

CHIEF TRUTHS OF THE FAITH

A Course in Religion Book I

About This Series

Fr. John Laux, M.A. was a high school religion teacher who distilled the fruit of his many years of research and teaching into these fine high school religion books. At first glance, it might appear foolish to reprint books that were first published in 1928. But a reading of Fr. Laux's books will lay that thought to rest. For he had a rare talent of capsulizing the intricacies of our Catholic Faith and its theology into succinct, precise, learned and yet lively prose that is at once truly interesting and that all can easily understand. He is profoundly intellectual, yet always clear and easy. His writing, while aimed at the high school student, remains challenging and informative to the college student and the adult Catholic as well. But further, Fr. Laux writes in a virtually undated and almost undateable style, a style that is, one might say, classic and timeless, a style that truly befits his subject matter—the timeless teachings of our Ancient Church. For these reasons, the four books in this high school series are all works of rare genius, as also are his *Introduction to the Bible* and *Church History*, for they all possess these same qualities that make Fr. Laux such a pleasure to read and such a joy to study from.

A Word to the Teacher

The need of some systematic presentation of the truths of our Holy Religion to boys and girls of our American Catholic High Schools has been felt by Catholic educators for a long time. The manuals now in use have been found to be either too technical or too simple, and the problem has been to prepare a text that would suit the needs of the growing mind, and, while enlisting the interest of the pupils in acquiring a knowledge of religious truths, would at the same time encourage the practice of virtue and cultivate a love for the Church.

The present *Course in Religion for Catholic High Schools and Academies* is an attempt to solve this problem. The general arrangement of the course is based, as far as possible, on the division and order of the larger Baltimore Catechism. The catechetical form of presentation has been abandoned, because, in the opinion of prominent educators, "it is conducive to memory work rather than to reasoning, encourages inefficient teaching, and makes almost no appeal to the interest of the pupil."

For practical purposes the work has been divided into Four Parts, each of which is bound and paged separately and provided with copious helps for study and review, a table of contents and an index.

The First Part embraces the mystery of the Trinity, the work of Creation, Redemption, Sanctification, and Consummation. It is introduced by a brief treatment of the nature, necessity, sources, and qualities of Faith. The Second Part treats of the Means of Grace: the Sacraments, the Sacrifice of the Mass, Indulgences and Sacramentals. Part Three is devoted to General and Special Christian Moral; Part Four to Apologetics.

The writer suggests that every pupil be provided with a copy of the New Testament, to be used throughout the course; a Student's edition of the Missal, to be used in connection with Part Two; and the *Imitation of Christ* as supplementary material for Part Three. It is presupposed that there is a well-stocked Religious Book Shelf in every High School Library.

The concluding words of Father Drinkwater's preface to his excellent little book of religious instruction *Twelve and After* are applicable to every textbook in Religion: "Let us remind ourselves that religion is not a book-and-writing matter. Such instruction as this book contains is very useful and in some ways necessary; but there are things even more necessary, such as plenty of singing, corporate prayer, both liturgical and unliturgical, and opportunities for personal service, not to speak of the more individual and interior practice of religion. If these more essential things are well managed, then the intellectual instruction will have all the more meaning and fruit. It should become the raw material of Catholic ideals. We can but build up our altar stone by stone and arrange our wood upon it as carefully as may be, and then pray for the fire of the Lord to fall in acceptance of the offering."

A word to the teacher of religion. The purpose of the teaching of religion must be the same in all our schools from the grades to the university—to form *religious characters*, to train men and women who will be ready to profess their Faith with firm conviction and to practice it in their daily lives in union with the Church.

This obvious purpose of all religious teaching imposes a twofold duty on the teacher of religion in the High School: to give his pupils a *fuller and more profound grasp of Christian Doctrine*, and to lead them on to the *intelligent use* of the helps that have been given us to lead Christian lives.

It is idle to dispute, as is sometimes done, whether the training of the intellect is more important than the training of the heart and the will; the imparting of religious knowledge, than the formation of religious habits. Both are of supreme importance. The will follows the intellect; but the intellect is also powerfully influenced by the will. Ignorance may sometimes be bliss, but never in religious matters. Well-instructed Catholics may become backsliders, but their number is small in comparison with those who are lost to the Church because their ignorance of Catholic teaching made them easy victims of the purveyors of false science, shallow philosophy, and neo-pagan morality. Religion requires that the *whole* man worship God with all his faculties and acts. The intellect must *believe* that which is true concerning God—

Faith; and the *will* must be directed to *do* those actions which are right and to avoid those which are wrong—*Morals*.

Cardinal Newman wished to see the enlightened Catholic youth pious, and the pious Catholic youth enlightened. This ideal may never be fully attained, but it is certainly worth striving after.

Catholic Action is today becoming a vital force throughout the world. The layman cannot effectively engage in Catholic Action unless he is well versed in the teachings of his faith and able at all times to explain and defend it. The type of layman, therefore, that is needed today is the type which Cardinal Newman asked for years ago when he said: "I want laymen, not arrogant, not rash in speech, not disputatious, but men who know their religion, who enter into it, who know just where they stand, who know what they hold and what they do not; who know their Creed so well that they can give an account of it; who know so much of history that they can defend it. I want an intelligent, well instructed laity. I wish you to enlarge your knowledge, to cultivate your reason, to get an insight into the relation of truth to truth; to learn to view things as they are; to understand how faith and reason stand to each other; what are the bases and principles of Catholicism. Ignorance is the root of bitterness."

The great Cardinal's ideal of the Catholic layman may never be fully attained, but it is certainly worth striving after. It is only through such pious and enlightened laymen and laywomen, working with their bishops and pastors, that Catholic Action can be truly successful. It is the chief duty of our Catholic Educational system to place on the battlefield an army of laymen, equipped to "fight the battles of the Lord."

THE AUTHOR.

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SECTION I

FAITH AND THE SOURCES OF FAITH

CHAPTER I

Our Knowledge of God

"The fool said in his heart: There is no God."—Ps. 52,1.

1. How We Know God.—Our first duty is to know God. In Heaven we shall know Him face to face, but in this life He is hidden from our direct knowledge. We can, however, know something about Him by carefully noticing the things He has made, and still more by firmly believing what He has told us about Himself. In other words, we know God both by the *natural light of reason* and by the *supernatural light of faith*.

2. What Our Reason Tells Us About God.—Our reason tells us that there is one true God, the beginning and end of all things, our Creator and Lord; and that we must worship Him and do His will as it is written by Him in our hearts.

That there is an almighty God must be clear to every thinking person, for the fact is clearly proved by the whole visible world with its wise arrangement as well as by the voice of conscience.

a) No one can reasonably think that the world made itself; nor that the heavenly bodies could begin to move through space by their own power.

b) The wonderful arrangement and perfect order of the world lead us to infer that it was planned and carried out by a Being of supreme intelligence and skill.

c) All men who are in a normal state of mind know that they are bound in conscience to do certain acts and to avoid other acts, and feel that they are responsible for their conduct to a Supreme Judge who is the avenger of evil and the rewarder of good.

d) All the nations and races of men have always had an inner conviction of the existence of a Supreme Being. If there are any barbarous tribes that practice no religion, they can be such only as are degraded by vice below the normal condition of human beings.

The Scripture says: "The fool said in his heart: There is no God" (Ps. 52,1). Those who deny the existence of God are called *Atheists* (Greek *a-*,

not, and *theos*, God). Such people usually have reasoned themselves, or have been led by others, into a state of *doubt* in regard to the existence of God. Their state of mind arises either from pride, or from corruption of heart, or from a misguided education, or from all three. "He who denies the existence of God," says St. Augustine, "has some reason for wishing that God did not exist."

3. God Reveals Himself.—But God wished us to know much more about Himself—and about ourselves too—than our reason alone can tell us. From time to time, in His wisdom and goodness, He drew aside the veil that hides Him from us. He revealed Himself and His eternal decrees to us. He told us things about Himself which we could not otherwise know at all or not with certainty.

Revelation (Latin *re-*, back, and *velum*, a veil) means both the manifestation by God of His will and truths to man, and the body of truths thus manifested. It is called *supernatural* or *divine revelation*, as opposed to the natural revelation of Himself that God makes through the visible world.

4. We Know God's Revelations by Faith.—God did not reveal Himself directly to all men, or even to very many, but only to a few. These men were told by Him to make His revelations known to their fellow-men. Since God does not speak directly to each one of us, we have to take the word of those to whom He did speak for what He told them. In other words, we take God's revelations on *faith*. To take something on faith means to believe or hold as true what another tells us.

If we believe what a fellow-man tells us on his own authority or on the authority of another fellow-man, we have *human faith*. If we hold firmly and without doubting what someone tells us on God's authority, we have *divine faith*, for in that case we really believe God Himself.

5. God's Spokesmen and Their Credentials.—But how do we know when a human being tells us something on God's authority? We ask him to present his *credentials*, that is, we ask him to prove to us that he is really a messenger of God, and speaks in God's name; just as we ask anyone who claims to be the ambassador or representative of an earthly potentate to show us his credentials before we believe him.

Miracles and *Prophecies* are the only infallible credentials which God gives His spokesmen. If God puts His miraculous power at the disposal of a human being or permits him to look into the

secrets of the future, we can say without hesitation or fear of error that such a person has been sent by God.

Miracles are extraordinary works which cannot be done by the powers of nature, but only through the omnipotence of God; for example, to raise a person from the dead.

Prophecy is a clear and definite foretelling of an event that can be known to God alone, because it depends either on the free will of God or on the free will of man. To foretell an eclipse of the sun or of the moon, is not a prophecy; but it is a prophecy to foretell the exact manner of one's own death at the hands of others.

6. Who Were God's Spokesmen?—The things which God wished us to know for our salvation He made known to us by the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, and above all by His Son *Jesus Christ* and the *Apostles*.

Jesus Christ claimed to be not only a messenger of God, but the true Son of God Himself. He proved His claim by the supreme holiness of His life, by numerous miracles and prophecies during His life on earth, and by the crowning miracle of His Resurrection. He guarantees for us the revelations made to the Patriarchs and Prophets, as well as those made by His own Apostles.

7. Revealed Mysteries.—Since, then, God Himself has spoken to us, all that He has told us about Himself and about our own origin and destiny must be absolutely true, for God can neither deceive nor be deceived; if He could, He would not be God. Hence, even when He tells us things which we cannot understand—*mysteries*—we none the less firmly believe them, because He has revealed them.

Mysteries are revealed truths that are above and beyond our reason though not contrary to it. There are many natural mysteries, such as the growth of trees and plants and the marvelous instinct of birds and animals, which we do not understand; is there any wonder that mysteries should be found among the revealed truths? The Trinity is a mystery, because we cannot understand how one God can subsist in three Persons; but it is in no way contrary to our reason: we do not believe that three gods are one God, nor that three persons are one person, which would be a contradiction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND REVIEW

1. What do we know about God by the light of reason?
2. What is the difference between human and divine faith?
3. What does the word "reveal" mean? Explain its origin.
4. Give five examples from the Old Testament illustrating the manner in which God revealed things to men.

5. How did Moses prove to the Pharaoh that he was sent by God?
6. How did Our Lord prove that He is the Son of God?
7. Is the following statement true or false: "A mystery is a revealed truth that is contrary to our reason"?
8. Copy the following texts: Heb. 1,1-2; Rom. 1,20; Acts 14,16; John 1,18. Use these texts to illustrate various points touched upon in this chapter; for example, Rom. 1,20 shows that we can know God by the light of reason.
9. *Reading*: Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, *The Question Box*, pp. 41-45, on Miracles.

THE ARAB'S PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

An Arab in the desert was once asked how he knew there is a God. "In the same way," he said, "as I know by the footprints on the sand that a man or an animal has passed this way."

ST. ANTHONY'S BOOK

The thousands of men who visited St. Antony in the desert were astonished at his wisdom and good sense. Asked where he had acquired such solid wisdom, he replied, pointing with one hand to the heavens and with the other to the earth: "There is my book; I have no other: all should study it: in considering the works of God, they will be filled with admiration and love of Him who created all things."

LORD BYRON ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

"How, raising our eyes to heaven, or directing them to the earth, can we doubt of the existence of God?—or how, turning them to what is within us, can we doubt that there is something more noble and durable than the clay of which we are formed?"

MASS AND THE SACRAMENTS

A Course in Religion Book II

About This Series

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CHAPTER I

The Sacraments in General

I. THE NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. Means of Grace.—Without grace we can do no good work of ourselves towards our salvation. Hence the all-important question is, how can we obtain God's grace?

The principal means of obtaining grace are *Prayer* and the reception of the *Sacraments*. Prayer will be treated under the Ten Commandments; for the present it will suffice to point out the difference between prayer and the sacraments as means of grace:

- a) The sacraments *produce* grace in us; prayer *obtains* it for us.
- b) Through the sacraments we obtain those *special graces* for which they were instituted; through prayer we receive *all kinds of graces*, except those which are given only by the sacraments.

The word *sacrament* comes from the Latin word *sacramentum*, which the Romans used for any holy or sacred thing, such as forfeit money deposited in a temple or the military oath of allegiance. In the early Church it was applied to any religious object, rite, or ceremony which was hidden from the knowledge of the heathen; it was synonymous with *mystery*. In the course of time it received its present restricted meaning.

