

VII. Interactions with the World

G. Progress and Science

489.

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Braces { } indicate the manuscript version, where there are disagreements of substance.

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Religion and Progress.

The religion of Christ is Catholic, in this sense: that it can be brought home to the understanding, the conduct, and spiritual life of all conditions of men. It is wider than the range of science, more comprehensive than the sphere of political or social progress. It jars with no form of just government, requires no abrogation of innocent local customs, debars no one from honorable employment, clogs no fair enterprise, fetters the mind in no kind of investigation or study. It is Catholic, or universal, filling all the earth, living on till the Day of Judgment.

In the early ages of the Church it used to be a reproach to a doctrine to say "it is new." And by that rule alone heresies were detected in the days of Tertullian, St. Augustine, and St. Athanasius. "What you preach is new," they used to say to Marcion, Arius and Pelagius, therefore not taught by Christ, therefore, false. Now the ideas of men seem to be reversed and the enemies of faith say "your Church is old, therefore false," "yours are the ideas of the men of the twelfth century, of the ages preceding the invention of printing, of the steam engine, the electric telegraph, and the sewing machine, therefore you should discard them." "It is vain," said the renowned writer Mr. Bancroft the other day, in Washington, "for the Pope to attempt to bring back the ecclesiastical institutions of the fourteenth {XVI.} century." In other words, progress is set up as the great antagonist of the Church of Christ; and conspirators against truth throughout the world have determined among themselves to make the very ideas she first taught to man, of human brotherhood, equality and liberty, and the fruits those ideas bring forth in society, the pretext of their hostility to her and a reason for her destruction.

The object of this lecture will be to examine the relations between faith and all desirable progress, and to show that no antagonism between it and the Catholic religion can exist.

Progress, according to its primary meaning, is an advance, or a movement forward. In this meaning it is not necessarily a good. If the movement is in the right direction, then each forward impulse that adds to it is good. If in the wrong direction, the more there is of it, the greater evil. Crime may progress as well as virtue, disease as well as health.

To know, therefore, what there is of desirable in modern progress, we must know

in what direction modern progress is carrying us. On this point opinions are somewhat divided. Some say the direction is downward towards anarchy in government, barbarism in social life, corruption and unbelief in the individual heart, in a word, to temporal and eternal ruin.

Others maintain that we are progressing towards felicity. Each day strikes some chain from the limbs, some fetter from the mind of humanity. Each day brings us nearer the goal of our destiny. We and our fathers have been passing through the Red Sea, and lingering with worn garments and weary hearts in the desert. But the promised land will come in sight, at last, if not to us, at least, (what ought to comfort us, all the same) to posterity. And the era of happiness--whatever that may consist in--will surely dawn at last.

A solid {sober} minded thinker can not agree with either of these views. It is certain that this world will never contain either heaven or hell. "After death is the judgment." Death is the precipice over which corruption takes the final plunge in its progress to the lowest depth, and where true worth is lifted up as the water that rises in mists above a cataract, to its home on high. Therefore as there can be nothing very appalling to the heart that understands its destiny in the evils to come, so there is nothing to bring ecstasy in the good.

Whatever there has been, therefore, or whatever there is going to be in progress, it will not be anything to take the place, or remove the necessity, of religion. Individuals must die, be judged, and go to heaven or hell, according to their previous choice, whatever happens to humanity; and so individuals will need faith and prayer and the Sacraments that cleanse from sin and strengthen against temptation all the same.

But to ventilate this subject more thoroughly let us take up one by one some of the items of progress from the mouths of its advocates, and see whether any one of them conflicts with the Catholic Church.

Since the sixteenth century, they say, there has been progress in science, in civilization, in arts, and in government. Consider these one by one.

1st. Science--The attempt to bring science into antagonism with religion is made in two ways:

1st. From its assumed vastness in modern times. We know so much more now, than they knew in the twelfth century, that it would be absurd for us to believe what they believed. "As the grown man puts aside the garments of his childhood, so humanity ought to cast aside the opinions of its pupilage." But however much more than the men of the twelfth century we may know of other things, we do not know more of religion than they knew; and nothing that we know on any subject contradicts what they held, or warrants in us any claim of superiority, on that subject, over them. Confronting age with age, on the point of religious knowledge, I fear that our polished Nineteenth Century could not bear comparison with that rude time chosen to be called

the Iron Age. I say nothing of ignorance among the uneducated classes, who very often have never heard the name of their Redeemer, except in curses. But even among the educated and polished classes how dense is the ignorance of the true religion all over the land! almost a majority, knowing neither what Christianity teaches nor on what grounds it rests its claims. Even if our conceited assumption of superiour knowledge were true, it would be no warrant for rejecting the faith they held, for that can never grow old.

"But science contradicts the dogmas of faith and on that ground explodes religion." This is the assertion most insisted on by recent enemies of religion, men in many instances calling themselves preachers of what they seek to discredit and undermine. Suppose, now, I recite the twelve articles of the Creed, and you name over your sciences. Which science will come into collision with what "I believe?" and which article will it conflict with?

Religion treats exclusively of the invisible. "Faith is the evidence of things not seen." But science deals exclusively with the visible. Though both were false, or both true, they never could conflict because they never meet in their teachings. What one asserts of the body can never deny what the other teaches of the soul.

A few examples of attempts made to bring science to bear as an argument against religion will serve to illustrate this statement.

Astronomy was once thought to be in contradiction to the Church's doctrines, and, as long as this idea prevailed, was studied with much eagerness. "The earth moves," said Galileo, and he began to prove it from scripture. "That is heresy," exclaimed his rivals, and the argument from scripture went on until Galileo was obliged to admit that he could not prove the earth's motion from scripture, or, in other words, retract what he had said. And "yet it moves," he persisted in saying, and by the time the controversy had passed through the Roman congregations and up as high as the Pope, all he had to say was "perhaps it does move; the Church does not teach anything to the contrary." "God made the rainbow a sign of his league with men that He would no more destroy the earth with water." "A contradiction" said the infidels. For the rainbow is but light refracted by drops of water in the air, and must have existed from the beginning, whenever light came from the sun, and water hung on the mists {of the air}. In their hurry to find a mistake they never noticed that God is not said to have first made the rainbow after the deluge, but to have it then for the first time a sign of the league between Himself and men; and so, made the mistake themselves.

2d. "The stars are much larger than the earth, and perhaps inhabited. What then becomes of the old notion that all visible things were made for man, and what probability is there, that the Son of God would, out of almost countless worlds far greater in size and in population, choose the earth for the dwelling of His love, and human nature for the one in which to offer the Ineffable Sacrifice to His eternal Father?"

The stars are many of them larger than the earth undoubtedly, and that they are inhabited is no improbable conjecture. But this, although contrary to the opinion formerly held among men, is not contrary to any teaching of faith. Almighty God never taught astronomy. When He had occasion to speak of the sun and moon and stars, He did not explain what they were in themselves, but what they were to us--what use we were to make of them in working out our salvation. His Revelation is mysterious enough when dressed in our language. It would be utterly unintelligible were He to clothe it in His own.

We knew from scripture, long before any one conjectured the stars to be inhabited worlds, that there are nine choirs or orders of angels, each higher in excellence and, for ought we know, exceeding in number all the race of men; enough to furnish inhabitants for a million of stars, if God chooses them to dwell there.

That God should stoop to redeem man is indeed a mystery of condescension and love, above our comprehension. But then He stooped to create us, and why not to save us? That He should choose *human* nature rather than any other is no great difficulty, for the distance from Creator to creature is so great that it is neither here nor there what creature God comes to, after He has once decided to come to any one at all.

