THE UNREASONABLENESS OF UNBELIEF.

LECTURE DELIVERED BY THE REV. LEWIS DRUMMOND, S. J., AT ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, OTTAWA, SUNDAY, 31st MARCH, 1889.

Reported Specially for the CATHOLIC RECORD.

REV. FATHERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN—I purpose this evening setting before you some reasons which will tend to show that not to believe in the existence of God and in the divine origin of Christianity is unreasonable. We are accustomed, we Christians, to hear ourselves sometimes addressed as well meaning people who, unfortunately, have not reason on their side. * * * Our opponents may be divided into two classes. There is first the dogmatic unbeliever, who may be termed the "bully" of unbelief; and there is another class of men who call themselves agnostics, who regret, they say, that nothing can be known about God or the future state. They measure the whole human race by their own standard, and, because they themselves do not know, or think they do not know, anything about these great truths, they say, therefore, the rest of the world really does not know anything about them. That is why they have been called "agnostics." It is a very fine word, but after all means "know-nothing." To the first class of unbelievers, the dogmatic, or the bully, belongs the man spoken of in Lafontaine's fable. One day when he felt tired he stretched himself to sleep under a great oak, and as he lay there courting sleep he began to philosophize about the visible creation around him. "It seems to me," says he, "that God made a mistake. Here are small acorns on the great branches of that tree, and below are the great pumpkins on the slender tendrils of this plant. It seems to me it would have been better to have put the pumpkins on the tree and the acorns on the tendrils." And as he slept an acorn fell on his nose, and he felt the smart and said: "God was right after all. What would have become of me if that acorn had been a pumpkin!" You sometimes read of infidels taking out their watches before a large audience and saying: "There is no God, and to prove to you that there is none I give Him five minutes to strike me dead." And then they wait five minutes in breathless silence, put back their watches with a self-satisfied air, and conclude that there is no God. We do not ask them to believe in a God of their own making, but to believe in God as He exists. We Christians and deists hold that between God and man, the most perfect of His creatures, there is a greater difference than between man and a worm of the earth; for both man and the worm need not have been but God in His very essence is the only necessary being That is the only view that ought to be attacked by the enemies of the deist. Therefore it is absurd to suppose that any of His creatures can call upon God to give proofs of His existence whenever they choose, or to expect that they should be punished on the spot whenever they think fit to insult Him. * * * He is terrible when He is silent. He is still more terrible when He is silent and accumulates wrath. That is our idea of the majesty of God, not a cruel Being but a just Being, and one who ought to be respected. It is absurd to suppose that God should resent these insults immediately. No one would expect Him to do that. Then how can we expect God to work miracles at the bidding of His creatures. There is one style of argument used by these dogmatic unbelievers which is no argument at all. It consists simply in asserting that there is no God, because there is no proof of His existence. In order to prove that there is no proof of His existence a man would require to have infinite knowledge. To be able to say dogmatically that there is no God, that is to be able to affirm without doubt that there is no proof of His existence, supposes that a man knows and has examined thoroughly all beings outside himself, not only everything in this world, but also everything in the vast realms of space. If he has not done that, he should never say there is no God, for he might find somewhere some proof of the existence of a maker, of the Creator of all things. Therefore we say rightly that to assert that there is no God is to claim for one's self the same energy as deists attribute to God, that is to claim for one's self infinite energy. I need only mention that to show what an absurdity it is.