2. A Sacrament is an outward or sensible sign instituted by Christ through which inward grace is imparted to the soul. Hence three things are necessary for a sacrament:

- a) An outward or sensible sign;
- b) A corresponding inward or invisible grace;
- c) Institution by Christ.

a) The Outward Sign.—An outward or sensible sign is something that can be perceived by one or other of the senses. Its purpose is to make something hidden known to us; thus a word, a movement of the hand, an inclination of the head makes known to us what is hidden in another's mind. *The outward signs of the sacraments make known to us the inward grace that is being produced in the soul.*

The outward sign of the sacraments is composed of two things, *matter* and *form*. The matter of the sacrament is the sensible thing

or exterior act used in its administration, such as water, oil, bread and wine. The form consists in the words pronounced by the minister when he applies the matter, e.g., "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

To constitute a sacrament, the form must be united to the matter. "Take the word away," says St. Augustine, "and what else is baptismal water except ordinary water? but *add the words to the element and it becomes a sacrament*" (*In Joan. tract. 80,3*).

The matter of a sacrament is *remote* or *proximate*, according as we consider it in itself or in its actual application. Water in itself is the remote, the pouring of the water the proximate matter of the sacrament of Baptism.

b) The Inward Grace.—The outward signs of the sacraments do not merely signify grace, but actually impart the graces which they signify, unless we on our part put some obstacle in the way (Council of Trent, Session VII, Canon 6). When a priest pours water on the forehead of a child and pronounces the words, at that very moment the child is really cleansed from original sin and made holy and pleasing to God.

c) Institution by Jesus Christ.—No sensible things or outward signs have of themselves the power to produce inward supernatural grace, nor can any created being give such power to sensible things. If they have this power, it must have been given to them by God. He who merited grace for us, the God-Man Jesus Christ, attached to certain outward signs the power of imparting inward grace and sanctification to our souls. These signs have thus become the sacred channels through which flow to us the graces which Jesus Christ merited for us by His Passion and Death.

3. But why, it may be asked, should God bestow His supernatural favors upon us by means of outward signs and material symbols? The reason is because He adapts His methods to our nature. We are not pure spirits, but beings composed of body as well as of soul; so that even in our most spiritual operations we constantly make use of material and physical elements. Thus, when we wish to convey an intellectual idea to others we have to clothe it in language written or oral. In the same way God makes use of visible things as the vehicles of His invisible graces and blessings. We thus have *visible pledges* of the *invisible graces*.

There is another reason why God should convey His graces by visible signs, namely, to unite us all more closely together. "Since

the sacraments are conferred under visible forms, we cannot receive them without giving public testimony of our faith, and of our fellowship with the millions of other Catholics spread throughout the world. We thereby prove ourselves to be members of the same Church, and sharers in the same benefits, and sheep of the same divine Shepherd."

4. Sacramental Ceremonies.—Christ gave His Church the power to administer the sacraments. Hence the Church also has the power to prescribe certain *ceremonies* and prayers, to be used before and after their administration. Their purpose is

- a) To direct our attention to the graces received in the sacraments ;
- b) To prepare us for those graces ;
- c) To represent to us the dignity of the sacrament ;
- d) To increase our devotion and reverence.

Some of these ceremonies have Christ Himself as their author ; others were instituted by the Apostles ; others, again, by the Church at different times. As the ceremonies do not belong to the matter and form of the sacraments, they can be omitted or abbreviated in case of necessity.

2. NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Council of Trent declared that there are seven, and only seven, sacraments instituted by Christ.—Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

In the case of four of the sacraments—Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Holy Orders—we know when Christ instituted them ; Confirmation and Extreme Unction were administered by the Apostles ; the sacramental character of Matrimony is clearly indicated in Holy Scripture.

The Greek Church, which separated from the Catholic Church in the ninth century, also recognizes seven, and only seven, sacraments. The Coptic, Armenian and Syrian Monophysites, who separated in the fifth century, have seven, and only seven, sacraments—a proof that the doctrine of seven sacraments was universally recognized in the Church at the time of their separation.

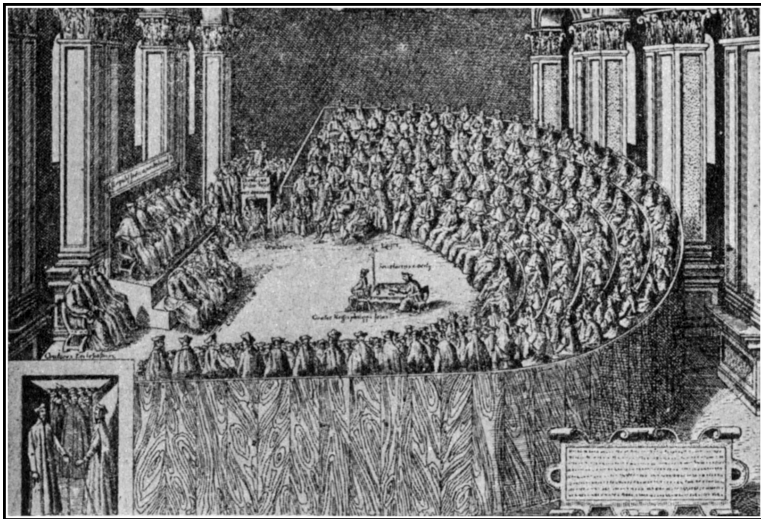
Lutherans admit only two sacraments, Baptism and the Eucharist. Luther at first also counted Penance among the sacraments, but later rejected it. When the Protestants of Germany sent a copy of their articles of faith

to the Schismatic Patriarch Jeremias of Constantinople in the year 1573 for his approval, the Patriarch strongly objected to their tampering with the number of the sacraments. "There are seven sacraments," he replied, "no more and no less."

2. The Sacraments Supply Seven Great Needs in Man's Spiritual Life, which form a striking parallel to the needs of his bodily life.

a) In the first place, a man must be born into this world. But he needs a spiritual, no less than a natural, birth. In the sacrament of *Baptism* he is born into the Church, and becomes a child of God. *The spiritual life is received.*

b) But a child must grow and acquire strength, or it will never be able to hold its own in the battle of life. A similar need is felt



THE COUNCIL OF TRENT
After a sixteenth century engraving

by the newly born Christian in the spiritual order. The sacrament of *Confirmation* strengthens the soul and raises it from the weakness of childhood to the vigor of Christian manhood. *The spiritual life is strengthened.*

c) But even a grown-up person needs food and nourishment. The same is true of the adult Christian. Hence Christ instituted the *Holy Eucharist* to be the food and life of his soul. *The spiritual life is nourished.*

d) Man's body is subject to various maladies which call for a physician. Our souls, too, are subject to many spiritual diseases and require doctors and remedies. In the sacrament of *Penance* we consult our spiritual physician and are freed from our spiritual ailments. *The spiritual life is restored.*

e) When our last hour draws near and we have to die, the body requires special comfort and assistance. Our soul also stands in need of help and protection and confidence to battle successfully against the final assaults of the devil. The sacrament of *Extreme Unction* meets this special trial and danger, and helps our anxious soul to pass through the throes of death with calmness and resignation to God's holy will. *The spiritual life is cleansed from the remains of sin.*

f) Human society needs rulers, instructors, and teachers. So does the Christian society, which is the Church. Besides this, the members of the Church require men set aside to administer to them the means of grace and salvation. In the sacrament of *Holy Orders*, the power of ruling the people of God, of preaching the Gospel of Christ, and of administering the sacraments is propagated from generation to generation. *The human instruments of the spiritual life are perpetuated.*

g) The Church must spread and increase in the world; and children must be born to replace the thousands who daily become a prey of death. Now, as the welfare of the Church and of society depends on the way in which parents bring up their children, in the sacrament of *Matrimony* the union between husband and wife is blessed that they may sanctify themselves and people the Church of God with a succession of good Christians. *The spiritual life is extended.*

3. DIVISION OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Sacraments Admit of Several Classifications.—

a) Sacraments whose purpose is to *perfect the individual*: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, and Extreme Unction; and sacraments whose purpose is to *perfect society*: Holy Orders and Matrimony. The latter are also called sacraments of *free choice*, because no one is *obliged* to receive them.

b) Sacraments of the *living* and sacraments of the *dead*. The sacraments of the living are so called because, in order to receive them worthily, we must have spiritual life, that is, sanctifying

grace. There are five sacraments of the living: Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. The sacraments of the dead are so called because, when we receive them, we either have not, or at least are not obliged to have, the life of grace. These sacraments are Baptism and Penance.

Occasionally a sacrament of the living may confer grace. For example, if a person in mortal sin, yet sincerely believing himself to be in a state of grace, were to receive a sacrament of the living with such attrition as is necessary to receive absolution, he would obtain the remission of his sin.

c) Sacraments that can be *received only once*, and sacraments that can be *received more than once*. Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders imprint an indelible character (mark, seal) on the soul, and therefore cannot be repeated. The remaining sacraments do not imprint this indelible character, and may be received repeatedly. Baptism stamps the recipient indelibly as a *citizen of the Kingdom of Christ*; Confirmation, as a *soldier of Christ*; Holy Orders, as a *captain in the army of Christ*.

The indelible mark or character consists in a special consecration or dedication to God. This mark is not effaced by mortal sin, nor can it ever be removed from the soul: it will either add to our glory in Heaven, or to our misery in Hell.

St. Paul refers to this indelible character when he says: "God hath anointed us and hath *sealed* us and given us the earnest (i.e., the warrant or guarantee) of His Spirit in our heart" (2 Cor. 1,22).

St. Augustine calls Baptism, even when unworthily received, "a consecration and character of the Lord." St. John Chrysostom compares Confirmation to the mark burned into the flesh of the deserter by which he might always be known.

2. If we consider the sacraments according to their *importance*, we find that Baptism is the most important because it is necessary for all; Penance is necessary for those who after Baptism have fallen into mortal sin—it is the "second plank after the shipwreck"—; Holy Orders is necessary for the Church as such. The Holy Eucharist surpasses all the other sacraments in *dignity*, as is evident.

4. EFFECTS OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. The Sacraments Impart Grace ex opere operato (The Council of Trent).—This is a Latin expression and literally means

“by the deed done,” that is, in virtue of the sacramental act itself, if no obstacle be placed in the way, and not *ex opere operantis*, that is, not in virtue of the acts or the disposition of the recipient or the worthiness of the minister. All that is required is that the sacraments be validly administered and that the soul be properly disposed to receive them.

These spiritual dispositions are necessary in the recipient, not to cause or merit the grace of the sacrament, but to remove the obstacles or impediments to its entrance into the soul; for example, infidelity and attachment to sin. They are therefore *conditions*, not *causes*, of the sacramental grace, just as the opening of the door is a necessary condition to one's entrance into a room, but not the *cause* of the entrance.

2. That the sacramental act itself produces grace is clearly taught in Holy Scripture.—Our Lord told Nicodemus that we are *born again of water and the Holy Ghost* (John 3,5). And St. Paul writes to his disciple Timothy: “I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, *which is in thee by the imposition of my hands*” (2 Tim. I, 6).

Protestants deny that the sacramental act itself produces grace; they maintain that we are justified by faith alone, and that the sacraments merely excite the faith or devotion of the recipient. But if faith alone justifies, how can little children be justified, and why baptize them?

3. The Sacraments Produce a Twofold Grace: *sanctifying grace* and special actual graces called *sacramental grace*.

Sanctifying grace is imparted by the sacraments if it does not already exist in the soul; if it already exists, it is increased.

With sanctifying grace is given the *right to special actual graces* which enable the recipient to obtain the end for which the sacrament was instituted. This sacramental grace is given according as circumstances demand, not merely at the time of the reception of the sacrament.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

The sacraments cannot produce the effects intended by God unless they are validly administered and validly and worthily received.

1. Each Sacrament Has Its Proper Minister, i.e., the person who has the power of conferring it. The minister may be a bishop, or a priest, or, in some cases, a lay person. For the *valid administration* of a sacrament, the minister must have the *intention to do*

what the Church does, and he must use the *matter and form* instituted by Christ. Neither sanctity, nor virtue, nor even faith, is necessary on the part of the minister.

The *Donatists* in the fourth century required the state of grace in the minister, and St. Cyprian (d. 258) and other African bishops maintained that Baptism administered by heretics was invalid. Both these opinions were condemned by the Church; and justly so, for the minister does not administer the sacraments by his own power, but by the power of Christ, whose instrument he is. He becomes the instrument of Christ by the sole intention of doing what Christ's Church does. St. Augustine says that "those who were baptized by Judas were baptized by Christ"; and that even if a murderer were to baptize, so long as the baptism was of Christ, it would be Christ Himself who baptized, for in every case the minister stands for the person of Christ. Even a sick doctor can heal his patients.

2. For the valid reception of the Sacraments, the following conditions are necessary:

a) The recipient must be still *alive*: the Church has power only over the living;

b) *Baptism* is a requisite for the reception of the other sacraments;

c) In the case of *adults*, the intention of receiving the sacraments is necessary; in the case of infants and idiots, such an intention is not required.

3. For the worthy reception of a Sacrament, the recipient must possess the dispositions necessary for gaining the grace of the sacrament. Hence before receiving a sacrament of the living, we must be in the state of grace; and before receiving a sacrament of the dead, we must have contrition for our sins, faith, etc.

Whoever deliberately receives a sacrament unworthily, commits a grievous sin, a *sacrilege*.

If an adult were to receive Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, or Matrimony unworthily but *validly*, the grace of the sacrament would not flow in upon his soul, but would remain, as it were, suspended until the obstacle was removed by an act of perfect contrition, or a good confession, or, in the case of Baptism, by eliciting an act of faith.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND REVIEW

I. NATURE OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. Prepare a short paper to be read or delivered before the class on the *Nature of the Sacraments*, using the following outline:

Introduction:

- a) Without grace no salvation.
- b) God gives grace in answer to our prayers or through the reception of the *Sacraments*.
- c) Difference between Prayer and the Sacraments as means of grace.

