

Rumble, Leslie, 1892.
— The unavoidable God
AEB3376 ~~112~~



Anavoidable

God

FATHERS RUMBLE and CARTY

"RADIO REPLIES"

St. Paul I, Minn., U.S.A.

This booklet attempts a simple and rather arbitrary outline of thoughts developed at length by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., in his masterly book, "Dieu—Son Existence et Sa Nature," Paris, Fourth Edition. Whilst acknowledging my indebtedness to that great work, I gladly assume all responsibility for any defects, whether in matter or manner, in this brief presentation of the case for the existence of God.

April, 1937.

L. R.

Nihil obstat:

PETRUS J. MURPHY,

Censor Deputatus.

24th Sept., 1937.

Imprimatur:

✠ N. T. GILROY,

Coadj. Arbp. of Sydney.

28th Sept., 1937.

PART I.

THE PROBLEM STATED.

I.

The Fool Hath Said:

CENTURIES ago David wrote wonderingly, "The fool hath said in his heart. There is no God." And that the same denial should still be heard after all these centuries of progress is surely matter for still greater astonishment. Yet it is a fact. Newspapers have told us how a Russian court has tried God, found Him guilty of all the ills of mankind, and sentenced Him to extinction. The Russians would say, of course, that they have merely sentenced the idea of God to perpetual exile as being quite untrue, and just a superstition. In reporting the "case," the newspapers had not only the news value of the startling event in mind. They wished to shock their readers into a dread of political systems which could lead to such practical atheism. But there are undoubtedly thousands of individuals who refuse to be shocked. The denial of God comes freely from the lips of many in every civilised

country in the world, and, strangely enough, as the boasted fruit of education. Multitudes, too, who hesitate to go so far as to deny God, hesitate also to affirm that He does exist. They simply lack conviction on this all-important subject. And they quite fail to realise the fatal consequences of such emancipation from God both in their own lives, and in those of their fellow-men.

Want of thought alone is responsible for such loose ideas, and this little book is, therefore, an urgent appeal for thought. It will bring out the fact that the denial of God is a violation of reason; that it leads to the absurdity which one does rightly associate with the fool; that it deprives mankind of the only solution of the greatest of all problems; and that, far from being a sign of progress, it is the inevitable road to pessimism and despair.

You may complain that you cannot understand our incomprehensible God, and that He is no solution to offer as an explanation of this universe; that, if He does exist, and is infinitely good, sin and suffering simply could not be; that a God who knows all future things cannot be reconciled with the freewill of man. A hundred and one such difficulties may present themselves.

Then read these pages.

But let me say one word first.

The existence of God may still leave you with a problem. But if you deny His existence, you are left with a greater problem still. The universe without God is a much greater problem than the God whom you are asked to acknowledge. There is at least nothing absurd in claiming that an infinitely perfect Being is uncaused. But reason rightly rebels when men assert that a universe teeming with imperfections is as uncaused as the God we claim, and they would reject!

II.

Poisoning the Wells.

It is well to remember that, when it is a question of reason approaching the problem of God, unbelievers have poisoned the wells. Even philosophers who have professed to be believers have given out ideas which, in the name of reason, have denied the value of reason! If reason is unreliable, how will one prove the existence of God from reason? The fruit of the philosophy of men like Hume, Kant, Spencer and Mill has been a tendency to accept only that which can be tested by the senses. "Believe only what you can see, hear, or touch," is the logical result of their teachings. And this result has been too readily accepted by multitudes who have neither the time nor the ability to sift such ideas for themselves.

Now if our bodily senses are our only reliable sources of information, all arguments based upon pure reasoning are invalid, or at best doubtful and so much waste of time. Yet the proofs of God's existence are based upon the purely reasonable principles that contradictory things cannot be at one and the same time true; that certain things which follow one another are linked by a very definite bond of causality; and that all things are governed by purpose in some form or another. If these things, which are not the object of sense-knowledge, are not reliable, then it will be impossible to prove that an invisible God does exist. Before setting forth our proofs, then, the very value of our rational principles must be justified, and the falsity of agnostic foundations exposed. But firstly let us say a few words about science, since this glorification of sense-knowledge has led to an acceptance of experimental science as being the only true science, and to the rejection of practically everything else as being unworthy of the name scientific.