Before going on to speak of agnostics, who are really the most serious in this catalogue of unbelievers, I would say a word about a man who is unfortunately too well known, and who seems to be a cross between the dogmatic unbeliever and the agnostic. The agnostic might be called the "dude" of unbelief and the dogmatic unbeliever the "bully" of unbelief. But there is a man in the United States who seems to be a cross between the bully and the dude, and that is Col. Robert Ingersoll. He has acquired for himself a very wide reputation as a man who slings all sorts of jokes on things that are holy. Finding the field of legitimate humor already occupied by Artemus Ward, Mark Twain and others, he attacked an illegitimate field of humor and posed as a mountebank. He is one of the rare examples in the history of the world of a great orator. Cicero says "a great orator is a good man skilled in speaking." Col. Ingersoll is skilled in speaking, but there does not seem to be much of the good man about him. He is praised by his friends as a very charitable, kind man. That he may be: there is no man who has not some good qualities, and when a lawyer is as successful as Robert Ingersoll it is very easy to be pleasant and amiable. But there is one very important branch of virtue which Col. Ingersoll has neglected, and that is respect for truth . . . I suppose there has not yet arisen any man in the United States who could compete with him before an audience. Perhaps no one has a sufficiently powerful voice or the gift of oratory, but in the way of written answers we have the crushing reply of Father Lambert's "Notes on Ingersoll," 200,000 copies of which have been sold in the United States, Canada, and England. When people hear Ingersoll I am told they are amused and tickled sometimes in spite of themselves, and then they go home half ashamed of having given way to this amusement. While with those who have read Father Lambert's books the impression is a most healthy one and a conviction that the reply is infinitely superior to the attack. Col. Ingersoll gave a very famous speech some nine or ten years ago in which he praised Tom Paine, who was a freethinker, at the end of the last century and the beginning of this. One of the points for which he praised Tom Paine was that he had the courage when he was a member of the French Assembly, in the time of the French Revolution, to go almost alone and ask that Louis XVI. might not be executed. Col Ingersoll brings out every thing that could produce an effect on an audience, such as this trait of Tom Paine. Now what are the facts? Carlyle, in his "French Revolution," says there were about 700 voters. Out of these almost one half voted that Louis XVI might not be put to death. Over 300 men joined Tom Paine in his vote. Now it requires no very great heroism to vote with 300 men when there were a little more 300 on the other side, especially when, owing to absentees, the death of Louis was carried by a majority of one. He speaks of Tom Paine's death, and he says it is not true that Tom Paine showed any signs of repentence before his death: that he called upon Jesus Christ. Now as against this we have the testimony of a clergyman who afterwards became Bishop of Boston. Two priests were called in to see him when he was on his death bed. They heard from the lady who kept the house where Tom Paine stayed that he had been calling out: "Jesus Christ, help me. Oh God, have mercy!" And yet Ingersoll holds him up as one who kept to his unbelief to the very end and never wavered. But perhaps the most curious fact about the Colonel's mode of procedure is that he never notices any reply made to his assertions. He has the key to the North American Review. His friend the editor will not allow others to enter on the same terms. Everything must be done to suit Col. Robert Ingersoll.

And now I pass to consider what seems to be a very serious difficulty proposed by agnostics. I do not deny that there are difficulties in belief in the existence of God and in belief in the divine origin of Christianity. No; the Maker of this universe has wished us to use our free will in the matter of faith. Faith always supposes a certain amount of obscurity. Faith is not sight. For instance, I can have no faith in the existence of those gas lights. I *see* them. I do not *believe* that they are. I am using words in their strict philosophic sense. In the strict sense of words you cannot believe anything you see You see it, you do not believe it. But there are many things even in human matters which we believe that we cannot see, merely on the testimony of our fellow men, and this testimony is that on which is based our business and pleasure. It is our common mode of procedure and it is perfectly rational. Let me take an instance. I believe that there is a city called St. Petersburg in Russia, and yet I have never seen it. I might, if I wished to be very skeptical, pretend that I did not believe in its existence, but I should find that unreasonable. There are so many people who tell me there is a place called St. Petersburg, there are so many geographies and other books in which the place is mentioned, that it seems to me impossible to deny its existence. Something similar occurs in matters of divine faith. It is not always necessary that the object of divine faith should not be one that we can know from another source, but generally speaking there must be a certain amount of obscurity in order that there may be free exercise of the will. In matters concerning the existence of God and Christianity, it is impossible that we can have that evidence that we have in mathematical or arithmetical questions. You can have no doubt that two and two are four, you do not believe it, you see it with your eyes. You cannot expect such proofs in regard to the existence of God and the divine origin of Christianity. You cannot be forced to believe these things. The evidence is very strong, especially in regard to the existence of God. It is a convincing evidence, but not necessarily compelling. You may use your free will and turn away your mind from the conclusion, for it is always possible for the human mind, when there is not absolute evidence of the senses, to avoid drawing a conclusion. Another remark I would make is that one hundred difficulties do not make a doubt. There are difficulties in every system of science, politics and literature. These difficulties are inherent to the nature of the acts of faith of which I have been speaking.