Exposition:

I. Various meanings of the word Sacrament. Its meaning here.

II. Three essentials in every Sacrament:

- | | | | | |
|------------------------|---|--------|---|-----------|
| a) <i>Outward Sign</i> | { | Matter | { | Proximate |
| | | Form | | Remote |
- b) *Inward Grace* "The Sacraments are *causes* of grace." "They impart the grace they signify."
 - c) *Institution by Christ*. Why the Church cannot institute a Sacrament.

III. Why Christ instituted visible signs to impart His grace.

IV. Why *ceremonies* are added in the administration of the Sacraments.

Illustration: Paper-Money

On their accession to the throne, the Roman emperors used to throw money to the people. One of them once thought to throw them slips of paper signed by himself and showing sums of money more or less considerable, which the State would pay the bearer on presentation. The people, not realizing the value of these papers, despised them; but some, well advised, gathered up a large number of them, and became rich in a single day.

If a man can thus give value to what has no value in itself, how much more can God attach wonderful graces to common and simple elements, such as water and oil and human words!

- 2 Copy the following texts: John 20,22; Mark 7,33-34; John 9,6. What do they tell you about visible signs used to confer spiritual and corporal blessings? Does the Church still use these very signs in the administration of the Sacraments?
- 3. *Reading: Question Box*, pp. 228-230, and 235, "The Sacraments."

2-3. NUMBER AND DIVISION OF THE SACRAMENTS

- 1. *Seven*, a sacred and mysterious number. Quote examples from Scripture.
- 2. What does the Council of Trent define in regard to the number of the Sacraments?
- 3. Show that the doctrine of the Seven Sacraments has always been taught in the Church. How many Sacraments do the Protestants have? Why is it impossible for them to have any other Sacraments besides Baptism and Matrimony?

4. Show how the Seven Sacraments supply seven great needs in man's spiritual life.
5. Explain the following terms: "Sacraments of the Living," "Sacraments of the Dead," "Sacraments of Free Choice," "Sacraments that can be received only once."
6. Why are Baptism and Penance the most important Sacraments? Why is the Holy Eucharist the most excellent?
7. Write a short paper on *The Sacramental Character*, using the following outline:

- I. What is meant by a character, mark, or seal? Illustrate. Who was "marked" by God in the Old Testament? See Gen. 4,15.
- II. What do we mean by the Sacramental Character?
- III. St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. John Chrysostom on the indelible mark imprinted on the soul by Baptism and Confirmation.
- IV. What special consecration or dedication to God is given by Baptism? by Confirmation? by Holy Orders?
- V. Why the Sacramental Character cannot be effaced in time or eternity. (A child, however rebellious, is still a child of its parents; a soldier, though a deserter, is still a soldier; a priest is "a priest forever.")
- VI. Value of the Sacramental Character in the next life.
- VII. Would it be a sacrilege to receive or confer Baptism, etc., knowingly a second time? Is "conditional Baptism" a second Baptism?
- VIII. Illustration: *Julian the Apostate*.

"Twenty years after his Baptism the Emperor Julian renounced the faith and returned to paganism. Convinced that his Baptism and Confirmation had impressed a character upon his soul, he took every means in his power to rid himself of it. History says that he had the blood of victims offered to idols poured over his head, and that he made use of many other superstitious practices to efface the character he had received. Alas! in spite of his sacrilegious efforts, when the Angel's trumpet summons men to judgment, it will be as *Christian* that Julian the Apostate will arise and go forth to answer for the abuse of the abundant graces which the Sacraments brought to his soul."

—MASSILLON.

8. Reading: *Question Box*, pp. 232-235.

4-6. EFFICACY, ADMINISTRATION AND RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

1. Explain the words of the Council of Trent: "The Sacraments impart grace *ex opere operato*."
2. Copy the following texts: John 3,5; 2 Tim. 1,6; Acts 2,38; Rom. 6,3-4; Acts 22-16; John 6,54-59. What do these texts tell you about the efficacy of the Sacraments?
3. Do not Catholics attribute a *magical* effect to the Sacraments by believing that they confer grace of themselves (*ex opere operato*)? To answer this objection ask yourself, What is magic? and, Whence do the Sacraments derive their efficacy?

4. What twofold grace do the Sacraments produce? What is meant by *Sacramental grace*?
5. What is necessary in order that the Sacraments may produce the effects intended by God?
6. What is necessary for the *valid administration* of a Sacrament?
7. Why is neither sanctity, nor even faith necessary on the part of the minister for the *valid* administration of a Sacrament?
8. What is required for the *valid reception* of a Sacrament? For the *worthy reception* of the Sacraments?
9. What must a person do who has received Baptism, Confirmation, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders or Matrimony validly but unworthily? Must he apply to have these Sacraments repeated? Why not?
10. Can you list some *social advantages* of the Sacraments?
11. *Reading: Question Box*, pp. 236-238.

CATHOLIC MORALITY

A Course in Religion Book III

About This Series

Fr. John Laux, M.A. was a high school religion teacher who distilled the fruit of his many years of research and teaching into these fine high school religion books. At first glance, it might appear foolish to reprint books that were first published in 1928. But a reading of Fr. Laux's books will lay that thought to rest. For he had a rare talent of capsulizing the intricacies of our Catholic Faith and its theology into succinct, precise, learned and yet lively prose, that is at once truly interesting and that all can easily understand. He is profoundly intellectual, yet always clear and easy. His writing, while aimed at the high school student, remains challenging and informative to the college student and the adult Catholic as well. But further, Fr. Laux writes in an undated and almost undateable style, a style that is, one might say, classic and timeless, a style that truly befits his subject matter—the timeless teachings of our Ancient Church. For these reasons, the four books in this high school series are all works of rare genius, as also are his *Introduction to the Bible* and *Church History*, for they all possess these same qualities that make Fr. Laux such a pleasure to read and such a joy to study from.

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CHAPTER I

Conditions of Morality

A. FREE WILL

1. *Nature of Free Will*

When the youthful Hercules' education was completed, he set out to seek his fortune. He had not gone far before he met two beautiful women, Kakia (Vice) and Arete (Virtue) by name, who immediately entered into conversation with him. Each offered to be his guide, but bade him choose which he preferred to follow. Kakia promised him riches, ease, honors, and pleasure; Arete warned him that in her wake he would be obliged to wage incessant war against evil, to endure hardships without number, and spend his days in toil and poverty. Silently the hero pondered for a while over these so dissimilar offers, and then, mindful of the instructions he had received, rose from his seat by the wayside, and, turning to Arete, declared himself ready to obey any command he might choose to give him.

This parable is called *Hercules' Choice*: it is an apt illustration of what we mean by *free will*.

1. Free Will or Moral Freedom is the power of determining our own acts; the power of acting or not acting, of doing one thing or another as we please. Hercules made use of his free will when he determined to follow Arete; he might have followed Kakia, but he chose to follow Arete.

But *why* did Hercules determine to follow Arete? Both Arete and Kakia presented something *good or desirable* to him and thereby gave him *motives soliciting his will*. He weighed the motives and then made his choice. Free will implies not choice *without* motive, but choice *between* motives. If there is only *one* motive within the range of intellectual vision, the act of the will in such circumstances is not *free*, but *necessary*. A choice without *any* motive would be irrational and impossible (Maher).

2. Free Will Presupposes Knowledge.—We are responsible for an action only in so far as we know it to be morally good or bad. Hence we cannot be held responsible for what we do during sleep, in a state of unconsciousness, or during a fit of insanity. Hence, too, children who have not attained the age of discretion are not responsible for their acts. But we must not forget that

the seeds of good or bad habits can be sown in earliest childhood. "As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

3. We can will only what we know; but our will often influences our intellect. Love and hate, sympathy and antipathy easily darken our understanding and mislead our judgment. The wish is only too frequently the father to the thought, as Shakespeare says; and love is proverbially blind. We readily believe what we *wish* to believe. "He who denies the existence of God," says St. Augustine, "has some reason for *wishing* that God did not exist."

4. The power to commit sin does not belong to the essence of moral freedom; for this power presupposes a lack of knowledge: he who sins seeks his happiness in something which is not a real good; he puts a false god in the place of the true God. Hence the more strenuously we combat our evil inclinations and set our mind and will on what is truly good and beautiful, the *freer* we become. "Where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty," says St. Paul (2 Cor. 3,17); and Our Lord declares to the Jews: "If you continue in My word, you shall be My disciples indeed, and *you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8,31). The blessed in Heaven, who see the Eternal Truth face to face, cannot sin any more.

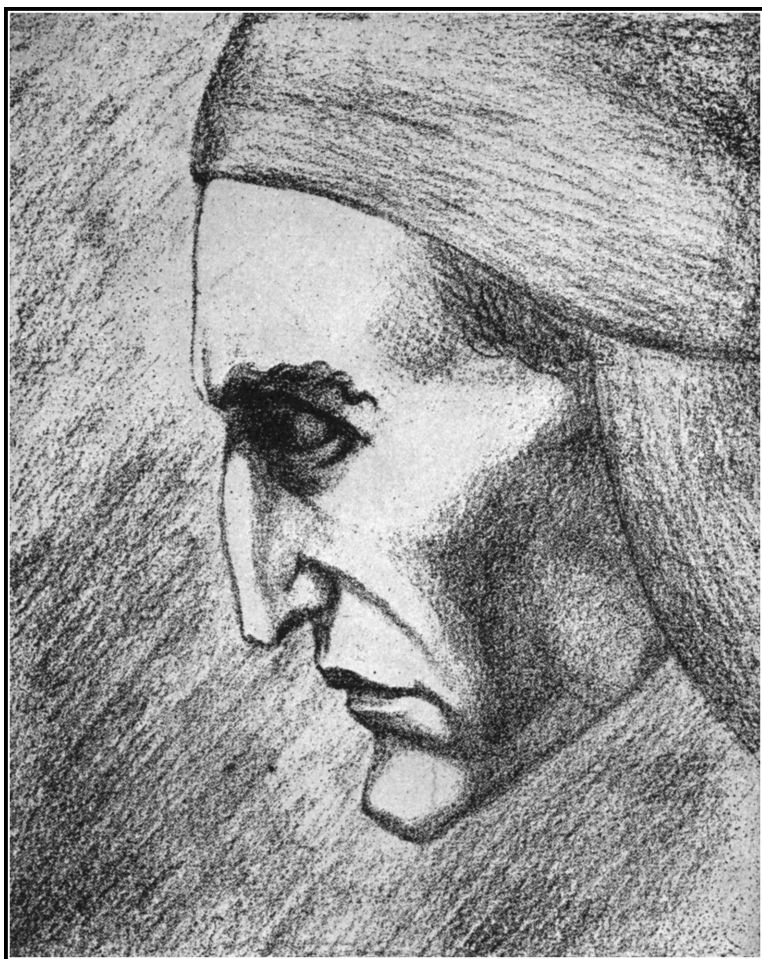
The one sole wished-for Good is there,
And everything defective elsewhere found,
In it is perfected beyond compare.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, 33

2. Free Will in the Light of Faith and Reason

1. That man has the power of free choice or free will is clearly taught in Holy Scripture.—Moses said to the children of Israel: "I call Heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: *choose* therefore life" (Deut. 30,19). Everlasting glory is promised to him "who could have transgressed, who could do evil things, and hath not done them" (Eccles. 31,10). Jesus wept over Jerusalem and lamented: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and *thou wouldst not*" (Matt. 23,37).

2. The Church has ever championed the freedom of the will against all its opponents.—Against the so-called Reformers of the 16th century, who denied human liberty, the Council of Trent solemnly declared: "If any one says that the free will of man does not co-operate in any way with the grace of God, and that it can not resist the grace of God, but, like a lifeless thing is merely passive, let him be anathema" (Sess. 6, Can. 5-6).



Immel

DANTE

3. The freedom of the will is also vouched for by the consciousness of each individual and by the common sense of mankind.

a) The very fact that our will acts upon motives; that it waits till it sees a reason for acting; that it passes from one insufficient reason to another till it finds an adequate reason for deciding, proves that it is master of its actions.

b) *Duty, obligation, responsibility, reward, and punishment*—words found in the languages, literatures, and laws of all times—all imply *moral freedom*. “If we *ought* to abstain from a forbidden gratification no matter how pleasant it would be to us, if we are to be *responsible* for our deliberate consent to it, if we are *deserving of reward* for resisting it, then assuredly we must be possessed of free will, we must be capable of yielding, just as well as of refusing to yield.”

c) All men make a distinction between certain acts done *deliberately* and *freely* and similar acts done *indeliberately*. The whole social system is based on the assumption that the normal person has free will. The state makes laws *for* its citizens. It makes laws *about* animals, not *for* them.

d) The *legal trial* is based on the assumption that man is free and responsible. The fact that the legal trial is to be found in every state in every age, indicates that it is natural for man to believe in free will. If a man can only do what he *must*, if he has no more liberty than a machine, why should he be subjected to trial and punishment? We do not punish an automobile for running over a child, but we do punish a reckless driver.

3. Hindrances to Free Will

1. Free Will is one of God's most splendid gifts to man.—

Through his free will man has the wonderful power, unique in all the visible creation, of directing his actions according to his good pleasure. It is this wonderful power that makes him a moral agent, that makes him king and lord of creation, and of all creatures most like to God.

“Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave
Of His free bounty, sign most evident
Of goodness, and in His account most prized
Was *liberty of will*—the boon wherewith
All intellectual creatures, and them sole,
He hath endowed.”

DANTE, *Paradiso*, 5.

2. Hindrances to Free Will.—But this “supreme gift” of moral freedom is given to us, not as a perfect possession, but as a *power* or *faculty* which we must develop and make as perfect as possible. This task of training and strengthening the will is all the more difficult because of the many obstacles that have to be overcome both from within ourselves and from without.

a) Among the hindrances to free will *concupiscence* takes the first place. By concupiscence we mean the rebellion of our lower against our higher nature, of the flesh against the spirit. Since the fall of our first parents our nature is drawn toward the things of sense, as iron is drawn by the magnet. St. Paul calls this inclination to evil “the law of the members,” the law of gravitation, as it were, of our fallen nature, which draws the will down into the sphere of sin, and which cannot be completely and lastingly overcome unless the will of man and the grace of God form an offensive and defensive alliance against it. All merely natural means are insufficient.

Concupiscence lessens our liberty and our responsibility; but if we deliberately excite our passions, we are all the more to blame.

b) Another hindrance to free will is *ignorance*. The exercise of free will presupposes that we *know* what we are doing. We can will only what we know. If we do not know and cannot know that our actions are evil, we do not consent to evil, and cannot be blamed for our actions. In this case our ignorance is said to be *invincible*. But if we suspected that our action was wrong, our ignorance is called *vincible*, and we are to blame for our action; still “the less the knowledge, the less the blame.”

c) *Fear* of a grave present or future evil lessens our liberty, but it does not take away our liberty unless it is so intense that we do not know what we are doing; in this case we are not responsible for our actions. A man who perjures himself because he has been threatened with death, is not blameless, but he is less to blame than if he had perjured himself deliberately.

Grave fear, if unjustly caused with a view to bringing marriage about, has always been regarded by the Church as an impediment that makes marriage null and void; it is even probable that this cause nullifies marriage by the natural law.

d) If *violence* is used to make us do wrong, and we refuse our consent, we are not responsible; but if we give partial consent, we are partially to blame. We must remember that only *external*

acts can be forced from us; the will as such is beyond the reach of physical violence. The will is an inviolable shrine.

e) Good or bad actions repeatedly performed become *habits*, i.e., we perform them with greater ease, regularity and satisfaction: they become a second nature to us. If we seriously try to overcome bad habits, we disown them, as it were, and any acts that spring from them indeliberately are not really imputable to us.

f) Natural propensities to evil arising from *hereditary taint* lessen the voluntariness of the action just as passion does; but these propensities are not as a rule so strong as to make what in itself is mortally sinful only venial. The struggle against vice is more difficult for those who have inherited some evil propensity, but as long as they are in their right senses they can resist with the help of God's grace, if only they make use of the proper means.

B. LAW

The will of God is the end of life. If we do God's will, we shall infallibly attain our life's purpose—eternal happiness in the possession of God. But how do we know what is the will of God? How is God's will manifested to us? God must have provided some safe and certain rule to direct man's actions towards their last end. That rule we call the *moral law*. It is the means appointed by God by which man may attain his last end.

The will of God, therefore, considered as the rule, norm, or standard of our actions is called *law*. God has revealed Himself as our law-giver in two ways: by the *natural law* and by the *positive divine law*.

1. The Natural Law

The Natural Law is that law which God has written in the heart of man; in other words, it is the light of natural reason by which we discern what is good and what is evil; what is to be done and what is to be left undone; what leads to our last end, and what draws us away from it; what is in accordance with the will of God, and what is contrary to it.

1. That there is such a law is clear from Sacred Scripture.

St. Paul says of the heathens that they "are a law unto themselves", and that they "show that the demands of the law are *written in their hearts*, their conscience bearing witness to them" (Rom. 2,14-15). They are a law to themselves because they

know of themselves what is good and what is evil; reason is to them the herald of the eternal law of God.

The *pagans* themselves bear witness to the truth of the words of St. Paul. Socrates declared before the judges who condemned him to death that he would rather give up liberty and life itself than become a traitor to the dictates of the moral law. In his oration *pro Milone* Cicero says: "There exists a genuine and absolute law, right reason conformed to nature, universal, unchangeable, eternal, whose voice teaches us the good it commands, and turns us away from the evil it forbids. To ignore it is to trample under foot one's very nature, and to inflict upon oneself by that alone the most cruel punishment, even though one should escape all the chastisements imposed by human justice." Juvenal, the Roman satirist, echoes these words when he says: "By the verdict of his own breast no guilty man is ever acquitted."

The superiority of the unwritten moral law over all man-made laws is beautifully expressed by Sophocles, the greatest dramatist of antiquity. Against the command of her uncle, King Creon of Thebes, Antigone buries the body of her brother Polynices. She is caught in the act and brought before the king:

Creon (to Antigone). Knew'st thou our edict that forbade this thing?

Antigone. I could not fail to know. You made it plain.

Creon. How durst thou then transgress the published law?

Antigone. I thought not thy commandment of such might
That one who is mortal thus could overbear
The *infallible, unwritten laws of Heaven*.
Not now or yesterday they have their being,
But everlastingly, and none can tell
The hour that saw their birth. I would not, I,
For any terror of a man's resolve,
Incur the God-inflicted penalty
Of doing them wrong.

Antigone transl. by CAMPBELL.

"Two things," says Kant, "fill the soul with an ever renewed admiration and reverence: the starry heavens above me, and the immutable prescriptions of the moral law within me."

2. The subject-matter of the natural law is: (a) the primary precepts of morality, (b) the immediate conclusions, and, (c) the remote conclusions drawn from the primary precepts.

a) There are *three primary precepts of morality* corresponding to man's relation to God, to himself, and to his neighbor: We should worship God, we should control our sensual appetites, we should not do to others what we would not have them do to us.

A fourth might be added: Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother. No normal person can be ignorant of these fundamental principles.

b) The *immediate conclusions* from these primary precepts are the *Ten Commandments*, with the exception of the Third. These conclusions are reached by a process of reasoning so simple as to be within the powers of the most illiterate.

c) In regard to the *remote conclusions*, such as the indissolubility of marriage, the unlawfulness of private revenge for bloodshed, and the like, ignorance is possible and excusable.

3. The natural law is the foundation of all other laws.—

Every law that contradicts the natural law is unjust and not binding in conscience. Since the natural law flows from the Eternal Law, that is, from the Divine Reason and Will, it is *binding on all men* independently of time or place or circumstances; it cannot be abrogated, nor can any part of it be changed, nor can any one be dispensed from it. There is no double standard of morality, one for the strong and another for the weak, one for the rich and another for the poor, one for the learned and another for the unlearned, one for the superior and another for the inferior.

4. But may not God, the Author of the natural law, change it if He so desires? May He not dispense anyone whom He may choose to dispense? We answer: To say that God could change the natural law or dispense from it, would imply that God could contradict Himself, would imply that certain actions were good or bad simply because He commanded or forbade them, and not that He commanded or forbade them because they were *intrinsically*, that is, in themselves, of their very nature, good or bad.

2. The Positive Divine Law

More clearly and fully than by the Natural Law God has made His will known by supernatural revelation, especially in the Old and New Testaments. This revealed law is called the *Divine Positive Law*.

1. Divine positive laws are necessary to man (a) in order to explain the natural law, especially those parts of it which are not so readily known and understood by reason alone; (b) because God gave man a supernatural destiny and therefore had to regulate man's actions so that he might be able to attain that destiny.

2. The divine positive law is divided into the *Law of the Old* and the *Law of the New Testament*; or simply, into the

Old and the New Law. The *Old Law* is subdivided into (a) the *Patriarchal* and (b) the *Mosaic Law*.

a) Even before the Fall God gave a positive law to our first parents: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat" (Gen. 2,8). After the Fall He imposed the *Law of Labor* on mankind: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken" (Gen. 3,19). To Noe and his sons He said after the Deluge: "Flesh with blood thou shalt not eat. Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed" (Gen. 9,4-6). On the children of Israel He laid the law of Circumcision.

b) The Mosaic Law is divided into *ceremonial*, *judicial*, and *moral* precepts. The ceremonial precepts had reference to the system of religious worship established by God under the Old Law; the judicial regulated the civil government of the chosen people, and when the old dispensation gave place to the new at the coming of Christ both ceased to have binding force. But Christ by no means abolished the moral precepts contained in the Mosaic Law; on the contrary, He set His seal upon them, perfected them and promulgated them anew for all time. "Do not think," He said, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5,17).

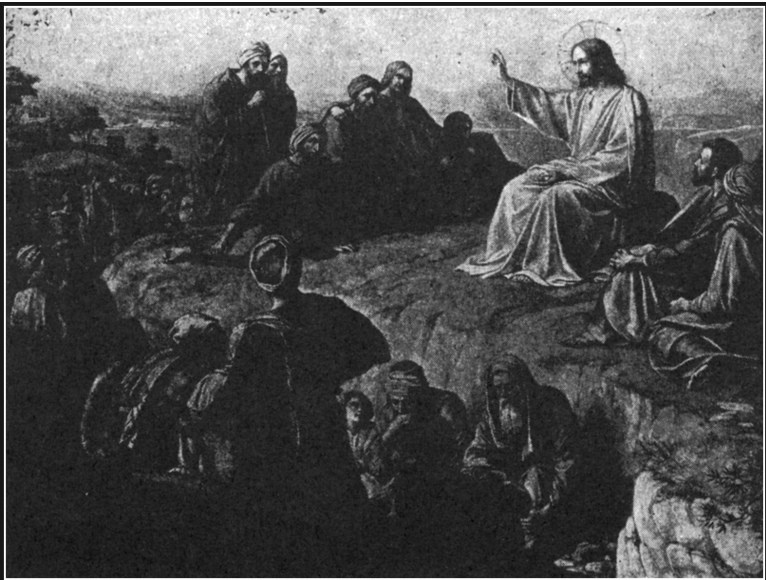
3. The New Law.—In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus, the Lawgiver of the New Testament, emphasized the necessity of the inward holiness and corrected some false interpretations of the Old Law, which were current among the Jews of His time. He developed what was implicitly contained in the moral precepts of the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), and He added to the precepts *Counsels of Perfection*, which He proposed as the ideal of the Christian life. He calls His commandment of love new, not because that great commandment did not bind under the Old Law, but because He urged it anew, gave us new motives to practice it, especially His own divine example and wish.

The only really new moral precepts found in the New Law are such as follow from the truths which Christ made known to us, and from the institution of the Sacraments. We are under moral obligation to believe explicitly in the Blessed Trinity, the Incarnation, and the other articles of the Christian faith, and to receive Baptism, the Holy Eucharist, and the other Sacraments instituted by Christ (Slater).



Hoet

THE LAW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT
The Giving of the Ten Commandments



Schumacher

THE LAW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
The Sermon on the Mount

3. Human Positive Laws

In order that the divine law may be made known to men till the end of time and applied to suit the changing conditions of time and place, the Eternal Lawgiver has appointed representatives among men and given them a share in His legislative power. Hence the power exercised by parents over their children and by the Church and the State over their subjects comes from God; it is a participation in the divine authority.

1. Parental authority is expressly proclaimed in the Fourth Commandment. It embraces the whole life of the child. Its object is the corporal and intellectual, the temporal and eternal welfare of the child.

2. The Catholic Church has received from her divine Founder full and independent authority to make laws binding on all her children in matters which pertain to religion and the salvation of souls. "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in Heaven" (Matt. 18,18). The Apostles knew that they possessed this power and exercised it. At the Council of Jerusalem they solemnly declared: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things . . ." (Acts 15,28).

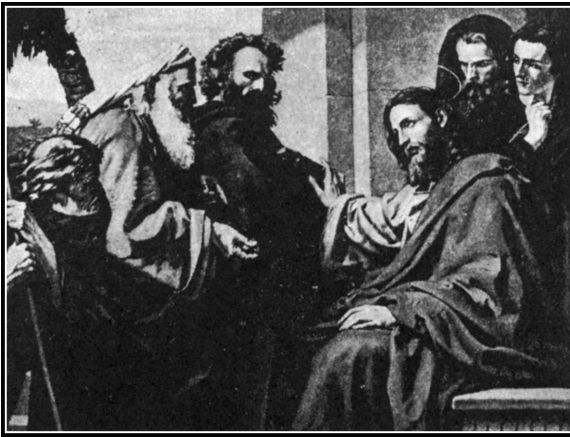
The laws of the Church bind only those who have been baptized. One who has been validly baptized, but belongs to a non-Catholic denomination, is strictly speaking, bound to observe the laws of the Church, but he is as a matter of fact dispensed from them as long as he remains in error without any fault of his.

3. Scripture teaches most clearly that the power of the State to make laws is also derived from God.—In a public interview Christ told the Jews: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22,31). Obedience to the civil authority, to an edict of the Emperor Augustus, marks the beginning of Christ's earthly life, and one of His last utterances concerned the divine origin of all human authority. "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me," He said to Pilate, "unless it were given thee from above" (John 19,10).

St. Peter echoes the words of Christ: "Fear God; honor the king . . ." and St. Paul says: "Let every soul be subject to the higher authorities; for there is no authority that is not from God, and the existing authorities are appointed by God. Wherefore he



"Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. 18, 18)



Ciseri

"Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God, the things that are God's." (Matt. 22, 21)

that opposeth the authorities resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall bring upon themselves a judgment" (Rom. 13,1-3).

