr. Talbot reproduces the whole of this tablet with the original cuneiform letters (Trans. vol. v. p. 427), accompanied with a translation into English.

> "17. On the seventh day He appointed a holy day, 18. And to cease from all business He commanded."²

¹ The following occurs in a paper on the religious belief of the Assyrians, by H. F. Talbot, F.R.S., printed in the *Transactions of the Archaeological Biblical* Society, vol. ii. p. 58:--

"§ II. The Holy Number Seven.

"See Rev. i. 4, iv. 5, v. 6.—Commentators explain these passages of the Book of Revelation by saying that seven was a holy and mystical number among the Jews. And we now find it was still more so among the Babylonians, for the doctrine is stated most emphatically in the tablets. For instance, the following—*The Song of the* SEVEN SPIRITS :—

"They are seven! They are seven,

In the depths of the ocean they are seven,' &c.

"And again-

'O my God, my sins are seven times seven.'"

² The Book of Job also may claim to be cited as furnishing very remarkable traces of the week and the sanctification of the seventh day outside the reach of any influence

Thus the happy discovery which has opened up to the knowledge of the present and future times the hitherto unknown records of the civilisation both of Egypt and Assyria yields us, particularly in the case of Assyria, the last link of the evidence which is required to make the body of the testimony from the Gentile world complete.¹

§ 17. Reasonableness of the demand for proof of the general beneficial working of the law.

To this reply on our part we may now very reasonably conceive our inquirer saying to us, "I have followed attentively your brief tabular statement of the evidence, and while I quite perceive that the study to be brief operates to the prejudice of the subject, we must see that the necessary and equitable allowance is made for this. I do not know, then, I may certainly say, that much more now remains to be done except invite you to deal with the question of the intrinsic character of the law. If the Divine Creator makes Himself a Legislator, and comprises the whole of His creation in all its successive generations from its first to its last day under the force of His laws, and if the particular law which we are considering occupies a first place in

of the Mosaic legislation, to which, indeed, the book does not contain a single allusion.

Job's sons were seven in number, whose habit it is said to have been to have celebrated a week or seven days of family festivity at stated times, the feast taking place day by day in the house of each of the brothers in succession. "Cum que in orbem transissent dies convivii." When the days in succession were past, Job then assembled them and sanctified them, offering early in the morning sacrifices for them (Job i. 5).

Also when Job was stricken with his ulcers, his friends who came to condole with him waited a week before they thought the time come for speaking to him (*Job* ii. 13).

Clement of Alexandria has also the following passage, Stromata v. 256 :— "But that the seventh day is sacred, this is acknowledged not only by the Hebrews but also by the Greeks, as the day in which the entire creation of plants and living creatures was perfected. As Hesiod sings—

Πρώτον ένη, τετράς τε και έβδόμη ιερόν ήμαρ.

(First the day of the new moon, the fourth and the seventh, which is the sacred day). "Homer also writes-

Έβδομάτη δ' ήπειτα κατήλυθεν ίερον ήμαρ.

(The seventh day arrived after this, the day that is sacred).

"And again-

"Εβδομον ήμαρ έην και τῷ τετέλεστο άπαντα.

(It was the seventh day, and in which all things were completed)."

¹ See "Grotius de Veritate Christianæ Religionis," who in a note to the first chapter of his treatise has collected many additional evidences from the Gentile literature of the knowledge which the nations possessed of the division of time into weeks of seven days and of the duty of sanctifying the seventh day.

this primitive legislation, considering what its effect is bound to be, it cannot but challenge the judgment of its subjects, who may certainly be expected, after the experience of so many different centuries, among populations differing from each other so widely in their modes of life and their natural gifts, to have come to something like a universal verdict on the character of the law with respect to its beneficial effect upon the religious, social, and political well-being of human society. T am, as I have said, a man of the world and not either a philosopher or a theologian, but I think myself, in a plain way, able and willing to listen with interest and attention to any brief statement you may be disposed to lay before me, the drift of which would be, to show me the way in which the working of the law has been beneficial to the life of men, and in what manner it proves itself worthy of all that we should naturally expect from the presumable wisdom and goodness of its Divine Author."

Here I should again consider that there can be but one form of answer to be returned, which, I should suggest, might be given somewhat as follows. As a reasonable man, you will easily perceive how little commensurate any such brief reply as there can be time on our part to make and you can have leisure to listen to, could possibly be to the real importance of the world-wide question which you propose. Your attention, however, may be very properly turned to the experience of the Christian people. You can hardly fail here to be struck with the remarkable perpetuity amongst them of the Christian observance of the rest and worship of the seventh day, and of the general joyous and festive aspect their celebration of it wears in all the various populations which have accepted the law commanding it, as one coming from God. The presumable conclusion from so remarkable a fact will certainly be, that the law is found from nothing less than a world-wide experience to be most beneficial to human life.