We must not be surprised if there are many things we cannot explain. In order that a religion may be true it must be a religion of mysteries, for its very first tenet is a belief in the existence of a God supremely perfect. * * He must be a boundless sea the existence of whom we know but whose shores we never reach. When you have a strong argument to prove a fundamental point, a hundred arguments that have nothing to do with the basis of that fundamental point do not attack it in any way. For example, the strongest proof for a logical mind of the existence of a divine necessary Being is the necessity of their being a first cause. We feel that no effect can be produced without a cause, and we feel that there cannot be an endless succession of causes, because an endless series would be like a chain hung up in space with nothing to hang it upon. That does not seem rational to our mind. As in human matters of government there must always be one leading mind, or at least one leading body which express one sentiment, so in all material things there must be one chief cause. Even in matters of science learned men tell us that there is one force that is always stronger than the other, or else there will be no motion. Two forces exactly equal and opposite produce no activity. There must be one paramount force ruling everything in the world or nothing would be preserved in order. Therefore, I say, no argument which does not destroy this argument, which does not prove this to be untrue, is of any use at all. It may touch on many other questions but not affect that basis. Men may say, "I admit there must be a first cause, but how can I understand that this first cause should busy itself with the multitude of creatures all over the world? I may not be able to explain all things perfectly. One would have to be God, but I have that strong argument. You have not attacked it yet. You have done nothing to weaken my position. You have simply thrown out difficulties. These difficulties are no reason for me to doubt. Let me try to explain my meaning a little more fully. When you have a difficulty ask yourself if it is a difficulty of the imagination or of the reason. In our day the imagination is over-cultivated. There is an effort made always to develop the imaginative faculties, and so true is this that even in matters of science the imagination has become as it were mistress. Men say to us—scientific men, learned men, who are called philosophers—"we cannot imagine an Infinite Being." Our answer to them would be, "I never said you could imagine an Infinite Being." We say you are forced by the very laws of logic to admit the existence of an Infinite Being, but you can never imagine it. To imagine a thing is to form a picture of it. Now we cannot form a picture of a spiritual being. Most difficulties, especially in our day, brought against theism, arise from that confusion between imagination and conception, and that brings about a state of doubt in some men's minds. * * * I now proceed to say a word about the way in which our agnostic friends prove themselves to be unreasonable. They find fault with us for not having strong enough arguments on our side of the question. My first answer to them is, have you read our side of the question? Many of these people read only very weak defences of Christianity. Of course you admit, or ought to admit, that Roman Catholics are Christians, and that they are an important part of Christendom. The most numerous, but perhaps all do not know that the Roman Catholic Church contains in its theology an arsenal of answers to infidel objections such as is not to be found elsewhere. M. Renan says that those who have never been Catholics have no idea of the strength of the battery of defence with which the Church has girded herself round about. I observe that most of the agnostics who attack the Church have never read our works. Therefore this is their first want of reason. They do not examine both sides of the question. This has been the case always, but I remarked it not long ago in an article very well written and thoughtfully composed. The writings of two persons were examined, one a gentleman, the other a lady, and these were taken up as exponents of the Christian side of morality. This defence I did not read. I only read the answer made by a Positivist, and I found that their defence of Christianity was about the weakest that could well be imagined. Now, this is putting up a man of straw to knock him down. If agnostics want to know the strength of Christianity they should examine our works and best authors. They are always ready to say, "we have not seen proofs" We do not mean to give proofs that will compel. They will only convince a person who is reasonable. Most of our agnostic friends are very ready to take up anything that is against