C. CONSCIENCE

Law is the expression of God's will. It is the external norm or rule of our actions. It is by knowing and *applying* law to our individual actions that we attain our final end. This is done by *Conscience*.

1. Conscience, therefore, is the connecting link between law and particular acts.—It is the *application* of the natural law to our thoughts, words, and deeds. It is the *judgment* passed by our reason on the moral worth of our actions already done, being done, or to be done in the future.

The process by which we arrive at this judgment is as follows: Our mind recognizes the primary principles of the natural law as true and binding on all; our mind also knows the conclusions drawn from these principles; our conscience applies this knowledge to a particular act. For example, the natural law tells me that evil must be avoided and that theft is an evil act; from these premises my conscience concludes: Therefore it is not lawful for thee to make off with this hat or this pair of shoes which belongs to another.

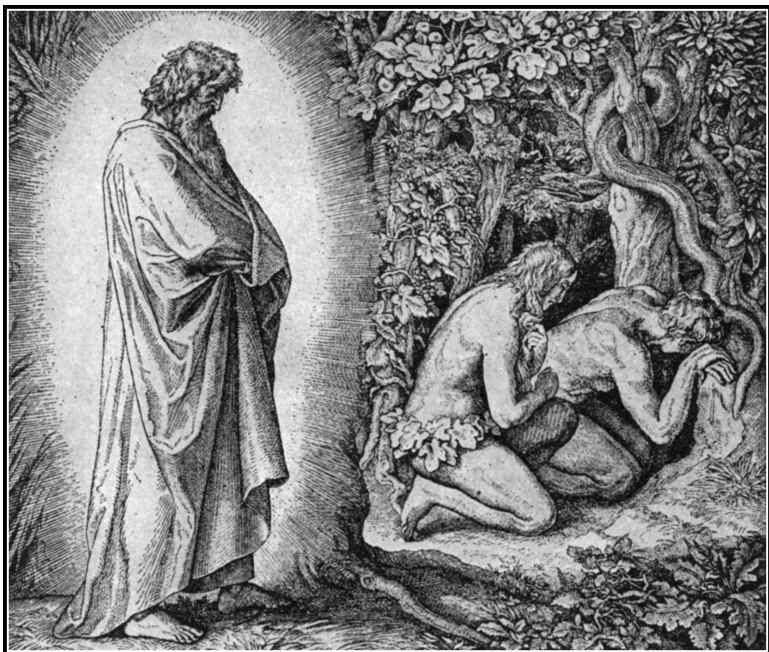
When there is question of obeying a positive law our conscience is formed as follows: I must obey all who command me with lawful authority. The Church commands me with lawful authority to receive Holy Communion at Easter time or to abstain from meat on Fridays. Therefore I must receive Holy Communion at Easter time and abstain from meat on Fridays. The drawing of this conclusion, or the conclusion itself, is called the *dictate of conscience*.

2. We do not need to prove that we have a conscience.—

All who have the use of reason *know that they have a conscience*. "Let no one," says St. John Chrysostom, "pretend to ascribe the neglect of virtue to ignorance or say he has no guide or no one to show the way. We have a competent teacher, namely, *conscience*, of whose aid no one is deprived. For the knowledge of what is to be done and what is to be left undone is in man *from the day in which he is formed*."

The deepest well-spring of conscience is, therefore, God Himself, the Author of our nature. In our conscience He manifests Himself as our *Lawgiver* and our *Judge*: as our Lawgiver who commands or forbids an act; as our Judge who after the act has been done decides whether it deserves blame or praise, punishment

or reward. Hence conscience is justly called the *voice of God* in man.



Schnorr

Adam and Eve, stricken in conscience, try to hide from God

3. The word conscience does not occur in the Old Testament or in the Gospels. In its place Our Lord uses the words *heart* and *interior light*. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Luke 6,4). The heart, that is, the conscience, is according to Christ, the birthplace of good and evil. In a striking similitude He shows the necessity and the importance of conscience for morality: "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single thy whole body shall be lightsome. If then *the light that is in thee* be darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be?" (Matt. 6,22-23). What the eye is for our body, the interior light is for our moral life. Where this light does not shine, there is no morality, nor good nor evil; all is darkness and night. But by the bright flame of the interior light we see the way which we must go, the pitfalls and obstacles and dangers which we must avoid.

St. Paul introduced the word conscience into the Christian vocabulary. He found it in use both among the Greeks and the Romans (Gr. *suneidesis*, Lat. *conscientia*). He tells us that it forms a part of every man's moral equipment. "The gentiles," he says, "show the work of the law written in

their hearts, their *conscience* bearing witness to them" (Rom. 2,15).

But St. Paul not only introduced the word conscience into the Christian vocabulary, he also gave it a Christian meaning: the conscience of the Christian is a *conscience whose rule and standard is the will of God*. Our conscience can err—there is such a thing as an erroneous conscience—but if the will of God is the measure of our conscience, if we form our conscience "in Christ and in the Holy Ghost," it is an infallible guide of right conduct. "I speak the truth *in Christ*, I lie not, *my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost*" (Rom. 9,1).

4. We distinguish several kinds of conscience.—

a) A *true conscience* speaks the truth; it tells what is truly right and truly wrong. It is a genuine Echo of the voice of God.

b) A *false or erroneous conscience* tells us that something that is really wrong is right, and something that is really right is wrong. We may be to blame for this error or not; if we are to blame, our conscience is said to be *culpably erroneous*; if we are not to blame, it is said to be *inculpably erroneous*.

c) If our conscience, whether it speaks the truth or not, speaks with assurance, without a suspicion of error, and its voice carries conviction, we are said to have a *certain conscience*.

d) If our conscience has nothing definite to tell us about the goodness or badness of an action, it is called a *dubious or doubtful conscience*. To doubt is to suspend judgment. Hence a doubtful conscience is one that does not function.

5. We are always bound to follow a certain conscience, even if false or erroneous. "All that is not from conscience," says St. Paul, "is sin" (Rom. 14,23). The reason is clear. We are judged by God according as we do good or evil. Our merit or demerit is dependent on our responsibility. We are responsible only for the good or evil we *know* we do. But knowledge and certainty come from a certain conscience. Therefore, if we disobey a certain conscience, we make ourselves responsible. A Protestant who is fully convinced that it is a sin to hear Mass or to speak to a priest would undoubtedly commit sin by so doing.

No authority, ecclesiastical or civil, can make it lawful for us to do what our conscience condemns as *certainly wicked*. "God Himself can not make it lawful for a man to act against his own conscience, because to do so without sin is a contradiction in terms."

6. We are never allowed to act with a doubtful conscience.—We must clear up the doubt before acting. I am uncertain, for

example, whether a person has paid me a debt which he owed me. May I while in this frame of mind exact payment from him? Certainly not; for in this case I would be equally as ready to do wrong as right.

We are bound to *form our conscience* with great care. If we have serious grounds for suspecting that our conscience is erroneous, we are strictly obliged to look well into the matter. We are bound to take all reasonable means, such as good and honest people do take when there is danger of offending God. We ought to pray for light and consult others, who are more learned or prudent than we are. If after that our ignorance cannot be overcome, it is plain that we are not responsible for the error into which we have fallen.

7. The best means for cultivating and perfecting our conscience are —

- a) To practice *truthfulness* in word and deed;
- b) To *repress* those passions which tend to stifle the voice of conscience, especially *pride* and *impurity*;
- c) To *examine our conscience* every evening before retiring to rest;
- d) To go to *confession* frequently;
- e) To make a *retreat* from time to time.

On the excellent fruits of daily self-examination Benjamin Franklin writes in his *Autobiography*: "Conceiving that daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination. I made a little book, ruling each page so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark by a little black spot every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day. . . . Conceiving God to be the fountain of wisdom, I thought it right and necessary to solicit His assistance for obtaining it; to this end I formed the little prayer, which was prefixed to my tables of examination for daily use. . . . I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined, but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. I was often almost ready to give up the attempt . . . for something that pretended to be reason was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals. . . . But, on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the per-

fection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was by the endeavor a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it."

By making use of these natural and supernatural means we shall secure for ourselves the inestimable blessing of a *true conscience*, whose judgment is always in accordance with the will of God; of a *watchful conscience*, which detects and signals the approach of evil, no matter under what disguise it may appear; of a *tender conscience*, which fears to offend God in the slightest degree; and we shall thus build up in our hearts a kingdom of peace and joy.

"*In this I myself also endeavor to have always a conscience without offense towards God and towards men*" (St. Paul, Acts 24,16).

"*Have a good conscience and thou shalt ever have joy*" (*Imitation of Christ*, II, 6).

D. COLLISION OF RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Christ commanded His Apostles to preach the Gospel. The Sanhedrin "charged them not to speak at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus." The Apostles decided that they "ought to obey God rather than men," and continued to announce the good tidings of salvation in spite of threats and scourging and imprisonment.

This example shows us what is meant by *collision of rights and duties*. We are sometimes confronted by two laws which we can not observe at the same time. Which one must be obeyed? The decision is not always easy. We have to care for our temporal as well as our eternal welfare, for the needs of our body as well as for the needs of our soul; we do not live for ourselves only, but we are also members of society; we have duties towards God and towards our neighbor, to our Church and to our country. Which of these duties takes precedence?

To answer this question we must remember that there is never any *real*, but only an *apparent* collision of rights and duties. "No man can serve two masters." The will of God, which cannot contradict itself nor demand what is impossible, never binds any of His creatures to observe two conflicting laws at the same time. In every case the lesser law must give place to the greater, the lower right or duty to the higher. Hence.

a) *The Natural Law takes precedence of any Positive Law.* I am allowed to work on Sundays in order to help some one in need, or to miss Mass in order to wait on a sick person;

b) *The Divine Law takes precedence of any Human Law.* We are never allowed to obey a human law if it commands something sinful; the martyrs disobeyed the Roman law which commanded them to sacrifice to idols.

c) *The claims of justice are higher than the claims of charity.* I must pay my debts before giving money to a charitable cause;

d) *Duties to which I am bound by my profession are higher than mere personal duties.* A policeman, a fireman, a doctor, a nurse, must run the risk of personal injury to health or life in order to save others.

e) *The salvation of our souls is a higher duty than the preservation of our life.* We cannot deny our faith in order to escape death.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND REVIEW

A. FREE WILL

1. Show from the story of *Hercules' Choice* what we mean by Free Will. What is a *motive*? Can you act without a motive? Why do we say: "Free Will implies a choice between motives"? Give an example.
2. "Free Will presupposes knowledge." Explain this statement.
3. "Our will often influences our intellect." Explain this statement.
4. What does Holy Scripture say about Free Will?
5. What has the Church always taught about Free Will?
6. How can you prove that you have a Free Will?
7. Why is Free Will such a splendid gift of God to man?
8. Why must we train and strengthen our will?
9. Which is the chief hindrance to the exercise of our Free Will? How can we overcome this hindrance?
10. Name and briefly explain some other hindrances to Free Will. Can any one force you to commit sin? Why not?
11. "*Albert* neglected his studies when he was a medical student. In spite of warnings from professors and parents, he gave a great deal of time to amusements of all sorts. He managed to pass his examinations, but there were some important subjects of which he was ignorant. When he began to practice medicine, he soon found out his deficiencies. His prescriptions seemed to do more harm than good."

Is Albert responsible for the harm he does to his patients? Is his ignorance *vincible* or *invincible*? What must he do before he may be permitted to continue his practice of medicine?
12. *What is a Human Act?*—"When a man acts without a purpose, can we call his act a human act? No. Because he does not bring into play

those very faculties, intelligence and free will, which characterize him as a human being.

"What, then, do you call an act performed without a purpose; that is, performed without intelligence and free will?

"It is called simply an *act of the man*, but not a *human act*. This is the case whenever either knowledge or free will is wanting. Thus, when persons walk in their sleep, they do not perform human acts, because they do not *know* what they are doing. On the other hand, a person may stumble and fall. *He* really falls. He knows at the time that *he* is falling, but the *falling* is not the result of his free will; it is against his will. The act is not a human act. Again, a person may drink poison, thinking it to be pure water. He knows that he is drinking, and he drinks of his own free will. In so far, therefore, as the mere drinking is concerned, there may be said to be a human act. But he neither knows that he is *drinking poison*, nor does he will to *drink poison*. Hence his *drinking poison* is not a human act. He knows and wills the *drinking*, but not the *drinking poison*" (POLAND, S.J., *Fundamental Ethics*, Chicago: Loyola University Press, p. 12).

B. LAW

1. *The Natural Law*

1. How does God make known His will to us?
2. What do we understand by the Natural Law?
3. Prove that such a law exists. What other names are given to it?
4. What is the subject-matter of the Natural Law?
5. What are the three primary precepts of morality; that is, those precepts of which no normal person can be ignorant?
6. Which are the immediate conclusions from these primary precepts? Show how each of the Ten Commandments, except the Third, is a conclusion from one or other of the primary principles of morality. For example: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" is a conclusion from the third primary precept: We should not do to others what we would not have them do to us.
7. A Roman law commanded all Roman subjects to offer sacrifice to the statues of the Roman emperors. Why was this law unjust and not binding in conscience?
8. Why cannot even God change the Natural Law or dispense from it?

2. *The Positive Divine Law*

1. What do we understand by a positive law? By a positive divine law?
2. Why are positive divine laws necessary to men?
3. How are the positive divine laws divided?
4. Give some examples of positive divine laws before Moses.
5. Which Mosaic Laws are no longer binding? Which Mosaic Laws did Christ perfect and confirm for all times?
6. Why is Christ called the Lawgiver of the New Testament?

