

montanism places its followers, and the looseness of the hold which it maintains over the masses, he says that the net result is that the Roman Church is an element of social war, and has brought about a position of things in the civil and religious condition of the States which it affects, universally regarded as uncomfortable, dangerous to public order, and obstructive to the diffusion of civilization and religion; while the only remedies it offers are Peter's Pence, French pilgrimages, mystical confraternities, and periodical religious demonstrations.

The Council having separated, and its extraordinary decisions having been generally acquiesced in by "the faithful," we are apt to lose sight of the importance of what it did and what it did not do. The great issue, as the Cardinal says, which really lay before the Vatican Synod, the choice which it had in its power to make, was between the policy of comprehension and that of exclusion; between the effect to combine the greater portion of mankind within the Church, or to drive many of those now within it into revolution; whether, in short, the Catholic nations of Europe are or are not to have a real religion, not a mere outward form, but a genuine belief which shall be held in common, shall be manifest in their actions, and be in harmony with their institutions. The Pope and the Curia did not, would not, see the issue thus clearly stated by Cardinal Vitelleschi: they made their choice, and have narrowed down the Romish Communion to an absolute autocracy, submitted to by the unreasoning, but having no hold on the intellect, and in antagonism to all the nobler feelings of the world at large. "That the Church in her own office should be infallible may in a certain sense be reasonable; but that God should take from an individual man the liability to error which is characteristic of humanity, would be an absolute and standing miracle." And so it is also that a man who could pen that sentence could also vote *placet* when the dogma of the Pope's infallibility came to the vote. Intellectually he repudiated its monstrous pretensions; morally he was too weak to obey his intellect. In fact the final vote on the question is one of those pitiable instances on record of human fallibility. Many voted, as this author says Cardinal Manning did, because "he was enamored of the principle of authority as the slave adores the ideal of liberty"; others voted, as Italians, to enhance the glory of the Italian primacy; others, as the guests of the Pope or pensioners of the Propaganda, "went it blind": but others, like poor Cardinal Vitelleschi, did violence to their intellect and their convictions, and for the sake of a false idea of unity, peace, and power inflicted irreparable injury on their Church.

NOTES ON INFIDELITY.

THE PROGRESS OF SCIENCE IN 1876.

IN the progress of science during the year 1876, in which England has borne a part, the most attractive is that made in physical geography. A chart of the Atlantic

ocean, prepared from the soundings of the *Challenger*, has lately been published by the Admiralty. It shows that the Atlantic contains three deep basins, separated by submarine ridges. Between the eastern and western basins a comparatively narrow belt of inter-oceanic highlands, extending from the Arctic to the Antarctic circle, in a sinuous mid-channel line. "No longer," says a writer in the *Times* of Jan. 15th, "need paleontologists conjure up a hypothetical 'lost Atlantis' to account for the migration of new animals and plants. The old land is now a reality, the general contour of which even is known to us almost as well as we know that of existing land."

This question of a "lost Atlantis" was one which much occupied the minds of men over one hundred years ago, in order to account for the peopling of America. In that age infidelity perplexed our fathers by the oft-repeated question, which was strongly urged: "If, as the Bible declares, the whole world has been peopled by the descendants of Adam and Eve, how did the Indian get to America across the Atlantic, a distance of three thousand miles, in his bark canoe? It is certain that he had not got there in a large vessel, for when America was discovered he had no knowledge of the sail. He only knew how to propel his canoe with the paddle.

On this interesting subject the learned Rev. Wm. Jones wrote thus in the year 1761: "A thought suddenly struck me, that in some very remote age, a great alteration might have been made in this part of the globe, and a vast tract of land swallowed up in the ocean, of which the *Canaries*, *Azores*, and perhaps the great banks of *Newfoundland* also, are so many remaining fragments, standing like pieces of a wreck above the waves, and still exhibiting to us some foot-steps, as it were, of the *ancient path* that once led from *Africa* to the *West Indies*. I was so possessed with this notion that I could not help proposing it to some learned friends, long before I had heard of *Plato's* tradition, as a probable-conjecture, whereby the peopling of *America* might be accounted for, and endeavoured to recommend it to their consideration, by placing a terrestrial globe before them."

"You may imagine then with what satisfaction I found this opinion confirmed, even beyond my hopes, when the passage you have extracted from *Plato's Timæus* first occurred to me." The passage from *Plato* reads thus: "It is looked on as a fact that in times past your city (*Athens*) resisted a great number of enemies who came from the *Atlantic Sea*, and had taken and possessed almost all *Europe* and *Asia*; for then this strait was navigable, and near it was an island just beyond the pillars of *Hercules*, which they said was larger than *Asia* and *Africa* put together; from this island was an easy passage to others that were near it, and opposite the continent on the main land, bordering on the true sea; for one may justly call that sea the true sea or ocean, and the land I mention the continent or main land." *Plato* adds: "Nine thousand (lunar)

years ago happened a great change, the sea surrounding this isle swelled so high by a prodigious increase of water, that in one day and night it covered the whole island, and swallowed and totally engulfed it; and that the sea in this place has been ever since so filled with mud and sands that no one can sail over it, or pass by it, to those other islands on the firm land." It may here be observed that all historians, ancient and modern, call that sea in which this island is said to have been engulfed, the *Atlantic ocean*, retaining the very name the island bore; which would seem to be sufficient proof that there had been such an island."

De Z'Arak, writing on this subject in the year 1700, says: "The authority of *Plato* is enough to convince me of the truth of this affair, and I make no question but our *new found world* (*America*) is the same as that *main land* or *continent* of which he speaks; as whatever he has said of it perfectly corresponds with our modern discoveries; particularly in what he says of this land, that it is adjacent to the *true sea*, which is what we now call the *great South sea*; in comparison of the vast extent of which, the *Mediterranean sea* and *Northern ocean* are but as rivers. Having cleared up this difficulty thus far it seems no way hard to suppose, that men could easily pass from the *Atlantic* and its neighbouring isles to what we call *continent* or *terra firma*, and thence by land or even by the *South sea* to *Peru*."

Such is the substance of the argumentation concerning the "hypothetical lost Atlantis" in order to account, on the principles of the Bible, for the peopling of America, and of which modern science has demonstrated the correctness. The discovery of the Strait, called *Berhing's*, rendered any farther maintaining of the hypothetical "lost Atlantis," for the peopling of America, altogether unnecessary, and the subject has slept from that time to the present, and has only been reviewed in connection with the scientific discovery of the past year. Although it was not with a view to the strengthening of the evidence of revelation that the soundings of the Atlantic were undertaken by the *Challenger*, yet this is the effect, and here again revelation and science are in harmony.

Long before the discovery of *Berhing's* Straits, conjectures were not wanting that the American continent must somewhere border upon either Asia or Europe. Dr. Chateaubriand in his "Beauties of Christianity" mentions the fact that, "A Jesuit in Tartary met with a Huron woman whom he had known in Canada, and from this extraordinary circumstance inferred the existence of that Strait, which long after conferred glory on a *Berhing* and a *Cook*."

And in a Natural History of Greenland, by Hans Egidius, a Danish Missionary, 1741, we are informed that it is not yet determined whether Greenland does not join to America, on the north-west side, round *Davis' Straits*. The historian inclines to the affirmation, and he adds that the Norwegians, who discovered it in A.D. 982 were not the first inhabitants, "for they found wild people on the west side of the country, whom he takes to be Americans." L.