Christianity, anything from the anti-Christian scientific point of view, and to find it most convincing. About twenty-eight or thirty years ago Mr Darwin wrote a book on the origin of species, which contains a great deal of learned examination of facts in natural history. The book tended to show that all species and kinds of animals and plants may be merged one into another. And later on he wrote a book called "The Descent of Man," in which this tendency was still more clear, for there, without saying it definitely, he led up to the conclusion that man was descended from monkeys, that we are all monkeys who have worn away our tails by sitting on them. And he says he has known monkeys who have worn away a part of their tails by sitting on them. This book is a still greater marvel of learning, but there is one peculiar thing about it—there is no great reasoning power. Some people say that Mr. Darwin strikes them as being childlike and bland, never meaning to attack the fortresses of religion. In fact he never does attack them boldly, but he is continually insinuating and laying ambushes. He examines some certain facts, as to monkeys or other animals, and says "it seems to be almost certain," or "it is very likely," "the only conclusion to be drawn," "my opinion is very strongly in favor of this view." He never says it is certain, but everybody from his hundred perhapses says therefore. Now this is not reasonable. A hundred thousand perhapses can never make a therefore. The conclusion can never be stronger than the premises or the hypothesis. According to some of Darwin's followers we made a great mistake when we thought that we came from one pair, called Adam and Eve—a noble origin. We can all go back to the jelly fish and from the jelly fish to the protoplasm, and that is much more scientific! But I think they have not proved their point. Their mode of proceeding is like that of their great leader, Mr. Darwin. Mr. Darwin leads us to believe that giraffes are only horses whose necks have grown a little longer. Darwin explains it in this way: The horse was in a place where there was no grass, nothing to eat but the leaves of the trees, and these leaves were rather high, so that the horses had to stretch their necks and it was only the tallest horses that could get at the leaves. Now these tall horses gave rise to a progeny of horses whose necks were a little longer, and so in the course of many years the strange shape of the giraffe was produced. You see how simple it is! One difficulty has always struck me, and that is, why did the leaves continue to grow higher and higher. They must have done so or the horses would not have had to stretch their necks more and more. The leaves would be renewed each year and I suppose the horses did not eat the branches! * * * * I think Mr. Darwin is a great artist. He felt that the best way to reach his conclusion was to allow people to draw the conclusions themselves. He knew that a few pictures would produce more effect than close reasoning. But since his death there has set in a current against evolution. At a meeting of scientific men at Wiesbaden Professor Virchow said this theory of Mr. Darwin's has been a useful hypothesis. It has enabled scientific men to study facts with very great advantage. It has pushed men in the search for new facts, but it has not at all proved that man is near the monkey. We have studied for thirty years and we are not one step nearer proof of the Simian origin of man. I mention these facts to show you that the theory of evolution is not at all proved. No learned man has ever pretended that it was anything more than a hypothesis, and it is rejected by the great body of learned men in Germany, France, and of some in England. But the fascinations of Darwin and Mr. Herbert Spencer have given it such a start that it will go on for some time as a popular belief. Now is it reasonable for agnostics to take up a theory like this and base a whole system of philosophy upon it? I do not deny that Darwin's theory has done good in some ways. It has proved to us that there may be many varieties in one species, and has shown that the different colors of skin in the human race are no proof that we do not all descend from Adam and Eve. Well, Mr. Spencer, who is called by many Englishmen, "our great philosopher," has really been going on the lines of Darwin. I do not know if he took his theory from Darwin, but at any rate he takes it for granted. Mr. Spencer is a man who can be very clear when he wishes, but unfortunately when he comes to definition he is far from clear. It used to be a principle that when you want to say what a thing is you should say it as clearly as possible. The definition should be clearer than the thing defined. Mr. Spencer wants to define evolution and this is the way he does it:

"Evolution is an integration of matter, and concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes through an indefinite, incoherent homogenity to a definite, coherent heterogenity, and during which the retained matter undergoes a parallel transformation." Is this according to the logical principle that the definition should be clearer than the thing defined? Mr. Kirkman thus travesties Mr. Spencer's definition: "Evolution is a change from the nohowish, untalkaboutable allalikeness to a somehowish and in general talkaboutable not allalikeness by continuous somethingelsefications and sticktogetherations."

Well, if the beginnings of evolution are so hard to understand, what must be the rest of the theory? Yet these men who accept all these things as something like the old view of gospel truth will tell us that our own proofs are not strong enough. What have they set up instead? They give us no definite answer. Spencer used to say that if there is a God He is unknowable. Well, it is true to a certain extent that God is unknowable. He is such a sea of knowledge that no one can know all about Him. But if you mean by unknowable that we have not some clear idea of God, then I cannot admit it.

Mr. Herbert Spencer was evolved into something like an atheist, for in the Contemporary Review, he said about five years ago: "About the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are thought about, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that we are ever in the presence of an infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed."

Now, that is quite enough for me to sustain my belief in the principle of God, for if we are in the presence of that infinite energy, then that is the first cause—Infinite, having no limits. Infinite and eternal, having no beginning and no end. His existence is an everlasting now. Now when we speak of the first cause, we mean precisely an Infinite Being who is eternal, all powerful.

Several others have followed in the same way. Dr. Carpenter, who began by being an agnostic, has become a theist Thus you see that their very leaders are uncertain; and yet religion must be something certain, for it is something that should take in all mankind, and which must be easily communicated to all mankind. Most men have no time to lose spending their whole lives searching for a religion. They must measure their lives by that work. Therefore, a system like their's, which is indefinite and uncertain and continually changing, cannot do Moreover, how many things are lacking? It strikes me that many of our agnostic friends are much like Mr. Darwin. Darwin says that he had devoted himself so entirely to working out observations on objects such as monkeys and worms that he had no taste for the great poets. He tried to read Shakespeare when he became old and said, "I regret that I do not care for him any more." It seems to me that a man who does not feel any pleasure in reading such a great writer must have many empty spaces in his brain. Agnostics try to grasp everything, and get nothing. They give us nothing for the poor and the suffering. When you put aside the question of the next world, when you say that philosophy teaches us to make the best of this, you exclude from your system the vast majority of men. It is all very well for positivist writers when they have plenty of money and are comfortably off to expatiate upon the advantages of charity and how the feeling that you have done well will help to swell the happiness of that prosperity which is to come: but tell me is that any consolation to the poor man that can hardly find enough to keep body and soul together? Will that stand in good stead to the man who is persecuted by his enemies, who is shunned by his friends and who is afflicted with mental and bodily disease?

There are numberless human beings who have great sorrows and burdens to bear. Now what does agnosticism give for them? Nothing. It is one of the marks of true religion that it should give peace. Every where in nature we find that animals and plants that have their proper habitat seem to be in the enjoyment of a kind of peace. Is it reasonable that a system of doubt can be a true system when it produces unrest in the mind? Was there ever an age like this when you find earnest men swallowed up in the sea of doubt? Can it be that this fight with doubt is the natural state of man? Is it according to his very nature that he should be continually in unrest? Why should he be an exception to the rest of nature? No, ladies and gentlemen, there can be no truth where there is no ease of soul, and there is no ease of soul outside of Christianity. It is a proverb ever since the foundation of the Christian religion that it is a source of sweetness and love. All that our enemies can say to us is, "this is a feeling that is not reserved for learned, intellectual men. We great intellects have to suffer. Poor ignorant people may enjoy this peace, but we must suffer in the battles of doubt." We generally see that when men fall away from a belief in Christianity, they fall away from the practice of those virtues which we recognize as the noblest and the purest. I will not say all, but I will point to a book which has become famous, "Robert Elsmere" It represents an Anglican clergyman leading a life of great earnestness, with a wife most devoted to him and to all works of religion. After a time he meets with an infidel who is continually throwing into his mind doubts, and little by little he falls a victim to doubt, gives up his Anglican religion and takes up a sort of shadowy Christianity—Christianity without Christ. Well the impression produced towards the end of the book is a most saddening one. The course which Robert Elsmere is supposed to have followed is not one that brought him peace. The contrast between his beginning and his end is most painful. When I read it I wondered why the author had killed off Robert Elsmere's mother so soon. Well the only reason why she was killed off seems to me that her Irish straighforwardness and common sense would have saved her son from the ruin which came upon him afterwards, and as the author had to ruin the son she took care to despatch the mother first.