Geology was next invoked to oppose religion. It too exploded some old ideas but none that were of Faith. The strata marking the duration of the earth were such as to indicate indubitably an age compared to which the Biblical six thousand years were as a day to a hundred years. The philosophers clapped their hands, and cried, "The cause is finished." They did not reflect that religion never pretended to give the mechanical process of the earth's formation, but only to assert that God made it, and incidentally to mention in what order He made it, and to designate the periods, after the one which "the earth was without form and void," occupied by each step of the operation as "days" which were doubtless periods of almost countless years, as the word is used to signify, not their length, but the order in which they succeeded one another. But this order, mentioned only incidentally, agrees with the one in which geologists say the earth must have been constructed.

The Azoic Time, or time when there was no animal or vegetable life, corresponds to the scriptural time, when the earth was without form and void.

Vegetable life opens the Silurian Era or Palaeozoic time; and we read in Genesis that after making the dry land appear, God created the plants and vegetables. Next in order in Geology came the fishes and reptiles, then the animals, and last *man*; an order though not distinctly marked in the Biblical account, yet is in no wise contradicted by it.

Moreover, geology asserts that all the component parts of the earth were originally in a state of fusion--were all liquid. And the scripture says "darkness was on the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved across the face of the waters."

So geology instead of contradicting, did but confirm the teachings of faith, and

the philosophers soon grew tired of it, and left its study to the professors in colleges.

I might illustrate the uselessness of all efforts to bring science into collision with faith, by many other examples, as of the efforts made by the French academicians to trace back the history of the Chinese, East Indians and Egyptians to an antiquity far beyond the Mosaic era; of rationalists, and other Protestants to assail the Church through ecclesiastical history, philology and criticism. But these two must suffice to show that our age had made no progress in science which will justify any departure from the old Catholic Faith.

2d. The Arts.--In the arts which contribute to what Macauley called the aim of Baconian Philosophy, *human comfort*, the present is unquestionably in advance of the past. A New England writer, long ago, wrote his opinion that "They did not know everything down in Judea," and the opinion is just. We have more comfortable dwellings, better means of transportation, better clothing and food, and better patent medicines than they had in the first, or eleventh or sixteenth century. But what then? Therefore we can follow Christ without carrying a cross? Therefore we can be saved without faith, and obtain grace without the Sacraments?

We can not carry any of our inventions or comforts into eternity with us, and therefore can not make any of them an excuse for neglecting the religion by whose practice alone we can save our souls.

3d. Civilization.--As for progress in civilization, so much boasted of among us, it is hard to tell what it is. That there has been a softening down of the rudeness of public manners, a refining disposition to hide, at least, the grossness of vice, nobody can deny. It is not the fashion now to kill one's enemies with weapons that make so much noise as fire-arms, or such ugly gashes as steel. The progress seems to me to consist in this: there are certain ideas of justice and right, which Christianity introduced, and by ten centuries and more of labor, made respectable and fashionable in the world; and fashion will rule the outward conduct, though the ideas that gave it birth, may never find a lodgment in the mind.

Civilization, therefore, is but a consequence of Christianity, and it would be absurd to speak of it as superseding the Church, as absurd as to propose to let the moon do the office of illuminating the earth. When Christianity is rooted out of society in any place, civilization will go along with it. But let there be ever so much of it, civilization can never save souls. Refined, elegant, genteel people may have the stain of guilt upon their souls, may die in sin and be lost. Dives was an elegant gentleman. He dressed richly and gave faultless dinners, but for all that "he died," and, as our Divine Redeemer expressed it, with awful simplicity, "was buried in hell."

The same unjust reproach is urged against the Church in the name of freedom and just government. "The world grows freer as it recedes from the Catholic Church," was the calumny of Protestants. "The world grows freer as it recedes from Christ," is

the parallel blasphemy of the atheists. Both are equally calumnies.

Have you not, in the history of the world, O, Atheist, enough of peoples and tribes, never subjected to the yoke of Christ, to put to the proof your theory of the sufficiency of unfettered humanity to find freedom and felicity on the earth? What result did you obtain in Greece and Rome of old, or in China or New Zealand of today?

Has not the experiment of Christianity without the Pope been sufficiently tried during the last three centuries in the civilized world? Yet where is your perfection of freedom in Prussia, in Sweden, Norway, and England?

Facts refute the calumny, and the nature of things shows it to be clearly absurd, that any movement from the Church should be in the direction of true liberty.

For liberty, as a good, does not mean freedom from all control, a condition that belongs only to Almighty God, but freedom from illegitimate control. The soul is free when the understanding is set in truth and the free will in justice. Those only are free, indeed, whom Christ has made free.

The Church, being the infallible teacher of truth and the sole channel of grace, is the source of true liberty to the world. Those who depart from her therefore to seek liberty are like persons running into the desert after water. Error and sin are the only shackles of the soul. The great end, that which gives its value to freedom, is eternal happiness, with God in Heaven; just as eternal reprobation is what makes slavery hateful and loathsome. Personal and political freedom are fruits of the Catholic teaching, smaller, yet still precious. They follow the spiritual freedom imparted by grace as effect follows cause. In any country, true liberty is attained in proportion as justice is supreme, in proportion, that is, as government controls no more and the people obey no less, than right demands. Hence there can be no true liberty where the public conscience does not worship truth and justice as absolutely supreme. But the public conscience is the public belief. But the Church alone teaches the belief that right and justice not only ought to be, but infallibly are to be supreme. Therefore Christianity alone affords society any sure foundation for civil liberty.

If there is, as a matter of fact, oppression in Christian lands, what would there not be in those same lands, were Christianity removed? If men were not withheld from trampling upon one another's right by the fear of judgment, what measure would there be to crime were that fear taken away?

They who recede from the Church, therefore, cannot approach liberty, and there is no desirable progress that has its source outside of Jesus Christ and His immaculate bride, the Catholic Church.

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Address, *The Freeman's Journal and Catholic Register*, July 31, 1847

We embrace the earliest opportunity provided us to enrich our columns with the following admirable Essay of Sylvanus Rosecrans, one of the graduates at the Second Commencement of St. John's College, Fordham.

We were among the thousands who had the privilege of hearing it pronounced on the day of Commencement. Its pungency in counteracting the idolatrous "Hero-Worship" of our age, tickled and delighted us--because in a certain sense, it was just, it was also, in a certain sense, original, notwithstanding its title--and, besides all this, it was well delivered and gave evidence that its author, both in writing and delivery, is capable of much more.

In listening to it we were satisfied, as we now are on reading it, that it is vastly more moral in its conclusions, than logical in its premises. Still it has great merit, and if we could have taken it with any degree of Catholic feeling of self-respect, from the columns of a paper which has attempted to degrade the Mother, the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mother of the World's Redeemer, to a likeness of the "Women of Long Island," we should have copied the speech from the *New-York Herald*, in our number of last week. Now, however, that we are enabled to copy from the *Truth Teller*, we do so with great pleasure.

[*Corrections to the Freeman's Journal rendition were made using the version published on July 16, 1847, in The New York Herald.*]

NOTHING ORIGINAL

BY SYLVANUS ROSECRANS,

A Graduate of St. John's College.

