

hand the universal and supernatural character of the Christian religion imposes upon its adherents the duty of finding a statement of it which will not be impaired by our wavering knowledge of nature and history; and, indeed, which will be able to maintain itself before every possible theory of nature or of history. The problem which thus arises permits, indeed, of no absolute solution, since all knowledge is relative; and yet religion essays to bring her absolute truth into the sphere of relative knowledge and to reduce it to statement there. But history teaches, and every thinking Christian testifies, that the problem does not come to its solution; even on that account the *progressive efforts* which have been made to solve it are of value.

Problem
Insoluble.

Attempts
at
Solu-
tion.

3. The most thorough-going attempt at solution hitherto is that which the Catholic Church made, and which the churches of the Reformation (with more or less restrictions) have continued to make, viz.: Accepting a collection of Christian and Pre-Christian writings and oral traditions as of Divine origin, to deduce from them a system of doctrine, arranged in scientific form for apologetic purposes, which should have as its content the knowledge of God and of the world and of the means of salvation; then to proclaim this complex system (*of dogma*) as the *compendium* of Christianity, to demand of every mature member of the Church a faithful acceptance of it, and at the same time to maintain that the same is a necessary preparation for the blessed-

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