§ 18. Instances showing the beneficial working of this particular Divine Law in promoting personal and social well-being.

And a very little study of the nature of the law in its visible working will go a long way to help you to understand the secret of this same beneficial influence. You may observe in what way the law contrives that a very great temporal blessing should be caused to spring out of the observance of a religious duty. It has been very well said that "a sea without a harbour is an awful conception," and such literally would be human time, if men were compelled to look

forward to one blank perpetual succession of days of labour uninterrupted with a single break. The seventh day, with its Divine obligation of the cessation from servile labour, thus becomes a haven of rest in the midst of the troubled sea of time. The advantages, then, of the Divine Law may be said to be, that while it usefully represses the self-ruinous efforts of those who are masters of their own time, and who, in pursuit of their schemes and selfish ends, would be tempted to overtax their natural strength, it secures, on the other hand, for all their dependents, as feeble and unprotected so ever as they may be, the indisputable right to their seventh day of rest. And this without their incurring the least debt or obligation to their masters, or to the employers of their labour for the boon of the day's rest, seeing that it comes to them solely and entirely as the free gift of their Divine Creator by His law. This, however, you will perceive to be merely the partial view of the Divine Law, which finds in it nothing but the seventh day bringing with it its repose from the wear and tear and the fatigue of the toils of the six days of labour. But, as is doubtless well known to you, besides this, the Divine Creator has given His special blessing to the day, and has sanctified it, or, in other words, has set it apart from the ordinary labours of the six days, that it may become a day to be employed in the exercises of religious worship.

We should find that this aspect of the law, were we to pursue it, would open up a subject-matter for consideration far too engrossing to bear to be touched upon at the present moment, but should a future opportunity offer itself, we might then attempt to consider it together.

Our subject has thus not been found very well disposed, as we must confess, to second our desire for brevity; but I think it may be now brought to a conclusion by our drawing your attention to a fact that cannot fail to be patent. Assemblies for religious worship in common give to a day a festive character, in a manner which can be obtained in the same degree by no other means. In all other festivities there is the liability to excess and to subsequent bitterness, against which it is an impossibility to secure them.

> "Medio ast in fonte leporum Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angit,"

-(Lucretius iv.)

is the sadly true confession wrung by hard experience from a great Roman poet. From all this bitterness the assembly for religious worship is free, and what with its prayers in common, its offering of sacrifice to God in the name of all, its choral music, its occasion for the meeting of friends and acquaintances, and its aids to the renewal

of family and friendly greetings, we may easily understand with how sincere a joy an inspired poet could say, "I rejoiced in that which was said to me, We will go into the house of the Lord." What, then, could you desire more from the Legislator's law than that it should consult the common good of all, by securing the indispensable rest from labour, at the stated recurring interval of time, which immemorial experience among all people shows to be the best adapted to the human constitution, and that it should further invest the day thus claimed for the day of rest, with the honour and distinction of being a day of festive observance in common, the joys and consolations of which are a living fountain, the waters of which appear never to run dry?¹

Our sceptic inquirer will assuredly now say to us, "You have made me your debtor for a body of knowledge I should otherwise not have acquired. I am not an enemy to human legislation; far from it. I honour law as the grand security of human life, and as the chief protection of the weak against the strong. I am not only unable to gainsay each step of the inquiry through which you have been my guide, but I have no desire to offer any opposition to it. To have lived as I am doing, without God in the world, I have long felt to be a real misery, and to cause a void in the inner man which nothing can supply. I may, however, reasonably ask for time to reflect upon all that has been brought before me, and in the meantime I humbly commend myself to the charitable prayers of all those who have taken part in the kind and considerate effort to bring me to make a surrender of myself to the laws of the Divine Legislator, from whom hitherto I have been living as an alien and a stranger."

¹ The most remarkable of all testimonies, coming also from a quarter in which it would be more than usually difficult to suspect the presence of any religious motive or influence, to the beneficial character of the legislation of the rest of the seventh day, is found in a work by the well-known French atheist P. J. Proudhon, "De la celebration du Dimanche, considerée sous les rapports de (I) l'hygiêne publique, (2) de la morale, (3) de la relation de famille, (4) de la relation de cité."

It is quite superfluous for such a writer to say (p. 13) that he treats the subject entirely from the human point of view, and that he is not to be suspected of any leanings to religion, because he finds that which is in perfect agreement with reason in a religion. The man who, in contempt of all Divine and human law, pronounces "property to be theft" (la propriété c'est le vol), is quite safe from the suspicion of being a believer in any religion. This total absence of all religion, however, makes his testimony to the beneficial effects of the "*celebration*" of the seventh day of rest, in the fourfold respect above enumerated, the more noteworthy. Atheist as he is, he recognises the benefit of the law and desires to claim it for the benefit of the very society which is to be taught to deny the God without whom the law would never have been heard of.

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