I will end by a few remarks upon our proofs. I have not said much as to the proofs on which our view is based. First, as to the existence of God. I come from the North-West prairies. There are places there where no white man has yet trod. If going through one of these prairies I suddenly come upon a watch I say to myself: "There must have been a white man here, or a white man must have sent it here. No Indian made that watch, because it shows signs of being carefully made. They do not know that trade." This reasoning is perfectly legitimate. We say that the care with which a thing is done, the skilful workmanship, shows the mind, proves that the maker had a mind. When you find a watch you say there must have been a watchmaker. Well apply this to the world at large. This great universe is a much more marvellous mechanism than any watch or clock. Look at the regularity of the seasons and of the rising and setting of the sun. We see in the existence of this order proofs that there must have been somebody to put it in order. There must be somebody to keep it in order. It must be kept going A watch must be wound up regularly, and we can only understand that by the presence of an abiding spirit that has made this world and that keeps it going. Yes, but some doubters will say, why should you call this spirit an Infinite God? Well, suppose we grant that the Maker of the universe was a very great angel. We say who made this angel? Did He make Himself? No, no one can make himself; because to make one's self would be to exist before one was made, which is a contradiction, an absurdity. Therefore, he did not make himself; who made him? It must have been a being greater than himself. A watchmaker is greater than the watch. We cannot have an infinite chain—a chain hung in space without anything to hang upon. We must at last come to one spirit who is so infinitely perfect that not only He never was made but no moment can have been when He did not exist. He must have been the First cause. That, briefly, is our view of the existence of God. From the admirable order of the universe we rise to the belief in the Being who made that universe. After a course of reasoning we reach this conclusion, that that Being must be infinite, and, being infinite, He must always have existed. Now this we cannot imagine, but we can come to this conclusion by the force of our reason, and once the conclusion is borne in upon us we must accept it.

Now against this truth what have the agnostics to answer? They say we cannot know. That is no answer. You must put other arguments which will destroy mine. More negation is no proof.

Then with regard to Christianity. I am going to give you the most striking proofs as to the divine origin of Christianity, and I think you will perhaps admit with me that our proofs are very strong, and that agnostics are very wrong in denying the potency of these conclusions. They start with the assertion that there can be no miracles, that there can be nothing which they cannot see or feel. Miracles do not happen, they say, because they have never seen them themselves. But here we pin them down to plain facts that have happened in our own time. In the years 1858 there occurred some very extraordinary events at a place called Lourdes in France. A young girl said that she had seen the Blessed Virgin Mary, and her testimony was simple and extraordinary, though the priest at Lourdes rather doubted it at first, but a spring of water arose in the grotto where there had been none before The water was examined by chemists, who found that it was simply pure water, containing no chemical substance which would produce cures, and yet wonderful cures were worked by that water. For instance, there was a man at Lourdes who was blind with one eye—perfectly blind. He washed his eye in the water at Lourdes and recovered his sight immediately. The doctor who treated him did not believe it, so he wrote something on a paper, closed the good eye, held the paper before the eye which had been blind and the man read the words Many other facts more extraordinary than this have been witnessed by many physicians and attested by witnesses who are still living. A gentleman, about the year 1869, seeing these wonderful miracles, and having the addresses of all the witnesses in the processes, published a challenge in France to all the free thinkers to come and examine these miracles. You say miracles do not happen: come and see. If you can disprove ten of these miracles I will give you $2,000. And he deposited the $2,000 with a notary. The money was waiting in 1887, and two journalists took up the challenge, but when they found that the witnesses were living they dropped it like a hot coal; and the money is waiting yet. Anyone who wishes to get it can have a try. I can testify to a miracle which happened. I was in France in January, 1875, when a gentleman came to me with his son asking me to give him some lessons in English. We used to take walks togetner, and this boy talked to me freely about all his family; he spoke to me about an uncle of his who was a priest, and had been paralyzed for eleven years. So weak were his eyes that he could not read. The boy used to say to me it is a pity for he is a very clever man and he has not been able to use his talents at all. We have tried everything, consulted doctors and tried novenas and prayers. On the 20th August in that year, I was at Lourdes and heard that only four days before the uncle of this boy had been suddenly and completely cured. I waited two or three years before I could ascertain the facts fully and then a book was written which gives the whole history of the cure, and in that I found that the Abbe had been ever since in charge of a parish of 10,000 souls and that he was working as well as any priest could, making up for lost time. Now if this is not a cure, I do not know what is—a cure of paralysis and blindness. . . . Now we say to scientific men, why don't you examine these facts? They answer, miracles do not happen: they are contrary to modern science. Some who do not believe in Christianity at all have verified these miracles, and say they are not explainable on any scientific theory. That is all we want. If they are not explainable on any scientific theory they are proofs of the hand of God. One real miracle is a proof that God must be there. And now we say, starting with the principle, we say there is nothing irrational in miracles. We proceed to show what has happened in the history of the world There are at present in this globe of ours about 1,400,000,000 of men. Out of these 400,000,000 are Christians About 250,000,000 are Roman Catholic. The rest, Greeks or Protestants, all professing Christianity. Mere numbers are as nothing in this matter. What I want to point out to you is that the Christians are the noblest specimens of humanity that this earth can produce. They represent the intellect, the common sense and the civilization of the world.