III.

Be Scientific!

There is a modern exaggerated worship of science together with what men are pleased to term its latest findings. But a very restricted

meaning is attached to the word. By it people usually intend that branch of knowledge which is concerned with observation and experience, and which results in a classification of facts and of the laws governing them. This is known as natural or physical science, and it is valuable as far as it goes. But when men talk as if this were the only science they betray themselves as most unscientific. Natural physical science studies the visible, audible and tangible. It concentrates upon sense-perceptions of external properties and qualities. And this means that it concentrates upon the mere manifestations of being, rather than upon being itself.

Higher than mere physical science comes the science of pure mathematics. This science concentrates, not upon visible properties and qualities, but upon an invisible and intangible divisibility which results from quantity. A greater capacity for abstract reasoning is required for the science of pure mathematics than is required for physical science.

But still greater capacity for abstraction, and therefore still greater mental ability, is required for that pure reasoning which rises above all material conditions, and which considers not merely properties and qualities in the external order, nor merely the ideas derived from the divisibility of quantity, but the prin-

ciples of being itself. That a thing is rather than is not; that it is itself and not another; that it influences other beings; that it exists for a definite purpose; these aspects have no necessary connection with material beings and the conditions of matter, and are the object of reason alone. The science of philosophy can alone get at these principles of being, contradiction, identity, causality and purpose or finality.

IV.

The Appeal to Reason.

Physical science tells of facts and of the laws governing them, according to observations of the visible world around us. It cannot say why they are facts, nor whence came the laws. Why should not things be otherwise? Science cannot say. Induction gives physical certainty that expansion of iron is due to heat. But physical science cannot say why it should not be due to cold. If it tries to give reasons, it gives provisional hypotheses which are not necessarily true, but which are arbitrary postulates suitable for classifying facts. Bodies fall. What force accounts for it? Are they driven towards one another, or mutually attracted? Science demands the latter. How conceive this

attraction? Mystery! Is light an ether wave, or a rapid flow of intangible matter? Either theory is pure hypothesis. Science can but classify more or less accurately these phenomena.

Such phenomena, then, cannot explain their own existence, nor their conduct and behaviour. And as they cannot explain themselves, they need a cause of their reality and regularity. We must look beyond them to find the necessary reason why they should be as they are. And the science which goes beyond the field of sense experience to discover this cause deserves the name of science far more than merely physical science. Indeed, physical science and mathematics give but a superficial notion of reality. We must go higher than these to the science of being itself, if we are to arrive at a true idea of the Supreme Being. Many scientists in the physical order speak as if they alone are the supremely educated men. They seem unaware that there is any branch of knowledge higher than their own. And they forget that, even though they be experts, they are experts only in a given subject.

There is a science of pure reasoning far higher than that of mere experimentation. And the proof of God's existence by pure reason is much more scientific in itself than the demonstrations of physical science. We study external facts; we know they need a cause; we prove

that they need an infinitely perfect cause, and no other. And this cause is not a provisional hypothesis, but a definite fact in itself.

It is worth noting that, whilst too often the scientists have gone hand in hand with the agnostic philosopher, they are compelled to use the very principles to which the agnostic denies value. The real understanding of science is derived from the application of the purely rational principles of non-contradiction, causality, and purpose or finality. And scientific certainty is deeper the more it approaches these fundamental laws of reason. Now these principles are not merely laws of thought. They are laws of existent being. Assertions based upon them are not only physically certain, but metaphysically certain, and far above the certainty based upon the mere experience of the senses.

V.

The Agnostic Fable.

Let us go to the very root of modern difficulties, the postulates of agnostic philosophy. Not adverting to the suicidal nature of their doctrines, the agnostic philosophers denied the value of rational principles. They demand as a condition of certain knowledge that we experience the object known by our senses. Let

us see, hear and touch what we profess to know, or give up pretence to knowledge. We may have the opinion that there is a God, but let us not say that there is a God, whom we have not seen, heard, nor touched.