7. Why did Christ call the commandment of love *His* commandment and a *new* commandment?
8. Which new moral precepts are found in the New Law? Would we be transgressing a command of Christ if we did not believe in the Mystery of the Blessed Trinity, or if we did not receive Holy Communion?

3. *Human Positive Laws*

1. Why are human positive laws necessary? Give examples.
2. Show that parents, the Church, and the State have been authorized by God to make laws.
3. Who is bound by the laws of the Church?

C. CONSCIENCE

1. What do we mean by Conscience?
2. How do we arrive at the "dictate of conscience"? Give an example.
3. Is the word conscience found in the Gospels? What words does Our Lord use for conscience?
4. What does St. Paul teach about conscience?
5. Why do we not need to prove that we have a conscience?
6. How does God manifest Himself in our conscience?
7. Distinguish and illustrate four kinds of conscience.
8. What kind of conscience must we always follow? Give an example.
9. Are we allowed to act with a doubtful conscience?
10. Which are the best means of cultivating and perfecting our conscience?
11. The Venerable Thomas à Kempis says: "Have a good conscience and thou shalt ever have joy." Comment on these words.
12. *Conscience the Interpreter of the Moral Law*.—"Implanted in us is a Moral Law whose incorruptible interpreter is Conscience. Of this I am as well aware as of my own existence. This monitor is, to some extent, innate in all men. The lowest member of the human race has *some* intuitive knowledge of the difference between right and wrong; and there is in him an instinctive feeling of obligation to do the former, rather than the latter. However callous criminals become, that inward voice still speaks within them; and after committing murder, deeds of excessive cruelty, and acts of base ingratitude, they are conscious of guilt.
 "This monitor does not entreat or argue with us; it *commands*. It says imperiously: 'This is right, that is wrong; do the former, do not do the latter.' As a free agent, I can disobey its mandate, but, though I do so, I well know I *ought* to have obeyed it."—STODDARD, *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*. (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons) p. 43.
13. We are sometimes confronted by two laws which we cannot observe at the same time. Which one must we obey? Illustrate your answer with examples.

CATHOLIC
APOLOGETICS
A Course in Religion

BOOK IV

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Section I

**Reasonableness of
Our Belief in God**

Chapter I

The Existence of God

**A. The Arguments for the
Existence of God in General**

1. “God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created things by means of the natural light of human reason.”

With these words the Vatican Council points to the twofold source of our natural knowledge of God: our natural reason and created things.*

By “created things” we mean the whole realm of nature and the human soul. The contemplation of nature leads us to believe and hope in God, and to love Him; but from the study of our soul, we derive a truer and deeper knowledge of God than from all the rest of creation, because our soul alone is made according to the image and likeness of God.

2. Our natural knowledge of God is indirect, or mediate. We do not see God *immediately*, but only through the medium of His works.

Our knowledge of God, though real, is only *analogical*; that is, our concepts or notions of God are taken from created things and applied to God after we have purified them from all created imperfections and raised them into the sphere of the unlimited and infinite. In other words, we attribute every perfection that exists in the world, such as goodness, justice, knowledge, love, to God, but we say that it exists in Him in a manner more perfect than we can imagine.

* Vatican Council I (1870) is referred to here. —*Editor*, 1990.



Schilling

God and the Creation

In the beginning God created heaven, and earth. And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved over the waters. . . . And God saw all the things that He had made, and they were very good. And the evening and morning were the sixth day. So the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the furniture of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And He blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because in it He had rested from all His work which God created and made. (*Gen.* 1:1, 2, 31; 2:1-3).

3. From the contemplation of nature and the soul we cannot obtain a full knowledge of God and His perfections,

because God has communicated the infinite riches of His Being only in a limited manner to the material world and to the human soul. "God *must* be a *mystery*, must be greater than His creation, greater than our intellect and our heart."

From the material creation we cannot know that there are Three Persons in God. Nor are all the attributes of God clearly and distinctly revealed in creation. God's holiness and justice, and His Fatherly love for all men, for example, will be fully revealed only in eternity. Our reason tells us that this life is merely a preparation for a future life in which the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished; but supernatural revelation alone gave us complete certainty on this all-important matter. Through the life, teaching, and death of Christ we know that God is love, in spite of all the suffering and misery in the world; and that God is holy and just, in spite of the apparent happiness of the sinner in this life.

4. The various arguments by which our reason proves conclusively the existence of God may be divided into two groups: 1) those which are derived from the contemplation of the visible world; 2) those which are derived from the consideration of the human soul. Each group embraces two arguments.

First Group. a) The first thing that strikes us when contemplating the universe is its *wonderful orderliness* and *purposeful arrangement*. The universe is a most marvelous work of art, which must have been planned and executed by an all-wise and all-mighty Master. This is called the *Teleological Argument*, from the Greek word *telos*, end or purpose.

b) From the very existence of the world, from the movement and life in the world, we infer the existence of some Cause different from it and superior to it, of some original giver of life and motion. This is called the *Cosmological Argument*, from the Greek word *kosmos*, world.

Second Group. Man is by nature both a *religious* and a *moral* being. From the examination of the religious nature of man, we derive what is known as the *Historical Argument*; and from the consideration of his moral nature, the *Moral Argument* for the existence of God.

All these arguments for God's existence are based on the *Law of Causality*: "Anything which begins to exist must have been brought into existence by something distinct from itself." This law or principle needs no proof. It shines by its own light.

B. The Teleological Argument or The Reign of Law in the Universe

1. We are all familiar with the ideas conveyed by the words *order* and *plan*. They are so closely related to each other that we can call them correlative ideas. Wherever there is order, there is plan. For wherever there is an arrangement of means to attain an end, we say that order exists; and the arrangement of means to attain an end is precisely what is meant by the word *plan*.

Our reason tells us that wherever there is order and plan, an intelligent being has been or is at work. This is true of the simplest household utensil as well as of the most complicated industrial machinery. And the more complicated the plan, the greater is the intelligence that it supposes, because every effect must have a proportionate cause. The plan exists first in the mind of the artist or the engineer, who then communicates it to, or, we might say, impresses it upon, the raw material.

This necessary connection between order and plan, between design and designer, is the *basis* of the teleological argument for the existence of God.

We have only to look around us to see that the universe is full of natural works of art which in beauty, variety, grandeur, and perfection far surpass the highest achievements of human craftsmanship.

From these facts we can draw only one conclusion: the universe is the work of a Supreme Intelligence, a Master-Artist, whom we call God.

2. The facts on which our argument rests are countless. Every new discovery in the field of the natural sciences—in astronomy, in physics and mechanics, in chemistry and biology, in botany and zoology—furnishes us with new wonders of Divine Workmanship. *The laws of nature are nothing but the order existing among things and perceived by the mind of man.* Organic nature, above all, reveals itself to us as a vast kingdom in which order and design reign supreme.

3. Space prevents us from entering into details; any work on general science will supply them. But we must say a word in regard to the *beauty of the universe*, which simply cannot be explained except as the work of an ordering intelligence.

“Beauty is present everywhere in nature. Whether we look at the sky above us, or at the earth below, or at the wide

expanse of waters, all manifest it. They display it in all their parts and under all their aspects. It is seen in the smallest flower, no less than in the forest as a whole: in the icebound regions of the pole, and in the sandy deserts, as in the glories of the tropics. Nor is it color alone that is in question. The forms of nature possess the same quality. The outlines of the different kinds of trees, the configuration of their leaves, the varied curves of their branches are as perfect in their way as is the coloring of the flowers. Of the innumerable species of animals which people earth and air and sea there is hardly one which does not arouse our wondering admiration, some by their grace, some, like the lion and the elephant, by their grandeur. Moreover, the sense of hearing, no less than that of sight, acknowledges the perfection of nature's handiwork. The song of the birds, the music of the waters, the sound of the breeze among the trees attract and delight us. We recognize beauty as the authentic note of nature in all its works." (Joyce, *Principles of Natural Theology*, p. 127.)

4. The Teleological Argument has been challenged by unbelievers since the days of the Greek philosopher Epicurus and the Latin poet Lucretius. *Epicurus* (d. 270 B.C.) attributed the order and purpose everywhere observable in the universe to the accidental coming together of atoms; in other words, he made *Blind Chance* the Designer of the universe. *Cicero* answered him: "If anyone supposes that this most beautiful and glorious world was made by the accidental coming together of atoms, I do not understand why he should not suppose that the *Annals* of Ennius might be produced by pouring out on the earth the twenty-one letters of the alphabet in countless profusion."

The French philosopher *Diderot* thought that this was possible. He maintained that if a case of type were emptied out a sufficient number of times, the letters might at last so fall as to give the text of the *Iliad*. Of course such an idea is absurd. Order cannot result from disorder. Where there is order, whether in the *Iliad* of Homer or in the movements of the heavenly bodies, that order must have a sufficient reason; and blind chance is not such a sufficient reason. The atoms of Epicurus could whirl around in space for billions of years without ever producing an oak tree, much less a human eye or ear or heart.

5. Blind Chance, discredited for centuries by all thinking men as a possible Organizer of the universe, was raised on the

throne once more by *Charles Darwin* and his school. Darwin contended that what we regard as standing proofs of the creative skill of a Supreme Intelligence could be accounted for by the *sole operation of physical causes*. "Inconceivably long periods of time," "Natural Selection," "Survival of the Fittest," "Struggle for Life" were the magic phrases invented to support his theory. According to this theory, nature's causes operate blindly: "there is not in them any inherent determination guiding them in one direction rather than another." Thus, we see that Darwinism harks back to the Blind Chance of Epicurus; and we may add that it is as dead today as the old Greek philosopher's theory of the "accidental coming together of atoms." Natural Selection does not explain the origin of species nor the origin of anything else.

"Only a madman," writes Dr. A. V. Hill, a Nobel prize man in medicine, "would attribute a telephone system purely to laws of chance and the principles of Natural Selection, and only ignorance or fanaticism could attribute a living cell to the same laws of chance and the principles of Natural Selection." (*Living Machinery*).

How can the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest in this struggle explain the curious fact that many animals have the powers to replace or *regenerate* new parts if the old ones are lost? "If the common *flatworm* be cut transversely, the head end will regenerate a new tail, and the tail will regenerate a new head. If the *crab* loses a leg, a new one is regenerated. The same is true of the *cockroach* before the final molt. If one or more arms are torn from the *starfish*, they are replaced with new ones" (Wieman, *General Zoology*, p. 29). According to the Darwinian theory, these mutilated animals would have to perish in the struggle for life.

6. But, it will be objected, are there not many things in nature which have no purpose whatever, such as rudimentary organs, suppressed and degenerated, aimless and inactive parts of the body? And are not these fatal to the idea of purpose in nature, to the idea of an Intelligent Supreme Being?

We answer with Professor Huxley: "If we are to assume, as evolutionists generally do, that useless organs dwindle away by disuse, such cases as the existence of rudiments of toes in the foot of a horse place us in a dilemma. For, either these rudiments are of no use to the animal, in which case, consid-

ering that the horse has existed in its present form since the Pliocene epoch, they surely ought to have disappeared; or they are of some use to the animal, in which case they are of no use as arguments against Teleology." Sixty years ago the thyroid gland in the throat was supposed to be absolutely without use. Now we know that it plays a very important part in the human body, and that its failure to function brings about a condition closely allied to idiocy. In time science will, no doubt, discover uses for all the other so-called "aimless and inactive parts" of the animal body.

7. Again, it is objected: **The prodigality of nature, the constant enormous waste in the vegetable world, the presence of vermin and harmful insects, of disease-carrying flies, mosquitoes, and bacteria, the sufferings of animals and men, seem to argue against the wisdom of the Designer of the universe.** This is a favorite argument of the materialists of all times.

We answer: No believer in God maintains that he knows *all* the purposes of the Creator. As our knowledge of nature's laws increases we see purpose and design at work where our forefathers looked for them in vain. The so-called defects in the work of the Designer are not due to the imperfect character of His design, but to our imperfect understanding of it.

a) The presence of *vermin* of every kind must not be judged by the amount of molestation it causes us. That is evidently not its purpose. The sucking organ of the bedbug is a contrivance of marvelous design, just as the human body. The *seeds*, the life-germs, so prodigally scattered about by nature are not all destined for reproduction, but also to a very large extent for the nourishment of men and animals. The lavish "waste" of fern spores buried in the ground ages ago has given us coal, to which so much of our material civilization is due.

b) The existence of *pain and suffering* in the world is the greatest problem that faces us when we reflect on God and His relation to the world. Let us deal first with the sufferings of animals.

We cannot form any accurate notion of what these sufferings are. We have no means of estimating to what extent animals feel. One thing seems to be certain: the degree of their suffering is very different from our own. "Brutes feel far less than man, because they cannot reflect on what they feel; they have no advertence or direct consciousness of their sufferings. And, hence, as their other feelings, so their feeling of pain is

but faint and dull in spite of their outward manifestations of it. It is the intellectual comprehension of pain as a whole, diffused through successive moments, which gives it its special power and keenness, and it is the intellectual soul only, which the brute has not, which is capable of that comprehension" (Newman). Since animals do suffer to some extent, it is detestable to add unnecessarily to their sufferings; but the sentimentalism that treats animal pain as an evil as great as human suffering is unreasonable and ridiculous. Animals do prey on one another, a cat does play with the mouse before devouring it, and the big fishes live on the little fishes; animal life is, in fact, as the poet says, a record of rapine and slaughter. But is there anything in the nature of the brute animal, as far as we can see, that points to the conclusion that it has any other destiny than to serve as food for other animals or for man?