Man is indeed fearfully and wonderfully made; his capacities of mind and body are manifold and mysteriously contrived; the end of his being is unspeakably grand; but it has not been given to man to create. He can explore, investigate, understand; he can trace analogies and follow premises to their intricate and far off conclusions, he is subtle to discover the hidden purposes to which things may be applied; he can give new forms to material objects about him, causing the rude rock to start up into the graceful statue, and the dull canvass to gleam with images of breathing life, but he can originate nothing. It is a very common impression that man not only can originate, but has originated many things. We have grown into the habit of considering sciences, philosophies, literature, and all those inventions by which civilised is distinguished from savage life, as having been created, brought out of nothing into existence, by the human race, and of looking upon the history of arts and sciences, and, in short, of

civilization, as a history of the production, and not a record of the discoveries of the human mind.--Hence, when we go back into the world's primeval times, and picture to ourselves as the yet unfinished earth, a mere expanse of land and water--the water a trackless waste of blue, the land a savage wilderness through which men, in company with beasts, feeding on roots and acorns, roamed without dwelling or fixed abode, a voiceless and brutal herd; and from them trace along from age to age, the adoption of successive comforts and conveniences, we imagine that we are reviewing the additions made by human ingenuity to the original creation. And as each improvement appears, whether it be a patent pack-saddle in patriarchal days, or steam engine in modern times, we say, behold a manifestation of man's creative power:--behold the cunning contrivances with which he elaborates the rude tenement wherein he is doomed to dwell. Wherefore we find much that is worthy of wonder and praise in modern days. The inventions of the last three centuries are almost innumerable. Gunpowder, the art of printing, the telescope, the lightning rod, the magnetic telegraph--all owe their existence to the prolific present era. So we say, in these last days, the genius of man, developed by long ages of sharp experience, is opening its treasure house, and Ceres like, filling the earth with plenty. Now, at least, man is manifesting his true character as superior to the planet whereon he delves. After 6000 years of progress, he begins to be the master of matters. Now at last his intellect leads captive into servitude all material elements. The blasts of the hurricane he has hitched to a car of merchandize, and the red lightning is his swift-winged messenger. And not only that, but at will he can create the hurricane--at will he can produce the local lightning flash. Now is his craft triumphant over all things, now his cunning is god of this world. Bow the knee, oh ye people; offer incense in the temple of science; sing psalms in the work shops unto this god who is manifesting himself, this creative energy of man. And personifications of this creative divinity--inventors, are made to be gods and demi-gods. The inventors of steam engines and of gunpowder have leaped from the roof of the temple of art to the breezy top of our many-peaked Olympus, and the lofty Olympian dwellings, which, in the poetic mythology of the dreamy Grecians of old, resounded to the quarrels of ox-eyed Juno and Jupiter, the dread compeller, are become the abode of Dr. Faustus, and Watt, and Galileo, and a host of others, deified for similar glorious deeds. And to them, full of wondering awe, we offer incense of panegyric and sacrifice of printed praise.

Yet, it seems to me that the ardor of our admiration will somewhat cool, if approaching more nearly to them, we analyze the actions for which we praise them; and, that when the distance which now lends enchantment to our view, is taken away, and the mists which round-eyed wonder has wrapped around them are dissipated, our awe will vanish, and we shall discover that we have lost sight of what they did, and honoured them for what they did not. Certain I am, that we shall find that they are men, endowed with only human faculties, of which they made only human use; and

that far from creating or making any addition to the original world, they fell very far short of discovering half the wonderful things whose existence is twin-born with time. For inventions are, properly, only discoveries; in which the inventor creates nothing really new, and in which he simply makes known to men some ancient fact of which men had hitherto been ignorant. He does not, I repeat, create his discovery. As Columbus, in the first voyage across the Atlantic, created none of the islands, or forests, or Indians, whose existence he discovered; so the inventor, who in the course of his investigations, arrives at some use to which a material force may be applied, creates or produces nothing. For example, when Watt, after much reasoning, came to the conclusion that steam, from its expansive property, would force the piston of the steam engine downwards as well as upwards, he did not create the expansive property of steam; and when the idea of having a condenser separate from the cylinder, occurred to him, he did not endow steam with the capacity of being condensed in a vessel apart from that in which it expanded. The steam that arose from the caldron, in which Pelops was boiled for supper to the gods by afterwards haughty Tantalus, was as capable of violent expansion and sudden condensation, as that which puffed from the high pressure pipe of the first engine that rippled the broad bosom of the old North river. And had Tantalus been in need of a steam engine then, without creating any thing, but simply using the vapor already made, he might have had clustering about his memory all the laurel leaves that now deck the brow of the inventor of the steam engine. Or, again, when the nameless unknown who invented gunpowder, discovered that 78 parts of saltpetre, 12 of charcoal, and 10 of sulphur, would form an explosive mixture, he did not endow saltpeter, or charcoal, or sulphur, with any new property, but simply brought to light a property which they had not been known to possess.

If you say that he did not endow these bodies with any new property, yet by a peculiar combination of them, he produced a body which had not before existed, and which therefore, was new, I admit it willingly--for to combine bodies and change their exterior forms, is by no means to create. precisely in the same manner a mechanic who is making some article of furniture, may, but some mistake, give it a shape which no mechanic had given it before. And if he do, he has produced a body which never existed, and which therefore, is new. And so if an apothecary, in compounding any one of his mixtures, should by accident mingle his ingredients in a different proportion from that in which they are wont to be mingled, then, he has by a peculiar combination of his ingredients, produced a body that never before existed, and which is therefore new. Wherefore, both the awkward mechanic and the blundering apothecary are entitled to a place among those who, by originating, have won unto themselves a deathless name and ought of right to eat ambrosia by the side of Watt and Galileo, in our scientific mythology. "But this is absurd, " you will say.--"These persons do not produce any thing absolutely new.--the article of furniture which the mechanic makes is

still an article of furniture whatever be its shape--and the compound of the apothecary is still a mixture of certain ingredients, whatever be their proportions." And I answer so the mixture of the nameless monk is still saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur, in whatever proportions they may enter into his destructive compound.

Steam is steam, whether they use it to force a piston upwards and downwards, or it be allowed to float to heaven and join the army of the storm-cloud king. In a word, combination cannot be a creation: changing the forms of material objects is not making material objects--discerning the hidden uses of things is not producing any hidden uses. However new the invention may be to ignorant men, it is no addition to the creation. Inventors, therefore, are neither gods nor demi-gods endowed with a superhuman creative faculty: but simply men of strong logical minds, acute observing faculties and patient application in investigation. And they are entitled to credit only if they professed comprehensive faculties; but thanks are due them that while other men are wrapped in sensuality--guided by impulse--dancing, feasting, reveling, quarrelling, killing, as the animal suggested--they live along, and intellectual and lofty life-searching, and contemplating the wonderful works of God. Searching out and contemplating, I say; for none but those old dreamers, the alchemists, who lived in the twilight of science and to whom, therefore, all things were distorted, magnified or dimmed by the mist light in which they were enveloped; or some obscure madman, hunting after perpetual motion or yet those more insane who sought in galvanism for the principle of life--the breath of God;--except these, I say, no one has ever dreamed of adding to the material atoms or elements of forces with which earth was endowed originally when on the morning of the 5th day she shot forth from space all graced in her robes of verdure and flowers, and girded with her belt of oceans to roll onward during her appointed 10,000 years.

All this, it may be said, is true enough. No one will claim that man originates any material thing, or that by the aid of science one man can produce any element, which, to another, is impossible. "Science," at best, only "investigates," but "art creates." Science, at best, only generalizes phenomena and writes down their generic name; but art produces phenomena which science may generalize. It is not to be expected nor to be desired that man should originate any material thing: here does not lie the world of his productions. The poet is not ruler of lifeless clouds; his world is not a material, but a spirit world; his body, it may be, is laboring on in the commonplace world of other men, struggling and wasting beneath the shadow and the cloud. But the interior man, the soul of the poet is wandering away through a bright world of beauty and joy. Forms and beings of unearthly splendor are ever flashing before his interior eye; and tones, soft, silvery and sweet as those that gush forth when angels' fingers sweep across ethereal heartstrings, with unremitting cadence, fall faintly on his ear from afar. And from this bright world of gladness and melody, which is the world of his own

conceptions, and therefore of his own creation, he brings forms and beings which are his own, entrancing the nations with the new song he sings, and leading princes captive by declaring the unutterable beauties his soul has gazed upon. Wherefore, it is said, every great poet, of necessity, originates. And of great poets, since the beginning of the world, many have appeared who, during this long flight of ages, have cast many a gleam of brightness upon the sable wings of time. Such is the soothing and ecstatic theory with which modern poets pour a mist of the wonderful about their verses, so that any man whose initials have been printed in the "poet's corner" of some newspaper, underneath four stanzas of some jingling words, imagines that he has bestowed upon the world a token of his creative power--some beauty which the eye of man had never before gazed upon, and which mortal conception never before figured. Alas, for this theory of the originality of poets, that the poetry which is written must be read! Alas, for those who admire originality, that they are allowed access to the innumerable books that have been published--that they seek to enjoy too much original poetry, and are brought to the sad conclusion that it does not exist!