The Mohammedan and Buddhist systems are confined to limits. . . . Take the Musselman, the Turk—"the unspeakable Turk" as Mr. Gladstone called him—has ravaged and spoiled every country that he has been in. He is not a civilizer. Palestine was a garden when he came there. Now it is a desert. Can you compare such religions with Christianity? Oh, some people say, but the Turk is very hospitable. He must be good for something. If he is a human being there must be some fair side to him. He has enough bad qualities to disgust any one and to prove that his cannot be the true religion. And so we have to come back to Christianity, and what do we find? That the Christian is the civilized man. There is no nation in the world that does not profess Christianity, if it is a civilized nation . . . We are all trained best and noblest in mankind and we all profess a belief in the divine origin of Christianity. Now that is in itself a very strong testimony, but when we go back to the history of Christianity we find it still stronger.

In order to poison the wells the agnostics and the positivists tell us that "testimony is not now what it used to be. Testimony is to be measured by the centuries in which we live. We are now in an age of progress. In the days of the apostles men did not examine into the stories that they heard, but now we test everything. Our testimony is worth something, but the testimony of past ages is of another kind." We have challenged all our enemies to examine into miracles. Some eight or ten years ago Cardinal Manning invited the "men of light and leading" to examine the miracles of Lourdes, but they poo-pooed the idea. If they are not very particular about their testimony, is it a proof that men in past ages could not give testimony about miracles? Does it need any great amount of learning or shrewdness to say whether a man is dead or alive, to be able to prove that the Israelites passed through the Dead Sea? This is only a question of using their senses, and from the beginning men always could use their senses. The very history of Genesis tells us that before the flood men would not believe that there was anything coming. In the days of Christ Our Lord Himself do we not read of the incredulousness of St. Thomas? Thomas would not believe in it Christ had risen unless he put his hand into His side and into the wounds of His hands and feet. When Thomas spoke there were hundreds of unbelievers. It is not at all true that people were ready to believe any story that was told. Replies have been given to these views over and over again.