Thus Hume denied that the principle of causality has any real value. The senses perceive one thing following upon another. We suppose that the first is the cause of the second. But, since no one sees causality, we can be sure only of succession. Our imagination links the two objects as cause and effect. Reason, after all, is but imagination. We have only sensations, and what men call ideas are simply general images grouping particular sensations.

Stuart Mill said much the same. All knowledge is sense experience and sense experience can tell us nothing of causes. Therefore it is impossible to prove a First Cause whom people believe to be God. Spencer, in turn, admits that, whilst men may feel obliged to conclude to a First Cause, the very notion of causality is a delusion, a pure hypothesis, merely symbolic, and without any certainty at all.

These men are the modern prophets, and their conclusions are accepted by multitudes who will never attempt to examine their process of reasoning. And it is easy to see how impossible it is to prove God's existence by

purely rational principles to such men. Before we even attempt such a thing, we are compelled to justify the principles of reason in the sight of those who declare that no knowledge is certain which goes beyond the realm of sense-experience.

VI.

The Mere Rationalist.

It seems strange that we should be called upon to justify rational principles against attacks by men who glory in the name of rationalists. Yet such is the case. Mere rationalism is opposed to real rationalism. Agnostics, in reducing men from the rational world to that of the animal world which lives by instinct and sense experience, have denied the superiority of reason even as the unscientific evolutionist would wish to deny the essential differences between man and ape.

To justify their attitude, agnostics say that insoluble difficulties present themselves once man tries to rely upon what he calls his reason. The retort is obvious. You do not know these difficulties by sense experience any more than does a horse. Your reason alone perceives them, and how can you know that there is anything in your difficulties, if you deny the value of reason? To deny the value of reason when

we offer rational proofs, and to assert its value when you offer purely rational objections is absurd.

However, let us view briefly some of the difficulties declared by agnostics to be insoluble. Spencer took up the antinomies or contradictions formulated by the German philosopher Kant. "You say your God is the First Cause, and is Absolute," declares Spencer. "But if He is a cause, He cannot be absolute, since every cause is relative to an effect. If you say that He existed first absolutely, and then became a cause, you have a new difficulty; your unchangeable God is changeable. So, too, it is impossible to reconcile both justice and mercy in God; or the foreknowledge of God and man's freewill; the goodness of God and the existence of evil. These things cannot be harmonised. I do not say that there is no God. But all these contradictions show that reason cannot give a valid answer, and our only reliable source of information is sense experience."

In all this, the appeal is not to sense experience, but to reason in order to prove reason invalid!

The French agnostic Littré wrote, "Science declares that all happens as if there were no God. Our positive philosophy accepts this declaration, and refuses to discuss what can be the object of no experience and no proof." His remedy is typical—refusal to think! "Why

worry whence you came, and whither you must go? If there be an intelligent, free and good Creator? You will never know a word about it These problems are an illness. The only way to cure is not to think about it." Such a burying of one's head in the sand is certainly no solution, and is altogether unworthy of anyone who calls himself rational.

From all this it is evident that three tasks present themselves. Firstly, we must prove the validity of reason and of its principles; secondly, we must prove from reason that God does exist; thirdly, we must solve at least the main difficulties of the professing agnostic.

PART II.

WHENCE PROOF COMES.

I.

The Reliability of Reason.

A GAINST the scientific agnostic we have to justify the existence and reliability of reason and intelligence as distinct from, and superior to sense experience.