It is an universal complaint among those who have read much, that, for them, reading has lost its fascinations--they find nothing new, they say; they remember a time when a book they had not read was a whole world of wonders they had not explored, and on the remembrance of that sunny time they dwell dotingly, as a dreamer cherishes sweet memories of pleasant hours now gone by, and sealed up forever in the returnless past.--Their hearts yearn to feel again those wild, thrilling ecstatic emotions that used to rush upon them long ago, when, of a winter's night, the legendary whispered his wizard tale from the corner of the ingle side, while the winds of winter wailed moaningly without, and the waning lamp burned feebly; when leaning forward they listened breathless--in that happy time when the lay of the poet was to them a gush of spirit-music from an unseen world. Whence it came, they knew not--why it came they knew not; but that it was beautiful they felt. But now their case is sadly different--now they find nothing that thrills them--nothing that touches them--nothing new. They buy book after book, and looking longingly into them, find that infinitely "flat, stake, and unprofitable" repetition of what they have already read in so many different authors. "Homer," says one of these, "is the only original writer that ever lived." And Dr. Johnson, another, says of Homer, "nation after nation, century after century, has been able to do little more than transpose his incidents, new-name his characters and paraphrase his sentiments." Some learned critics have made it their business to discover the similar passages in different authors, and there are editions of classics loaded with notes and commentaries explaining that this idea was borrowed from there and this from there--that here the author imitated such a passage of some preceding writer. We are told by these, how much and for what Virgil is indebted to Theocritus, Horace to Pindar, Shakspeare to Euripides, Sophocles and Æschylus; and we learn from

these that almost all that is excellent in great poets, had its origin among different individuals of inferior fame. How many obscure writers do our commentators bring to light as having been robbed of their excellent passages by Shakspeare. How many of his most matchless productions are mere patchwork--or recasting, a further development of simple legends sung in rude Saxon by some Allan-a-Dale of old--where the plan is nothing altered--the characters nothing changed! How many of those rude ballads--how many of those wild Saxon legends--how many tales gathered from all tribes and people, are incorporated in his poetry! As a despot in the realm of poetry, he has exacted from public poets whatever they had which he needed--like the rod of Moses, absorbing into himself with the gigantic power of nature the feeble instruments with which magicians strove to rival him.

And so we might go on and show by induction that no poets originate; but that all use without scruple whatever they read and hear-- without asking whether it may not have been read a thousand times, and that of the thousand and one sonnets, poems, &c., which one must see or shut his eyes in these days of cheap publication, an essential part of one will not be found which will not also be found to be the essential part of at least five hundred others. And this ought to occasion no surprise, for poetry is a representation of nature and of life; and nature and life are essentially the same, by whatever poet, and in whatever age they are viewed. Poetry is a representation of nature and of life, as they are, and as they are they remain unchangeable through all ages. Nature in her beauty, nature in her sublimity never changes. The solitary grove on a summer noonday, with its carpet of green grass, and the little brook purring through its deep cool shade, where the swaying branches of the gigantic trees murmur a soft and dreamy melody, when the south breeze rustles through them, is beautiful--whether Moschus tells his longings after it in Greek, or it be painted to the enraptured fancy in the touching and the simple lay of the bard-peasant Burns. The storm on a sultry summer afternoon--the gathering of black thunder clouds in the west--the huge broken-edged masses rolling upward, mountainous in size and blackness, as Erebus, towards the zenith--now driving towards each other, now recoiling, now whirling around and seeming to retreat--then shooting with the winged speed of thought far up into the sky--the thunder meanwhile rumbling hoarsely in the black depths, and their lurid lightning along the dark edges of the clouds--the wind passing fitfully by, whirling along light reeds and flying straws--then the bursting of the storm on the shrinking earth--wild beasts cowering in their dens--men's hearts failing them for fear--the peasant barring his cottage door, and with closed eyes falling on the ground--the shepherd clinging to the crags of the lonely mountain--the gasping mother clasping her young child to her nerveless bosom in agony, while the winds rave--the forests are prostrated--fields are desolated--"Torrents swelled" and the "sea roars in its foaming friths"--the terrific grandeur of this scene is the same, whether Virgil describe it in

hexameter Latin, or it be the theme of the mountain muse, the wild raving Ossian. And life, with its exterior vicissitudes and its interior passions--with its extreme of poverty and affluence--with its joys for one and sorrows for another, changes not with the lapse of time and difference of latitude; and the characters of men, acted upon by these vicissitudes, and made up of these interior passions, are essentially the same so long as man is man. The feelings of the human heart require the same language for their expressions, whether that heart throbs beneath the shaggy breast of a Grecian hero, or under the steel cloak of Knight in times of chivalry. According to the passions by which it is stirred, so will be the voice it utters, whenever and wherever it is moved.

The language in which Leander, all wet and dripping with the water of the Hellespont, wooed the Sestian damsel, to see whom he had swam three quarters of a mile, was the same equally expressive of that emotion of the heart as that which is lisped by the romancer now-a-days, as "capers nimbly to the soft breathings of the lascivious lute," before the fastidiously painted belle of a modern parlor. And again, patriotism, that loftiest feeling of the natural heart, gave birth to the same strain in the days when Roman poets changed the praises of the seven-hilled city, sitting above the crushed world, as in modern times gushed forth when Moore, Erin's patriot bard, proudly unbound his Island harp, and gave all its chords to light, freedom and song. Sensual pleasure--the feeling of those who would hide their love of animal enjoyments of roast beef and claret under the name of conviviality, utters the same sentiments now, in the song of Anacreon Moore, as it did three thousand years ago, in the lays of Anacreon the Greek. The wail that bursts from the bereaved and desolate heart, over hopes blasted, plans frustrated, kindness scorned, is the same, whether it burst frantically from the doomed *Ædipus* of Sophocles or be moaned piteously to the walls of a rude hut, by mad King Lear of Shakspeare.

The character which Homer has drawn, and to which he has given the name of Achilles, is a hero; whether the son of Thetis, he sit all day gazing into the hearty *Ægean* sea, nursing his wrath, and involving his sea-goddess mother, in Homer, or tilt in tournaments and thread dark forests in search of danger, the lion-hearted Richard of Sir Walter Scott. And, in short, all that is poetry, all the reality in literature, is unchangeable forever. The words may vary, the language may vary, it may be written now in hexameter, now in trimeter, now in rhyme, now in blank verse, but in essence, that by which it is poetry, never varies. It is that language of the general human heart, that representation of the universal human life, of which no particular man can claim to be the originator, since its origin is not in man, but in the originator of man--even God. Wherefore, neither ancient poets nor modern poets have originated, but simply have described what they saw and felt in the world, and in their own hearts. And, in fact, from the nature of things, it is as impossible that man should originate any truth, as it is that he should create a material particle. He may give a form to truth--he may view it in