Death has not the same sting for the animal as for man. The animal lacks that which makes death so dreadful for man—the foreknowledge of it. Someone has well said that a sudden and violent death is better for the animal than a slow death through old age, because there is nothing in the animal nature to make old age either beautiful or desirable.

We sometimes speak of the *cruelty of animals*. But this is not true. Man is cruel, not the animal. Man often tortures his fellowman and gloats over his sufferings. Not so the beast or bird of prey; nature has given it weapons and instruments to bring death to its victim quickly and surely.

But why is there pain and suffering at all in the world?

Could not an Almighty Creator have made His creatures immune to pain? We answer by asking another question: Could corporeal beings with bodily organs capable of sensation feel pleasure if they could not feel pain? They could not, unless God worked a perpetual miracle to keep pain away from them—they would have to be sentient at one moment in order to be able to feel pleasure, and not sentient the next moment in order not to feel pain. Since it is clear that the pleasure of animal existence far exceeds the pain, it is not incompatible with God's wisdom and goodness to permit the one for the sake of the other.

When we come to man, the problem of physical evil assumes larger proportions. Man suffers incalculably more than the lower animals, and physical evil is aggravated and intensified by moral evil, or *sin*. We must not, however, forget that, in the

case of men, suffering is raised into the domain of the *spiritual and the moral*; in him it loses the transitoriness that characterizes it in the animal kingdom. Pain and suffering are factors that contribute largely to the moral edifice of humanity. Untold blessings spring from sacrifice, and moral good is worth all the sacrifices that can be made for it. Pain becomes a *stimulus* and a helper. God makes use of physical evil to punish and to refine individuals and nations, as gold is refined by fire. "*Sanabiles fecit nationes*"—"He made the nations of the earth healable" (Wis. 1:14). What appears to us shortsighted mortals a hindrance and a check is in reality a lever in the hand of God to raise us to unimagined heights of moral goodness. The most glorious revelations of God's justice and love as well as the most heroic virtues of His creatures presuppose the existence of physical and moral evil, of sin and suffering. The heroism of duty, the overpowering splendor of unselfish deeds, loyalty to God even unto the sacrifice of life itself, in a word, all that is great and noble and lovable in saints and heroes, presupposes the conflict between good and evil. It needed a Nero, and such as he, to call forth the heroic virtue displayed by the martyrs. The worst deed of the Jewish people, the murder of the Messiah, resulted in the greatest blessing for mankind.

Si tollis hostem, tollis et pugnam;
Si tollis pugnam, tollis et coronam;
Si tollis libertatem, tollis et dignitatem.

St. Columban

"Without an adversary there is no conflict, and without a conflict there is no crown; without freedom no honor."

"We cannot raise the question: How can there be evil if God exists? without raising the second, How can there be good if He exist not?" (Boethius).

Natural reason can never adequately "justify the ways of God to man"; the existence of physical, and moral evil in the world will always remain the greatest of the world's mysteries. Christianity alone offers a satisfying explanation. "It tells us of the fall of man and its consequences, and of the Redemption through Christ. It tells us of the glorious promise that all nature shall one day be transfigured. It guides struggling and suffering humanity to Him who cast the wood of the cross into the bitter waters of tribulation in order to sweeten them; to Him whose instrument of torture and death is raised

up before the world as the sign of salvation from sin, and sorrow, and death"; to Him who showed that "the problems of sin and suffering are really one, for sin can be healed by suffering, and sorrow itself can be turned into joy."

C. The Cosmological Argument or God and the Origin of the Universe

1. In our experience every event (effect) is determined by a cause. That cause is in its turn determined by another cause. But we cannot assume an infinite series of causes, because an infinite series with no beginning involves a contradiction. And even if we did suppose the possibility of an infinite series, that would not explain how causation began. Hence there must be an uncaused Cause, the ultimate Cause of all the events which proceed from it. *This ultimate and supreme Cause we call God.*

The series of causes in the universe is like a chain to which new links are continually added. There is always a last link to which the succeeding one is attached. But if it has a last link, an end, it must also have a beginning, a first link, which carries all the other links but is itself carried by none. "In this chain we must of necessity go back to that first link which is fastened to the throne of God" (Secchi).

2. The mind refuses to entertain the idea that nothing should turn into something. It is evident that if there ever had been nothing, there could never have been anything. As a matter of fact, all philosophers and scientists agree that there must be an *eternal, absolute, self-sufficient, necessary Being*. They part company, however, when the practical question is asked: What is this absolute, self-sufficient Being?

The *Pantheist* answers: "We ourselves and all around us are merely the manifestation of one and the same Substance, one original Force that thinks in man, seizes its prey in a wild beast, unfolds bud and leaf in an oak, darts through the clouds in lightning, strikes the cliff in a storm wave."

The *Materialist* answers: "We ourselves and all around us, earth and all the stars, are due to chance, the product of whirling Atoms, how arisen, how ending, known to none."

The *Theist* answers: "All has arisen from the *fiat* of an intelligent Creator, and all exists in consequence with a definite purpose" (C. S. Devas, *The Key to the World's Progress*, New

York: Longmans, Green and Co., Section 9).

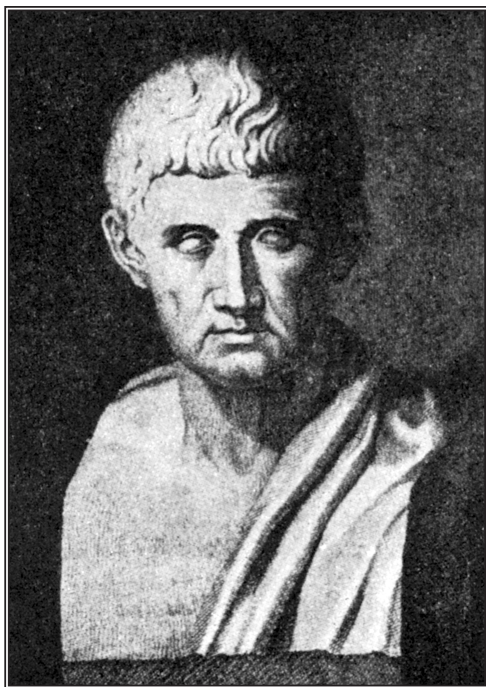
Pantheism and Materialism agree in reducing All to One. For this reason both systems have been given the common name *Monism*—from the Greek *monos*, “single.” To distinguish them, Pantheism has been called *Spiritualistic Monism*, while the term *Materialistic Monism* has been applied to Materialism. According to Pantheism, “all reality is one spiritual being, or rather a being that is neither spirit nor matter but such that matter and spirit are alike but aspects of him or it.” According to Materialism, there exists but one *Thing*, that which we usually call Matter, of which mind or spirit is only a form. Both agree in rejecting the reality of a personal God, and therefore both are irreconcilably opposed to *Theism*, which emphatically affirms the existence of a personal God distinct from the universe which He created and governs.

3. Pantheism does not explain the origin of the universe; for if, as Pantheism affirms, God is not really distinct from the world, the world is without a cause. Besides, Pantheists are involved in a glaring contradiction: They must admit that the same universe is necessary, eternal, absolute, and self-sufficient in so far as it is identified with God, but contingent, finite, not self-existent and self-sufficient in so far as it is the universe.

Pantheists contradict the testimony of consciousness. If there is one thing that we are more conscious of than another, it is that we do not naturally share in the Divine Nature, that we are not God. “Strange truth,” a French philosopher-poet says of Pantheism, “hard to conceive, humiliating alike for the heart and the brain, that the universe, that we all should be God, and not know it.”

4. If Pantheism cannot explain the origin of the universe, much less can Materialism. The Materialists of our day are the worthy successors of the “Night-Philosophers,” of whom Aristotle speaks, “who made night the cause of day, and nothing the mother of being.” They set up *Matter*, the world of whirling atoms, as the eternal necessary being, the cause of all that is. It was surely the strangest aberration of the human mind, to use the words of a modern philosopher, when Materialism placed the Atom on the throne of God.

Matter cannot be self-existent from all eternity. For, something which exists necessarily and of its own right, which possesses in itself the reason of its existence, must also be absolutely perfect and independent of conditions outside itself. Matter is anything but that. If nothing but dead matter existed



Aristotle

in the beginning, as Materialists claim, we should have nothing but dead matter now. For, according to all observation and experiment, matter cannot set itself in motion, cannot produce organic life, sensitive life, consciousness, reason, thought, speech, moral goodness, order, beauty.

5. Riddles of the Universe. One of the most eminent scientists of the last century, Professor du Bois-Reymond, found that there are seven Enigmas or *Riddles of the Universe*; that is, seven things which are matters of daily experience, but which can never be explained if we recognize no other god than Matter. These Riddles are:

1. What is Matter and Force?
2. What is the cause of Motion?
3. What is the origin of Life?
4. What produces Sensation and Consciousness?
5. What produces rational Thought and Speech?
6. What is the cause of Order and Design in Nature?
7. What is Free Will?

6. Let us examine two of these enigmas more closely: the origin of Motion and of Life. We shall see that neither can be accounted for unless we admit the existence of a Prime Mover who is Himself unmoved, and of a Creator of Life.

a) By *Motion*, we understand *all changes that take place in things*. Materialists claim that Motion is an original property of matter, that matter always has been and always will be in uninterrupted movement and transformation. But this is in direct opposition to the first of *Newton's Laws*, which are universally recognized as the most firmly established and unquestionable of all scientific conclusions. This law tells us that a body at rest will continue at rest forever unless compelled by some force to move, just as a body in motion will continue to move at the same rate and in the same direction unless compelled by force to arrest or alter its course. Upon the universal certainty of this law the whole of our Natural Philosophy depends: but it absolutely blocks the way for the idea that Matter has an innate tendency to move itself, which is thus quite unscientific. Not self-movement but *Inertia* is the property which science ascribes to Matter (Gerard, *The Old Riddle and the Newest Answer*, p. 14).

From this it follows that all movement or change must proceed from some Motive Power that is not itself set in motion, that is not subject to change. This Power we call God.

b) It is a fact, vouched for by all men of science without exception, that there was a time when there was no life on earth. *Geology* points to epochs in the formation of the earth when life was impossible and when no vestige of it is to be found.

Since life did not and could not always exist on the earth, it must originally have either sprung from lifeless matter or been put there by someone.

The first alternative has long since been abandoned by science. *Omne vivum e vivo, omnis cellula e cellula, omnis nucleus e nucleo*—Every living thing comes from a living parent, every life-cell from another life-cell, from organic matter alone can the smallest particle of organic matter be derived. This is one of the most conclusive results of modern research. (Louis Pasteur). So-called *spontaneous generation*—that is, the production of life from lifeless matter—is a figment of the imagination.

Hence there remains only the other alternative, viz., that life is the result of a special act of creation, that there is a Giver of life, who is Life Itself—the *Living God*.

“To invite me to agree to mechanism (materialism) as an explanation of life phenomena, is to ask me to bury my head in the sand and pretend that things are not there when I know they are.” (A. V. Hill, *Living Machinery*.)

Lord Kelvin suggested that a life-germ may have fallen from some other star upon our earth. But even if that were the case, it is no solution of the problem of life; it only puts the question a stage farther back.

7. We sometimes hear it said: Creation is impossible, because *ex nihilo nihil fit*—nothing is made out of nothing.

We answer: To imagine creation to be the ghostlike appearance on the scene of *something* where there was previously *absolutely nothing*, is, of course, absurd. But no sane person imagines such a thing. Creation supposes an almighty God at the beginning of the world, who called all things into being by an act of His will without making use of any pre-existing matter.

D. The Moral Argument or God in Conscience

1. The Facts. We know from experience that we have naturally a *conscience*. We have, in the first place, a *sense of right and wrong*. We call some thoughts, words, and deeds good, others bad. We have, moreover, a *sense of a moral obligation imposed upon us*. We must avoid evil and do good. This obligation is so strong that we feel remorse and compunction when we have done wrong, whilst our good actions are invariably followed by self-approval, inward peace, and lightness of heart.

It is also a fact that conscience is something *common to all men*. No normal human being is without a knowledge of the first principles of morality. In all men, too, conscience speaks with an authority that cannot be gainsaid. It is an absolute monarch, an impartial supreme judge. It rewards and punishes on the spot.

It is true that in some men we cannot find a trace of conscience. But such men are afflicted with *moral insanity*: they are exceptions which prove the rule.

2. Explanation of the Facts. Whilst the rest of creation is subject to the laws of nature, man is *free*. But his liberty is not without a check. The commands “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not” are clearly and distinctly traced on his consciousness. He knows that he is free to disregard them; but he also knows that, if he does, he must pay the penalty.

This *natural law of man's moral nature* points as inevitably to God as do the laws which govern the universe. God has impressed His mind and His will, not only on the organic and inorganic world, on matter and its forces, but also on the soul of man and its powers.

Hence, men have always recognized the voice of conscience, not as their own, but as God's voice; its sovereignty and power as the sovereignty and power of God.

3. It has been justly remarked of the *argument from conscience* that it has the advantage of leading us more directly than any other to a true conception of a just, holy, and merciful God. It has been admirably drawn out by Cardinal Newman in his *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 98-117. We can quote only a few characteristic sentences:

"If, as is the case, we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear. If, on doing wrong, we feel the same tearful, broken-hearted sorrow which overwhelms us on hurting a mother; if, on doing right, we enjoy the same sunny serenity of mind, the same soothing, satisfactory delight which follows on our receiving praise from a father, we certainly have within us the image of some person to whom our love and veneration look, in whose smile we find our happiness, for whom we yearn, towards whom we direct our pleadings, in whose anger we are troubled and waste away.