The very word intelligence is from the Latin words *intus legere*, to read within, to penetrate below appearances. Men invented the word to express a real power of which all are naturally conscious. We know that we have information not obvious to the senses. An animal sees the shape and colour of a plant; man knows what a plant is, that it is a body endowed with vegetative life. Every power in man has its proper object. Sight is adapted to colour; hearing to sound; consciousness to the registration of internal experiences; the will to that which at least appeals as good in some way. So, too, reason is adapted to truth, an object more profound than any object of

sense experience. Man does not live merely by his senses. There are realities which it is impossible to represent by sense-images. The object of bodily sight may be a material thing; but the object of thought is the very nature, principle and idea of the thing; and such ideas are spiritualised abstractions outside the realm of matter. Two and two potatoes make four potatoes. You can put the four potatoes into a pan and fry them. But you cannot put the truth that two and two make four into a pan and fry it. Such an idea is in a totally different order of being. Sensations provide a foundation for thought, but sense-images are not thought. The eye of a child in school forms a sense image of chalk marks on the board, and nothing more. The eye of a horse would see as much. But the mind of the child detects an intelligible meaning beneath the sense phenomena, and all men know that the child has perceived a real truth. The eye could not perceive that truth merely because it is adapted to a lesser light altogether. The child must "see" with two different powers. It must see the visible writing with its eyes. It must see the intelligible meaning with its mind or reason. This latter meaning is very much a reality, and the assertion that sense knowledge alone is valid is about as reasonable as would be the assertion of an owl that sunlight does not exist, merely because its eyes are not adapted to such

brilliancy and daylight renders it blind.

A savage, in the presence of a locomotive for the first time, will form a sense-image of the machine and of its various parts. But his reason will certainly go beyond appearances, and insist that there is some motive force behind its running wheels. His mind demands an invisible principle which alone can render movement intelligible.

Reason, therefore, exists, and is a power by which man can penetrate with certainty beneath appearances to being, to substance, to causality, even as it penetrates audible or written words to find the intelligible meaning of them.

II.

The Penalty of Denial.

The penalty of denial is radical absurdity. An agnostic tells you of his system. He takes it for granted that he is giving you the right explanation, and not the wrong explanation of what he thinks. He accepts the purely rational principle that a thing cannot be simultaneously right and wrong. He accepts the principle of contradiction in spite of himself, for its denial would be the end of his philosophy. And he cannot explain by sense experience why he accepts that principle as necessarily true.

We are certain that reason can just as validly perceive intelligible realities of being, causality and purpose, as the senses can perceive colour, sound and tangible properties of material objects. But let us look a little more closely at two principles of being which are essential to our proofs that God does exist.

III.

Cause or Sequence?

Causality is not mere imagination. It is a decided reality. Take a white object. The senses tell us that it is white; reason tells us that it has being. The senses see a white thing. Reason formulates the proposition, "That object *is* white." In other words, "It is a white *being* that I see." Reason also tells us that it is impossible for blackness to succeed whiteness without some causality. The object is white, and whiteness excludes blackness. Blackness is not there, and whiteness cannot give itself a blackness which it does not possess. When anything becomes something else we must admit a cause, just as we demand applied heat for the changing of cold water into hot.

If we deny causality, and declare that we merely imagine it, because we see one thing succeeding another, why do we not always

think causality when succession occurs? Writing succeeds the movements of my pen, and I am sure that my pen is causing the writing. But if, the moment I had written these last words, an unexpected visitor burst into my room, I am quite sure that my last written words were not the cause of his advent.

A cause is not only followed by an effect, but produces it. If not, our agnostic friend would be conscious of possessing ideas, but would not claim to be the cause of them. He could not even prove that he was the author of his own books. But whilst he dispenses himself from paying God the honour due to Him from all rational creatures on the score that causality is unproven, he does not dispense the publisher from paying him the royalties due to the sale of his works!

Our judgment of causality is every bit as valid as our notion of the real as opposed to the unreal.

IV.

An All-pervading Purpose.

The principle of purpose or finality is an equally valid principle of reason. Its denial has led to the doctrine of blind fate or chance. The senses do not detect purpose any more than

they perceive causality in visible succession. But reason knows that every single agent acts for a purpose either appointed by outside causes, or self-imposed. An animal instinctively chooses means suitably ordained to a given end, without reasoning why they should be the right means. The senses perceive that a bird flies *with* wings; reason declares that a bird has wings *for the purpose* of flying. Reason knows that the eye is for the purpose of seeing; it is for that purpose, and no other. The eye does not hear sounds; it was never *meant* to hear sounds.