relation to one thing or in relation to another; but it is absurd to say that he can originate it--for truth has its existence out of the mind and independently of the mind. The human race need not be told of the existence of a truth, in order to call that truth into existence. It was just as true that planets acted upon each other with a force inversely proportioned to the squares of their distances from each other, and directly proportioned to their masses, before the fall of the far-famed apple in Sir Isaac Newton's orchard, as afterwards. It was just as true that lightning and electricity were identical before Franklin flew his kite on Boston Common, as it was after he had announced that wonderful fact to the scientific world. That is to say, the intellect of men and truth are realities, totally distinct from, and independent of, each other. If truth depended on the mind, it would be as changeable, as fluctuating, as capable of non-existence, as is the mind. But truth is eternal--unchangeable. It would also be like the mind, local; so that what is true here, would not be true there; but it is universal, from everlasting to everlasting. All truths are formulæ written upon the universe by the hand of God, which are eternally, unchangeably written--whether man read them or not. As ages on ages slide away, the blinded visions of men begin slowly to decipher the simpler and more easy sentences that are written in their own minds and hearts, and on the sensible world about them. But do they, therefore, originate the formulæ? Are they the authors of that which existed from all eternity? No! Truth exists out of the human mind. The eternal years of God are hers--the existence of God is hers. Hence, when we glorify our inventors, and our original writers, let us remember that we honor them, not that they have produced anything for us, but because they have searched more into the mysteries that surround our race than common men. Let us always be mindful that our destiny is to contemplate truth, and not to make it. As yet our race has fathomed but few of the mysteries that are hidden in all material things; and it could hardly be expected that we could pierce very deep. Life is too short, and too full of fiery passions and turbulent strife and bitterness to allow us intellectually to comprehend many of the truths within our grasp. And even if our life were longer and more calm, we should not have travelled over all the field that lies before us at its end. We could still discover, investigate, understand, at the end of a very long life. And when leaving this scene of turbulence and passion, the mind will, I doubt not, find truths to discover, investigate and understand, through the long stillness of immeasurable eternity.

491.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, October 23, 1852

Progress.

Every earnest minded man before allowing himself to be tricked into enthusiasm in favor of any idea should take some pains to determine in his own mind what that

idea is. "Try the spirits" and see before falling down to worship them whether they are *black* or *white*. Now what is *progress*--about which half the unbelieving world is just now shouting so madly? What idea is there under that word whose sound sends a thrill through so many hearts in this 19th century?

The shortest and clearest method, we apprehend of arriving at the truth is a little analysis of what it is to progress and what it is on which progress is predicated.

What is it to progress? Who is to progress? are two questions which if fairly answered will give us the true value of progress.

The first question is easily answered. To progress is a word of Latin origin which means simply "to go onward." It means nothing more. It has nothing in it either good or bad. One may "go onward"--following either a right or a wrong road--onward either in good or evil--onward either to heaven or hell. There is nothing therefore in the idea of progress worth a shout.

But it is *man* that is to progress--the progress is *human* progress. Society is to progress. Arts, sciences, morality, religion--every thing is to progress! There is a good time a-coming--hur---! But wait a moment! Society is only an aggregate of individuals that compose it. Society will therefore progress just as the individuals in it progress. If they progress wrongly society will progress wrongly--if they stand still society will stand still--if they progress *backwards* (as a stump orator of our acquaintance once said) society will retrograde.

Now natural reason dictates that the true progress of the individual is an advancing towards the end for which he was created by Almighty God. But the end for which Almighty God created man, has not its accomplishments in this life. Therefore true progress is not towards anything in this life. Hence the true progress of society is not towards anything temporal. Therefore the progress of arts, sciences, railroad improvements, electric telegraphs--is not the true progress of the human race.

We like progress in its true sense. We like that every man in every community become better--more humble, chaste, obedient, more detached from avarice, sensuality, and all his vicious habits. But we do not hope that progress will ever reach a point in which there will be no misery in the world--in which all will be happy.

There will always be sickness, poverty, grief, weeping, in the world. The world is cursed--and the malediction of God--the necessity of a redemption--will remain on it to the end of time.

Any doctrine of progress that teaches us to look for happiness in this world is false and to be rejected even without examination. These doctrines originate generally in Strauss' pantheism, and are the more pernicious, the more flattering they are to human pride. We shall have more to say of this hereafter.

492.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, February 5, 1853

The Enlightenment of the Present Age.

It is a trick of system-mongers, in our times, that whenever they have anything exceedingly absurd to propose, they preface its proposal with a fulsome eulogy on the enlightenment of the present age. Thus they persuade the people that in departing from the customs of the past, they are only acting in accordance with the spirit of this enlightened age.

For example, when the profound theologian, historian, and *litterateur* who edits a Daily in this city, wishes to persuade parents to omit all precautions in guarding the virtue of their children, he puts forward the ground that in the present age all precautions are not only unnecessary but "bigoted." A virtue that is preserved by the use of means, and precautions, is a "mechanical virtue;" and in this enlightened age people are to be virtuous without any means at all--without trying. He wants to see people not virtuous "in theory," by withdrawing themselves from all occasions of sin, but "in practice,"--by exposing themselves to the occasions of sin, and--"*Qui amat periculum peribit in illo.*"

Now to discuss the enlightenment of the present age and compare it with that of ages past with these progressist fanatics, would suppose in them a knowledge of history and philosophy which, did they possess, they would cease to be fanatics. But it may not be amiss to call to the mind of Catholics a few truths on this subject.

In the first place, then, Catholics know *a priori*, that the present age is not in advance of the past in religion. Religion is revealed; and it was all revealed at once when Jesus Christ was in the world, and when He sent the Holy Spirit to guide His disciples into "all Truth." Hence, the present age, neither in the great principles of religion, nor in any of its details, has anything which the past had not.

Neither can the present age vaunt a superiority over the past, in natural ethics--the science by which man learns the means of gaining the end of his creation. On the contrary in our day, such is the universal ignorance on this subject--that ten lines of St Thomas, to be intelligible, would have to be diffused into fifty pages of a modern treatise on ethics. And the more ancient Fathers of the Church, such as St. Augustine, St. Basil, St. Chrysostom, would be still farther beyond the depth of modern science. Nor in metaphysics, the abstract science that determines the relations of truth with truth, and defines the value of all sciences, is the present age superior to the past. The Poems of Horace, a heathen poet, presupposes a knowledge of philosophy which in our day few masters possess; and St. Thomas, St. Bernard, St. Anselm, of the dark ages, make allusions to things in their day well known, which in our day are utterly beyond the science of the schools.

Wherein, therefore, consists the superiority of the present age over the past? We answer in one word: in the things that relate to man as an animal. We live in more comfortable houses; we have better means of transporting our bodies from place to place; we have greater facilities for hearing the news; more ways of making and spending money; more science of medicine and poison; in short, we are vastly improved over the past in the science of the *comfortable*. But this gives us no right to conclude that we are better in any of the things that relate to the soul. We cannot conclude from our material, our intellectual superiority. No doubt a raw-boned backwoodsman is stronger--could "whip" the most learned professor in Cincinnati; but it does not follow from that, that he could teach pupils any better. In like manner we are far ahead of the past in material improvement, but it does not follow thence that we are not infinitely behind them in every noble science. In fact, the miserable logic with which we are deceived shows too well what we are intellectually. Who in the "dark ages" would have dared to set on foot a syllogism like this? The present age has steamboats and electric telegraphs; but the American school system was invented in this age, therefore this system is preferable to the old system. Or this:

The Republic must be preserved.

But to preserve the Republic, education must be Americanized. Therefore we will import from Prussia a despotic system, and add to it a demoralizing trait, and under it train up our children. Or this:

Virtue that is tried is the most praiseworthy.

But the trial of virtue is temptation; therefore we will expose our children to temptation. Or this:

Woman was destined to be the help and companion of man. But companionship requires congeniality of taste; therefore boys and girls ought to be educated in the same schoolroom.

The school boy who would bring such syllogisms as these against the defenders of a thesis, would have been sent back to study logic over again, in the dark ages. But these are now brought up by the patrons of education, and urged with an effrontery which shows the confidence of their authors in the public ignorance.

The fact is, in our eager pursuit of material inventions and petty details, we are losing all knowledge of great truths and principles--becoming utterly debased and sensualized.