"These feelings in us are such as require for their exciting cause an intelligent being: we are not affectionate towards a stone, nor do we feel shame before a horse or a dog; we have no remorse or compunction on breaking mere human law: yet, so it is, conscience excites all these painful emotions, confusion, foreboding, self-condemnation; and, on the other hand, it sheds upon us a deep peace, a sense of security, a resignation, and a hope, which there is no sensible, no earthly object to elicit.

"The wicked flees, when no one pursueth.' Then, why does he flee? Whence his terror? Who is it that he sees in solitude, in darkness, in the hidden chamber of his heart?

"If the cause of these emotions does not belong to this visible world, the Object towards which his perception is directed must be Supernatural and Divine; and thus the phenomena of Conscience, as a dictate, avail to impress the imagination with the picture of a Supreme Governor,



Cardinal Newman

a Judge, holy, just, powerful, all-seeing, retributive, and is the creative principle of religion, as the Moral Sense is the principle of Ethics." (pp. 106-107).

4. But may not what we call conscience be the result of education and environment, as we hear and read so often today?

If conscience is wholly the result of environment, how comes it that the first principles of morality are held equally by the Hottentots, the American Indians, the Esquimaux and the cultured white men of Europe and America, although their environment is so totally different? If conscience is wholly the result of education, why does it so often rebel against the very things which it is taught? Conscience is not the result of education, but a factor which the educator finds ready-made and which he tries to develop like the other faculties and powers of his pupils. Conscience is often led astray by ignorance and want

of proper training, by false principles and bad example; yet it makes itself felt in spite of all these hindrances and can never be completely stifled.

E. The Historical Argument or Man's Need of God

1. The Facts. All races, civilized and uncivilized, are at one, and have ever been at one, in holding that the facts of nature and the voice of conscience compel us to affirm the existence of God. *Religion*—that, is, the knowledge of God, of His will, and of our duties towards Him—not *Materialism*, is an inalienable possession of the human race. Religion belongs to man's nature just as truly as thought and free will, language, customs, and art.

There is no race of men without religion. It used to be confidently asserted, especially by the Materialistic evolutionists of the last century, that savage tribes existed destitute of all religious notions, and that man in his original state had no religion whatever. Today all anthropologists agree that "there are no races however rude which are destitute of all idea of Religion." (Jevons, *Introduction to the History of Religion*, p. 7.)

Since the days of Darwin, the Patagonians of Tierra del Fuego were regarded as a horde of cannibals without any articulate language and without any notions of religion. In 1921 two missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word, Fathers Gussinde and Koppers, were admitted to the initiation ceremonies by which the full privileges of manhood are conferred on the youths. They were astonished at what they heard and saw. Such names as "My Father," the "Highest," the "Strong One," the "Almighty," the "Ancient One in Heaven," were applied to the God worshiped by the people. Before retiring to rest, a father said to his son: "May the heavenly Father grant us all to see a new and happy day." Before setting out on a journey, a young man was heard to say: "If my Father is good to me and protects me, I shall return." Far from being cannibals, these people would not even eat the flesh of animals such as foxes, dogs, and rats, which occasionally eat human flesh.

2. Explanation of the Facts. The fact that the overwhelming majority of mankind have at all times firmly believed in the existence of God clearly proves that *man is by nature religious*.

Man needs God, aspires after Him, seeks union with Him. Man is religious in his intellect, for even the rudest savages recognize God as the creator and ruler of all things. He is *religious also in his will*, for he sees in God the author and avenger of the moral law. Thus, the voice of man's nature proclaims the existence of God, and this utterance must be true. "What all men, impelled as it were by instinct, hold to be true, is a natural truth," says Aristotle.

Man as an individual needs God; he also needs Him as a social being. Society without God is a house "built on the sand." Many years ago, a Spanish statesman described the consequences of materialistic teaching in the following words: "The professor, who has patented his own wisdom, proclaims from his chair in the university: 'There is no God.' The ruler in his palace hears the news with astonishment and hastens to apply it to his own conscience and says: 'There is no justice.' It finds an echo in the ears of the criminal and he says to himself: 'There is no guilt.' Flaming youth hears it and draws the logical conclusion: 'There is no virtue.' It comes to the knowledge of the subject, and he argues correctly: 'There is no law.' When it reaches the streets of the city, blood flows, and above the roar of the cannon and the rattle of musketry we hear the howl of the mob: 'Away with God, Heaven, and Eternity.'"

Without God marriage is without dignity, the family without authority, education without its highest appeal, the State without a basis for law and right. Just as science and philosophy have never been able to disprove the existence of God, so they have never found a substitute for Him. The French Revolution, which in 1793 abolished the worship of God and placed the goddess of Reason on the desecrated altars, was compelled in the following year to introduce the "Feast of the Supreme Being."

F. The Nature and Attributes of God

Every argument for the existence of God gives us some insight into the *Nature of God*.

1. God is a Self-existent Being. Such a Being cannot be matter like our bodies, nor force like electricity. It must be *Spirit*. Not Something, but Someone. Not impersonal, but a Personal Being. **God is a Pure Spirit.**

2. A Self-existent Being must necessarily stand *alone*, above and beyond all other beings, who derive their being from Him. There is but one God.

3. A Self-existent Being exists of necessity, and therefore *always existed*. There can be no past nor future with God, because He is outside of time. For Him there can be only an ever-present Now. **God is Eternal.**

4. A Self-existent Being cannot be subject to change, for all change implies imperfection in the subject capable of change. But there can be no imperfection in God. **God is immutable.**

5. A Self-existent Being, from whom all other being is derived, must be present wherever anything is or can be; and He must be present everywhere, not only by His Power, but also by His Substance; for power, as Newton remarks, cannot subsist without substance. **God is omnipresent.**

We must not represent to ourselves the Divine Omnipresence as a sort of *infinite extension*. We might rather conceive it, St. Augustine suggests, as we conceive the truth "Twice two equals four" everywhere. This truth is independent of all limitations of time and space. It is whole and undivided everywhere. It would be present without change to the minds of myriads of other worlds if they should be created at this moment. It would receive them into its presence rather than they it, and would no more be bounded by their limits than it was before. Now in place of this abstract truth, say the same of the Substantial Truth, God, and you will have a true concept of His immensity or omnipresence.

6. A Self-existent Being, from whom all law and order in nature, and intellect and free will in man are derived, must be supereminently **endowed with Understanding and Free Will**, otherwise He would be inferior to His own creatures.

7. **A Self-existent Being must be infinite in all perfection.** Infinite means without limits. Perfections are all good qualities we know of or can imagine. God, being the cause of all that is good and desirable in creation, all the good in things must be in Him first, and without limit. If it is not in Him first, He could not be the cause of it in His creatures; if it is not in Him without limit, He is on the same plane as His creatures—which is absurd. He must, therefore, be infinitely powerful, wise, good, beautiful, holy, just, merciful, patient, true, faithful.

8. Since we are finite, limited, and God is infinite, unlimited, it follows that God must ever remain **infinitely incomprehensible** to us. "It is impossible," says St. Augustine, "thoroughly to grasp and comprehend God; for couldst thou

comprehend Him, He would not be God." The wonder is, not that we know so little about God, but that we know so much about Him. "Instead of complaining that God has hidden Himself, you will give Him thanks for having revealed so much of Himself." (Pascal.)

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

The Teleological Argument Briefly Stated

"We see that many things possessing no knowledge, namely physical objects, act towards a goal; which follows from the fact that they are always or almost always active in the same way in order to attain that which is best. From this it follows that they attain their goal not by accident but *purposively*. But that which has no knowledge tends towards a goal only through guidance by a being that has knowledge and reason, like the arrow of the archer. Hence an intelligent being exists by whom all things of nature are directed towards their goal, and this we call *God*."

—ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

The Cosmological Argument as Formulated by St. Thomas

We see some things in the world that could either be or not be, since things come into being and disappear, whence it is possible for them to be and likewise not to be. But it is impossible that everything of such a nature exist forever, since that which can also not be, at some time is not.

Now if all things whatsoever are capable of not being, then there was at one time nothing actual. But if that were true, neither would there be anything at present. For that which is not, begins to be only by means of something that is. In the case, then, of there being nothing actual, it would be impossible for anything to come into existence; and there would now be nothing, which is evidently false. Hence not everything that is, is merely possible; there must be a *necessary being* among things. But every necessary being has the ground of its necessity either from elsewhere or not. For this, it is again impossible to proceed



St. Thomas' victory over error

ad infinitum in regard to the necessary beings that have the ground of their necessity elsewhere, just as this is impossible in regard to efficient causes. Consequently we must accept something that is *necessary in itself*, and has not received the ground of its necessity elsewhere, being rather the cause of necessity in others. And this all call *God*. —*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

Science and the Teleological Argument

Science has destroyed many old traditions but it has not destroyed the foundations of ethics or religion. In some respects it has greatly contributed to these foundations.

The universality of natural law has not destroyed faith in God, though it has modified many primitive conceptions of deity. This is a universe of ends as well as of means, of teleology as well as of mechanism. Mechanism is universal but so also is finalism. It is incredible that the system and order of nature, the evolution of matter and worlds and, life, of man and consciousness and spiritual ideals are all the results of chance. The greatest exponents of evolution, such as Darwin, Huxley, Asa Gray, and Weisman, have maintained that there is evidence of some governance and plan in nature. This is the fundamental article of all religious faith. If there is no purpose in the universe, or in evolution, or in man, then indeed there is no God and no good. But if there is purpose in nature and in human life, it is only the imperfection of our mental vision that leads us sometimes to cry in despair: "*Vanitas vanitatum*, All is vanity." . . . Atheism leads to pessimism and despair, while theism leads to faith and hope. "By their fruits you shall know them."

—EDWIN GRANT CONKLIN in *Scribner's Magazine*,
November, 1925.

Atheism Destroys Man's Nobility

I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind. And therefore God never wrought a miracle to convince atheism, because His ordinary works convince it. It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism; but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them, and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity. . . .

They that deny a God destroy man's nobility: for certainly man is of kin to the beasts by his body; and if he be not of kin to God by his spirit, he is a base and ignoble creature. . . . Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon divine protection and favor, gathereth a force and faith, which human nature in itself could not obtain: therefore as atheism is in all

respects hateful, so in this, that it depriveth human nature of the means to exalt itself above human frailty.

—FRANCIS BACON, *Essays*, XVI: Of Atheism.

Denial of God an Act of Intellectual Suicide

The Holy Spirit tells us the “fool said in his heart there is no God.” Observe the clause—“in his heart”—not in his mind, not in his reason. No, it is a rooted unwillingness to obey and love God that causes men to try and persuade themselves that no such Divine Person exists, and in this effort they too often succeed. “The wish is father to the thought,” as the poet says. It is their hearts, their desires, that speak, not their reason. In the inner depths of their own consciences they know that God does and must exist, and that the universe would remain for ever a wholly and absolutely inexplicable riddle unless we accept the doctrine of an intelligent Creator—a doctrine of reason and common sense. Man cannot disguise from himself the fact—if he reflects at all—that every object around and about him proclaims the presence of God far more certainly than the human footprint on the sand proclaims the presence of man. For the traces of God’s creative power are on every leaf and on every blade of grass. We cannot deny Him without dethroning reason, stultifying ourselves and committing an act of intellectual suicide—from which may God in His mercy preserve us.

—RT. REV. J. S. VAUGHAN, *Earth to Heaven*, p. 13.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND REVIEW

1. What are the natural sources of our knowledge of God?
2. What is the nature of our knowledge of God?
3. Why can we not have a full knowledge of God?
4. Classify the arguments for the existence of God. Define the terms Teleological and Cosmological in their verbal sense.
5. What is the Law of Causality?
6. What is the basis of the Teleological argument?
7. On what facts does the Teleological argument rest?
8. Why cannot Blind Chance be the designer of the universe?
9. How does Darwinism try to explain the order and beauty so evident in the universe?

10. State and refute two objections brought against the Teleological argument.
11. Do you know any reason why God should permit pain and suffering?
12. Briefly state the Cosmological argument.
13. Why can neither Pantheism nor Materialism explain the origin of the universe?
14. Which are the Seven Riddles of the Universe?
15. Show that motion is not a property of matter.
16. Show that life must be the result of a special act of creation.
17. On what facts does the Moral argument rest?
18. What is the only explanation of these facts?
19. Why cannot Conscience be the result of education and environment?
20. On what facts is the Historical argument based?
21. What conclusion must be drawn from these facts?
22. Show why man needs God.
23. What Attributes of God can be deduced from the fact that He is a Self-existent Being?
24. Give a false and a true notion of God's omnipresence.
25. Write a brief paragraph on each of the following: *Lucretius*, *Epicurus*, *Darwin*, *Pasteur*, *Secchi*, *Newton*, *Pascal*, *Newman* (Cardinal), *Huxley*, *St. Columban*, *Nobel Prize*.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Drinkwater, F. H., *Twelve and After*, pp. 108-127.
Gerard, John, *The Old Riddle and the Newest Answer*, Chs. VII-XII.
Newman, Cardinal, *Grammar of Assent*, Ch. V.
Pallen, C. B., *As Man to Man*, pp. 66-84.
Stoddard, J. L., *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*, Chs. IV and V.