And now let us proceed to examine what that testimony of Christianity tells us We say that the Christians at present occupy the best places in the world. All the intellect and refinement on this earth is in Christian countries and not outside. Now these men have a history of the past. They tell you, and every one will admit with them, that if you go back nineteen centuries you come to a time when there was no Christianity at all; when there was on the contrary something very different from Christianity. The whole world was heathen, with the exception of the Jewish nation, which was then despised. The heathen world is portrayed to us by its writers, whom we still have, and from these writers we know what a seething mass of corruption it was. No really good Christian could have walked the streets of Rome or Athens in the days of our Lord without a blush for his humanity. The meanest and most disgusting vices were adored and deified. There was no idea of purity, no idea of humility. The very word did not exist. There was no charity. Hospitals did not exist until the time of Christianity. There was nothing that makes the beauty of our present lives. That world was a most degraded world. The Greeks were the most clever of men. The Romans were men of strong will of great legislative ability. They had the reins of power laid upon the necks of subject races and they governed them with an iron sway. But it is not true to say that it had been a period of progress. In reality history shows us that every nation has had a season of rise and perfection and then decay. Material discoveries do not affect the mind. In the highest regions of mind I do not believe that we have advanced a step since the days of Aristotle. Between Herbert Spencer and Aristotle there is a space of 2,000 years. In my opinion Aristotle was a much greater man than Herbert Spencer.

There had been very much more rectitude among the Romans than there was at the time of our Lord. The Greeks had had their fine age, and then they had dwindled down into a sort of clever people having no influence on the world.

The cohesiveness of a doctrine is always a strong argument of its truth. Nothing can be more natural than what our Lord did and taught. He came and said the prophets have spoken of Me of old. He mentioned them by name and verified everything that they had said. He vouched for the reality and inspiration of all the books which had gone before Him, and then He said I am not come to destroy all these. You have had your own books of the Old Testament announcing My coming, I am simply come to make them more convincing. And then He laid down the law of love. You shall love one another. He went about doing good And during that time when people asked Him for a sign, although He worked numberless miracles, still He said He would give them but one sign, the sign of Jonah, that He would be three days in the heart of the earth and then He would rise from the dead. He foretold that several times. Finally we read that He did sacrifice His life, died a most ignominious death and rose the third day . . . Taking these book merely as history, no one will deny that Jesus Christ did wonders when He came into this world and that He showed Himself as the fulfiller of the prophecies that had preceded Him, and that He gave as the sign of His divine mission, His resurrection. We know that He had chosen twelve followers, who, immediately after His death, went out into the world preaching that He had risen from the dead Judge of the effect produced by their words and see if their work was not divine. Twelve weak men went out into the world and said to men: "We preach to you Jesus Christ and Him crucified" And men said: "You want us to adore a Man who was crucified, Who suffered the ignominious death of the cross?" The Greek said, "How will you adore a Man who died the death of a slave?" The apostles did not change their language for that. "If you do not believe in Him you shall die the death." He has been crucified for you and this is your only hope for salvation." They said, "we are the witnesses of His resurrection; We swear to you that He died and that He rose again." And then they told their story, how that He did appear on the day of the resurrection to all of them—that they felt His body—that He appeared twelve or thirteen times to many of them, and finally ascended as He had said He would and promised to come again to judge them at the end of the world. Now this is the sort of teaching they taught. If it had not been true it would have had no effect. These twelve poor men revolutionized the world. See the change that came over the world. From these twelve men sprang a body of Christians who suffered torments and death in vast numbers—millions of them—men, women and children, gave up their lives rather than deny their faith. The whole power of the Roman Empire was against them. There were ten persecutions, the last the most terrible of them all, and yet after that persecution of Diocletian the cross which had been the punishment of slaves was set in the diadem of the Emperor?

We have developed the teachings of the apostles in works without number. We have answered all the objections that have ever been brought against us, and we find that most of the objections of our days are simply the old objections of the opponents of Christianity. Great effects can be produced only by great causes. If the apostles preached to men in such a way as to convert them and to make them give up their impurity, their cruelty, their want of charity, it is a proof that they must have proceeded from true facts in establishing their doctrine. It would have been very easy for those to whom they preached to have verified whether it were true or not that Christ had risen from the dead . . . . If they preached Christ risen, it was because they knew that He had risen. And how energetically they preached. St. Paul says: "If Christ has not risen then vain is your faith; but if He has risen then you shall be honored one day as He is now."

Finally, our view is far more reasonable than any other. There have been very many great men in past ages, and these men's cleverness has been handed down to us. In our school days we read of Homer and Virgil and their heroes. We read of Cæsar and Alexander, but I think we school boys had no particular affection for them. That is the only sort of immortality that most men have. They very seldom ensure

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