Since writing the above we have seen in the Boston Pilot an extract from a lecture of Dr. J. Cummings, published at the Pilot office, which has led us to believe that the gifted author has examined elaborately the "advance" of the present age, and showed its material, superficial character, in his own happy style. We should like to see the pamphlet.

493.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, May 1, 1858 (4)

The March of the Age.

There is no subject more frequently spoken of and less understood than human progress; and manifold are the opinions respecting it. Some say it consists in the acquisition and accumulation of natural objects, such as wealth; according to others, its presence is indicated by the development of art and its resources; and there is another class, and perhaps it is the largest, which identifies human progress with the discoveries of physical science. All these belong to the same school, the materialistic, which practically, if not avowedly, asserts that man's pure animality is the only proper domain of human progress; and that any system of social amelioration which does not primarily aim at the elevation of man's physical condition, is unworthy the attention of the age. To this class belong the modern philanthropists--a name well chosen and very significant, indicating that Man, a being of mere physical wants, as differing from God, not an intellectual being, assimilated to Him by the moral attributes of his nature, is the object of their solicitude. There is another class which, generally, apprehends aright the department of human progress, and says it is situated in man's intellectual and moral nature, but err as to the specific manner and means by which it is to be effected: this is the rationalistic school; and to it for the most part belong men of deep-thinking and philosophic research, whose minds recognize the authority of no religious creed.

Whatever be the shades of opinion characterizing the views of individual rationalists, they all vanish in this one grand principle;--that man is capable, of his own strength and by the single exercise of his native powers, to achieve his destiny; that he has suffered neither loss or injury in his faculties; that he has native energies to progress and an irresistible tendency to exercise them: in short, that man, in the savage state, is not a fallen creature--a degenerate specimen of humanity--but simply *undeveloped*, like the grub that has just burst its envelope and crawled into life, but which will, one day, take wings and soar up into the bright sunshine of matured existence! The eighteenth century, as an epoch, marks the stage of this development, say the advocates of this theory; whatever superiority the present exhibits over the past is the result of man's natural effort, and the indication and "assurance of his future improvement and final arrival at the full perfection of all his powers and faculties." This is the grand error of the age--the self-sufficiency of human reason, unaided by revealed religion, to work out its destiny. We find it everywhere insinuated in the modern systems of speculative philosophy, in the ethics of political constitutions, in the investigations of science and the creation of art; wherever Revelation is ignored and Christian principles disregarded; and we have lately seen it enunciated in a leading editorial of one of our city cotemporaries with a terseness and depth of thought rarely found in the columns of a

newspaper. This theory of human progress may be very flattering to human pride, may fill men with a vast idea of their own importance, and cherish a feeling of conceited self-esteem; but it is as false as the principles upon which it rests, and as delusive as the systems whose failure it would pardon, and whose defects it would conceal.

There is indeed, progress in the physical order which the ages that are past may not boast of. Our steam factories may turn out more yards of calico in a much shorter time than the old hand-loom; the modern reaper and reparator can cut and thresh more grain than the old-fashioned sickle and flail; we can run faster and break our neck sooner now-a-days than long ago. But are there not other departments of physical science in which we have, perhaps, degenerated? We have discovered steam-power; yet, with all its aid, does the machinery which lifts block after block to the summit of the Washington Monument rival that which reared the pyramids and lodged on their pedestals the huge granite shafts of ancient obelisks? We can span our rivers with suspension-bridges; but can we swing in the air the hanging gardens of Bablyon? Does the inventive cunning of the Patent Office compare with the grand conceptions of the Vatican Museum? In the department of art, are we not, in many respects, servile imitators of the past? But, granting that we are ahead of all creation in the physical sciences, does this indicate progress in the moral order? If we know the laws of gravitation, calculate the distance of the stars, decompose a drop of water, explain what thunder *is*, and what lightning *isn't*; are we therefore versed in the true notions of right and wrong, in the immutable principles of justice?

Civilization, in the sense of physical advancement, may be said to attain a higher grade in the present than in former ages; but has it not also introduced a refinement of crime, and multiplied the means for its commission, which were unknown to the nations of the past? Man, by his own unaided efforts, by the pure exercise of his reasoning faculties, advances! Is it true? What savage tribe has ever effected its own civilization? And if it has not, if it has invariably received its civilization by means external to itself, what is the meaning of all this talk about native energies, manifest destiny, etc.? Nations the most refined have degenerated; what guarantee have we that our own may not share a similar fate? And if it should, what becomes of human progress? Now, do the intellectual efforts of the present day, in the moral order, so much outstrip the efforts of the past? It is unfair to institute a comparison between the rationalistic philosophy of the nineteenth century and the kindred philosophy of pagan times. There is no system of *pure* reason, today; there is no modern philosopher free from the influence of Christian ideas; they quicken his mental vision, direct his thoughts, and affect his judgments. He has, therefore, advantages over the old pagan sage, whose mind was left to itself, or, at most, dimly illuminated by faint traditions. The boy who mixes paints and cleans the pallets in a painter's studio, has opportunities in the sphere of art which the mountain child has not. Eliminate from modern systems

of ethics what is distinctly Christian and revealed, and in what do they surpass the old? In nothing. The Fables of Phædrus Æsop, the moral sentiments of Epictetus, the lofty genius of Plato, the logical acumen of Aristotle, the grave dignity of Socrates, have no superior in their several departments among the theorists and moralists of the modern rationalistic school. There is, indeed, progress; but not in the modern sense: it is the progress which *reason*, illumined by *faith*, and *will*, assisted by *grace*, accomplish. Other progress save this, there is not; the history of the Gentile world for four thousand years discovers what the unaided intellect of man can compass; and the failure of a thousand humanitarian schemes show, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that decay shall blight, and ill-success attend the growth of any system in which the sap of revealed truth does not circulate, and the dew of divine grace does not nourish.

494.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, September 7, 1861

The Religion of Progress.

Nearly all the faith left in the world now is a vague belief in a bright destiny for the human race, here on earth. This faith is preached as religion in most of the Protestant churches, it is made the basis of political systems, and the motive of great revolutions. People take it up without examination, and act on it unconsciously. Up to the battle of Bull's Run we Americans were an evidence of the faith in the eyes of the nations. Man never has been blessed since the thistles and thorns sprang up, but now he is just going to be. How? By means of "Free Institutions" to which enlightenment and progress tend. The heart of the nation leaps at the prospect, and their banners flaunt the motto to the breeze. They smile when they see old dynasties sinking, and look glad on fields ghastly with carnage, because they think they feel in these events the spring of society towards its destined felicity. Hope is a blessed gift of God--but common sense is a better guide to truth. To what, my hopeful reader, can this progress reach? What happiness is mysteriously in store for the coming generation? Will it conquer death--this *development*? Will it eliminate bodily disease, or pain, or deformity? Will it change the course of births, deaths, and marriages?--alter the ups and downs of commercial life?--stop lawsuits, backbitings, envyings, strifes? Will it be a guard against earthquakes, tornadoes, early frosts, droughts, blight in the harvests, rot in the grapes? What can this development bring us to? It can but unfold what is in us--and what is in *us* that has not been in every generation since the flood? Progress as we may, we can never make a paradise of earth. A railway train moves very rapidly but it never takes you out of the region of swamps and tunnels, villages and cities. So human life rushes on, but is ever rushing by the old landmarks, round and round, the track traversed since the morning star by those who fell as proudly, as hopefully as we. There

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is nothing new under the sun.

495.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, June 19, 1875

[We Cannot "Learn" from the Progressives]

The *Morning Journal* in its article noticed in another column has this of the Editor of the *Columbian*:

He has not yet discovered that sectarian bigotry and intolerance is an anachronism in America of the Nineteenth Century. But we are not without hope that the progressive spirit of the age may yet penetrate even the sombre walls of a Bishopric.

Through whom are we to discover this? Through those who defend Bismarck and the South Americans, and Mexico, for waging relentless war on persons who want to give their lives to God? From those who are opposed to liberty of conscience in prisons? From those who drag us into party politics to make capital out of the unpopularity of our creed, when we suffer, whoever wins?

496.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, March 2, 1861

Reason and Rationalists.

Rationalists are so called not because they use reason, but because they deny supernatural revelation. There is no class of writers who make less use of argument, who define with less exactness, who assert more at random, appeal more to prejudice, who take more for granted, than they do. They arose in Germany by finding out the meaning of the Protestant principle of private interpretation of the Scriptures. They showed that if every man has a right to determine, by his own judgment, the sense of revelation, that private reason is above revelation: or, in other words, that there is no such thing as revelation. And this appears to have been their last exercise of reason. They did not go logically forward, and say, therefore, the principle of private interpretation is unsound, and the Reformation is a delusion; but went wandering away in the midst of crude speculations, absurd theories, and impious conclusions. They seemed satisfied with asserting the dignity of reason, thenceforward to abandon its use. For from the impious and delirious fancies of Strauss and Rosenmüller, to the bald egotism of the Boston school, you will search in vain among the writings of Rationalists for any thing like a manly discussion of first principles, or sound, truth-loving logic.

The puerile attempt to explain the miracles of the Old and New Testament by extraordinary combinations of natural causes, unwonted winds, electrical currents, galvanism, mesmerism, and the like; the attempt to reduce prophecies to the level of

conjectures, the bold dogmatism with which the Apostles are accused of ignorance, and of mistaking their Master's plain teaching, are all put forth in utter contempt of logic and common sense. In fact we have never met a Rationalist who would listen to any one but himself. He is always ready to explain your own views to you, and tell you precisely how many stations you are behind the age. He is never embarrassed, never hesitates, is never wrong. If you tell him you consider his theories monstrous, he answers that he hardly expected anything better from a mind so inharmoniously developed as yours. If you oppose him with unanswerable arguments, he thanks God that his mind is released from the trammels of the schools that were useful for the rude ages in which they were acknowledged, but now obsolete. You would as soon get fire from an icicle as reason from a Rationalist. They should be called sentimentalists or egotists, and drop the name of reason as they have renounced its use.

497.

Editorial, *The Catholic Telegraph and Advocate*, October 5, 1861

Synthesis and Analysis.

Synthesis means literally the putting of parts together so as to make a whole. Analysis means the separating of a whole into parts, so as to understand the parts in detail.

Synthesis and analysis are but different *methods* of reaching the same results, and the propriety of using the one or the other depends on the order of mind and the extent of information of the persons by whom the choice between them is to be made.

The scholastics chose the analytic method of teaching philosophy and theology. They were under the impression that the way to learn a body of doctrine is to learn all the particular truths contained therein. When they taught the creed they did so by explaining its twelve articles. They took it for granted that whoever understands truths in detail will understand them in their relations to one another. To them the Church's teaching was all truth; and their study was to know precisely what she taught to be believed and practiced.

Latterly there has arisen a school of men calling themselves philosophers, who profess to be men of superior mind. They find themselves without effort in advance of the schoolmen, in virtue of their intellectual superiority. St. Thomas and Scotus and Peter the Lombard and Albert the Great were *analysts*. They are *synthesists* which is a "peg" higher. The great schoolmen who, with all their deference to the Church, and their humble distrust of their own judgment, never feared to grapple with any problem however abstruse, or meet any difficulty however subtle, saw truth only in detail. The modern synthesists see it in its integrity. By the aid of synthesis they know what every thing is, and what it means. They can tell *a priori* what God ought to have revealed, and

what the Church ought to have defined. Hence they sit in judgment on generations of theologians and reject without specification of error whole schools of philosophy. They make a language of their own, using a jargon of foreign words for ill-defined ideas, and maintain their dignity by imperturbable superciliousness.

Now if these men had as much intellect as they think they have they could easily see two very wholesome truths. First, that a new method does not give any new truth, and secondly, that to see truth in its integrity is an act exclusively of the Infinite Mind.

They do not see any more of the oneness of truth than St. Thomas did. If they have ever been bewildered by the multiplicity of his propositions he never was--and when, after long perplexity, they cackle over the discovery that there is some connexion between them, they have only reached the point he started from.

The complete integration of truth is possible only to the mind of God. The smallest being in the universe has relations which can be comprehended only by Him who comprehends the universe.

You do not integrate truth by saying you do--nor explain anything by reducing it to a formula you cannot understand. Both analysis and syntheses have the mysteries of life, and thought, creation and destiny where they found them--still mysteries--until the Great Unveiling. Reason can enable us to receive the teachings of faith, to explain them to others, to defend them from misrepresentation; but it cannot "integrate" them.

498.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 20, 1875 (1)

[Proud Science]

A contemporary speaking of the cold winter, says it is a mysterious business, and it behooves science to *ferret out* the courses of "polar waves." The words "ferret out" are well chosen to tell the province of physical science. It must search among little things, molecules, anatomies, transportable fossils, chemical analyses and philosophical instruments. A cold north wind passes its comprehension, and it loses itself utterly in a great fog. Yet science, in the person of the *Advanced Thinkers*, wants to call the revelation of God to the bar of judgment and decide whether the word of Him who made, not this little earth alone which baffles them, but all the planets and all the suns, and who furnishes and regulates all the forces which move them, and all the phenomena they exhibit, is to be accepted as it comes from Him through the Church, or amended as seems good to them!

499.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 24, 1875 (2)

[God and the Weather]

The late cold weather has doubtless done extensive damage to fruits and grain throughout the entire country. In the face of such a calamity would it be out of place to remind our readers that the old Catholic notion of attributing the government of this world to the personal supervision of God, even in its heat and cold, frost and snow, is, notwithstanding the growth of science, still Catholic teaching. Of course the spirit of unbelief to which modern science has been made an unwilling ally greets with scorn such a declaration. Little fellows who have hard work to remember such big words as *Nebulæ* and *aerolites*, but who have advanced in science enough to know that rain would not come down if water did not get up into the clouds first, and that winds are air currents, cold when they have been sweeping over ice-fields and among ice-bergs, and warm when they come from the tropics, tell us they have cast off that antique superstition, of making any appeal to God on the weather question. "My weak-minded Christian friend," they say, compassionately, "where is the sense of your prayers, '*ad repellendas tempestates*,' '*ad petenedam pluviam*,' '*ad postulandam serenitatem*'--for averting storms, asking rain, begging for fair weather? Don't you see, the weather depends on the adjustment of physical phenomena."

If the hot air of the tropics is brought northward by the atmospherical adjustment, or if the polar wave has commenced its downward sweeps toward the banana country, they will have their fling in spite of *Masses* and "*Our Fathers*."

But then, might a plain man ask, who is the adjuster of physical phenomena? Who flings the winds along the Gulf stream or among the icebergs? Who settles the times, and measures, the precise direction of those currents?

Physical causes have no action in them, they are merely the routine which some one who has action in him, follows. When you see Blickstaff go regularly for his beer at 9, 11, 3 and 5, you say that is the law for Blickstaff. But Blickstaff is the actor, not the law.

By finding out the order in which God is pleased to do things, science does not prove that He is not the author of them. He does all things outside of sin, and does them all well. When He answers prayer He does not change, but stands immutably by His promise to answer it always. He may not turn aside the thunderbolt for a "Hail Mary," but the man kneeling to say it may feel the thunderbolt whizzing over his head. God need not shake the foundations of the universe to shield or to destroy us and ours. But He would answer prayer rightly offered though the universe had to be shattered.

500.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Sept. 25, 1875 (4)

Seeking to be Wise and Becoming Fools

It is the height of scientific ambition in advanced thinkers, to demonstrate that man is a two legged beast, and mind is nothing but a form of matter. The end proposed does not strike us as very lofty irrespective of its falsity. Supposing their work accomplished, where is the comfort of it? What boast is there in proclaiming, "I am a beast, a monkey, a dog, a pig, and I can prove it to you?" How much more pleasant it is to think, I am immortal, Jesus Christ thought me worth dying for and makes me his brother and companion for eternity.

501.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, Nov. 27, 1875 (2)

[Learning Too Much but Missing the Essential]

"The searcher is uneasy and is overwhelmed by glory." It is a melancholy madness, that of too much learning. You always remember the mild-eyed man in the corner of the room of the lunatic asylum, who was "just finishing his Great Book," longer than any of the others. Yet his lunacy does not differ essentially from that of Great Book makers of the last three centuries, outside of the asylum, denying or ignoring the great fact of revelation--studiedly shutting out the "True light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world." They have toiled unremittingly, and the fruits of their toil strew the field of civilization, gigantic and shapeless as the ruins of Babylon or Nineveh. They hold and have elaborated many fragments of truth. They have labored with amazing industry on history, philology, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology. But not bringing the great central truth which upholds and gives meaning to all else that man can know, the Incarnation of the Son of God, their creations are without form and void, and darkness broods over all.

Those who have studied creation doubt whether there is a creator. Those who have written volumes on the human soul, conclude by denying that there is such a thing. Those who magnify the dignity of human science and of man, end in denying all distinction between man and the beasts. Glorifying knowledge they deny all certainty, and put the operations of the intellect on a level with a sick man's dreams. They know everything but the one they need to know. They have searched caves for the city on the hill, looked under the bushel for the candle which was burning on the candlestick. Like the old Greek philosophers, they can pull one another's theories down, but can build nothing up. They can show that certain doctrines are not true, but cannot show that anything *is* so--and the most advanced of them have settled down into the gloomy and

despairing doctrine of Stuart Mill, that there is no connection between our knowing a thing and the real existence of that thing. Searching audaciously into majesty, they have been overwhelmed by glory; trying to see all things, they have lost the power of seeing anything.

These reflections have been forced on us again, by report telegraphed from Boston, that Professor Proctor, whom we supposed to be a Catholic, had renounced his faith in Christianity on account of certain theories about the origin and antiquity of man. That is (if the report is true) he judges God's word by his theory, not his theory by God's word. This is the very essence of denial, and its logical end is Atheism.

502.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 19, 1876

The ellipses in the following transcription are due to a large black spot on the microfilm of the newspaper (the films at the Catholic Record Society, the Ohio Historical Society, and Ohio Dominican University are all the same). The series of hard copies of the Columbian at ODU begins with 1878.

Science and Religion on the Origin of Things (incomplete)

Just now the scientists are making a great effort to discredit Christianity... Professor Proctor, has fa..... his own self-conceit, and some theory of the world's..... he thinks, contradicts the [account of the Creation] by Moses, is urging it on ...[confer]ences in the cities of the press, in addition to t..... profits.

The view in as far as it is is thus stated: To astronom[ers it is man]ifest that all the visible [universe was] originally, a mass of thin, g[asseous] containing in it heat and attraction... motion and evaporation, and ion of particles and the format[ion of] denser matter. In this way were formed the suns, planets, and their satellites, as countless billions of ages glided away. But Moses represents God as creating the earth by direct power, and by six successive acts, divided into periods, which he calls days. Moses, therefore, is discredited by positive science. Moses and Christianity represent the earth as the central object of the visible universe. But science shows it to be very insignificant in size, compared to the other bodies whirling in the vast realms of space. Therefore, science discredits Moses and Christianity.

This is a fair statement of the question. Now we will not reply by dogmatizing; nor by saying what is manifestly true--that scientific theories only prove how things *might have* come about, not how they *did* come about; but by candid appeal to reason and common sense.

Whatever be the manner of the "evolution" which set the stars where they are, in

space, there is one certain truth that no science can escape, and no understanding ignore, namely: That God, a self-existent, infinitely powerful being, created them. Whatever was the original gas or mist filling space, He made it. Whatever were the forces that set them whirling, and crossing, and colliding, and hardening, He produced them, and shaped their action. There is no effect without its adequate cause. Strange it is, that these geologists who tell us we are unreasonable when we say that a fossil found in such a position and condition as to indicate that it *might have* been got there through ages of natural working of such causes as we can analyze, *might also have reached there* by other more violent and rapid causes, do not also see that the whole circle of causes and effects in the visible and invisible universe must have been established by the only cause conceivable, equal to producing such effect, to wit: a Being essentially and eternally existing, Who has the wit to devise, and the power to make them all! Such a being is incomprehensible, we admit. But for such a being not to exist is not only incomprehensible, but contradictory. You may confound a willing dupe of his own self-conceit, by advancing the finely drawn and audacious theories of Kant and Mill about all existence and life being subjective, but the sturdy force of natural reason will always persist that there are outward realities corresponding with our perception--that matter and time and space and cause and effect, are no more created by our mind than beef and bread are. A machine can not exist without a machinist, a watch without a watchmaker. A finely constructed universe bespeaks, necessarily, a wise constructor; and, considering that he not only had to adapt the materials, but to furnish them out of nothing, an almighty Creator.

Moses, in his account of the creation, is a paritzan of the Creator. He is not discoursing about the chemical, geological or meteorological beginning of things, but explaining it, to throw light on the moral relations between free will and its author. His thesis is, God made man free, man sinned, and God punished him, and will punish him every time he sins. There is no special wonder in what Moses knew concerning the creation. God told it all to Adam. Between Adam and Moses there was not more than three or four generations. Do we need any inspiration to know what our grandfather was always talking about for three or four hundred years? Inspiration, however, guided his pen, as the Church teaches.

As Science, therefore, takes no moral grounds, but simply describes its physical phenomena, its conclusions can never clash with the view of the beginning of the world accepted by Christianity.

2. The measure of importance attached to not its magnitude, . . . compared with other..... *to us* and to our..... that He "annihilated.... "He became us," and is not Count a thousand.... rs--what then?times sextillion.... fancy with..... more than the.....--that there is between the natureSon of God and the Hu[man nature] He took in Mary's womb.ly, to us, the earth is the center of the universe, and each

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one of us is to himself the center round which all hopes and fears, all joys and sorrows, revolve. What God may have done for other worlds, we know not. But we know that He identified Himself with ours; and made us so near Him that no other can be nearer, no other greater.

We have no need, therefore, of disputing scientific theories to retain our faith. God made the world, however He chose to make it, and is its Master, whoever finds out the steps by which it was produced.

God made this earth the center of all our interests during our trial period, and ennobled it by becoming one with us in the Incarnation and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

503.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, April 8, 1876

[Inconsistent Modern Philosophies--The Nothingness of Man]

The pride of man never made an uglier manifestation of itself that in that turn of what is called "advanced thought," by which the human race is belittled as the offspring of mist and monkey, without the corresponding submission to the eternal Creator which such lowliness implies. If we are such nothings in our origin, why then not humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God? Why not believe in His teaching, obey His Church, and seek the aid of His guidance in everything? If we are really nothing but material "organism," where is the use of fighting old systems, or inventing new ones? If we are bugs in a rotten tree, or pismires in a little sand heap, where is the use of writing, and arguing, and publishing? What is truth to us? Why trouble ourselves about any thing that is just, and right, and eternal? If Mr. Mill was a mere animal why did he not go to pasture instead of writing his "philosophy?" If "Professor" Proctor gives himself up to be a form of nebulae, where is the use of his going around lecturing? Let him dissolve again, and disappear. This method of arguing, "We are nothing, therefore we are better than God," is monstrous and impious. But that is really the drift of all these modern, materialistic theories. From our littleness they concluded our greatness. Because we are well developed brutes, the Son of God is not good enough to teach, and His divinely commissioned Church has no authority over us! "Thinking themselves wise they became foolish."