If the eye sees rather than hears without being *ordained* to sight rather than to hearing, then there is no reason why it should really do one rather than the other. We have not only to admit causality; we have to admit causality and purpose. Every agent acts for a purpose, either that for which it was made, or, in the case of free and intelligent beings, for a purpose known and willed by self.

This doctrine is opposed to the idea that all is ruled by fatalism and chance. The very word chance is used for apparent exceptions to purposeful conduct. It is normal for a doctor to know medicine. He is for the purpose of knowing medicine. By chance he may happen to know music. But we do not go to him on the chance that he may have studied medicine.

Thus reason is a reliable power in human beings, and we rightly appeal to it beyond the province of mere sense-perceptions. And the principles of causality and purpose are equally reliable, despite the agnostic doubts and denials. And the result of those principles? There must be a God.

PART III.

THERE IS A GOD.

I.

The Line of Thought.

REASON cannot pretend to prove fully *what* God is in Himself. If God could be fully comprehended by limited human reason, He would be as small as the limited mind conceiving Him, and would not be God at all. But if reason cannot grasp fully *what* God is, it can definitely prove *that* He is, by showing that the universe needs just that Cause whom we rightly express by the word God. Reason demands that a proportionate cause exists for every effect. And for the universe we need an Infinite Cause. We have to get beyond all secondary causes, which are themselves the effects of other causes, until we come to a permanent first cause which is uncaused by any other agent, and which contains its own explanation within itself.

II.

An Eternal World?

Some people have made much of the hen and egg argument. They ask, "Whence came this egg?" You reply, "From a hen." "Whence came that hen?" "From a previous egg." At once comes the argument, "Then you either go on forever, or come to a first hen which must have been created by God. And since it is impossible to go on forever to infinity; God must exist!"

But is it impossible to go on forever to infinity? Revelation, of course, tells us that the world did begin by God's creative act. But here we are not dealing with revelation. We are concerned with reason alone. Does reason forbid the idea of an infinite series of objects dependent one upon another? Mathematicians are growing less and less inclined to say so. Men have said that an infinite actual number of beings supposes a first and a last, and therefore finite limits. But St. Thomas Aquinas wisely replied to that, "He who calls a multitude infinite would not call it a number, nor admit that it was numerable."

But even granted for the sake of argument that finite things did go back to infinity, though

we know by revelation that they do not, such a concession in no way affects our problem. The proofs of God's existence are independent of this matter altogether. He would be as necessary as ever, as we shall see. Let us, then, turn to our proofs.

III.

Things Exist.

We commence with the fact that finite things exist. Whence did they come? Now it is certain that nothing could cause itself. It would have to be there to do so, and it could not be before itself. If to-day there is something, there never could have been nothing. Nothing has nothing to work upon, and no powers with which to operate. And since to-day there is obviously something, something must always have existed. That something which always existed is the uncaused God. It is no escape to say that the universe always was, and that therefore God is not necessary. The universe is a collection of caused things. Not one finite object explains itself independently of the rest. If each link in the chain is dependent, the whole chain is dependent. If each link is caused, the

whole chain is caused. Each separately is as inexplicable as all, and all are as inexplicable as each. To prolong the series is not to change its nature. The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle himself adverted to this. "If the world is eternal," he wrote, "then it is eternally insufficient and incomplete."

In a watch each wheel is dependent for movement upon a preceding wheel. Give this watch a hundred wheels, or a thousand wheels, or an infinite multitude of wheels. Since each wheel is moved by a preceding wheel, infinite multiplication of wheels can never explain the movement. One might as well try to explain a running train by saying that it was always running! So, too, granted an eternal series of finite things, God is still necessary as the eternal Cause of all. The only rational explanation of an eternally caused series of beings is by One who is uncaused Himself, and who exists with a complete self-sufficiency obviously missing in finite things. We designate that uncaused Cause—God. He is there, however men wish to speak of Him.

We know by revelation that the world is not eternal. But the rationalist who scoffs at revelation, and maintains the eternity of matter subject to evolution, has not avoided the difficulty, and has in no way diminished the force of our arguments.

IV.

Things Need Not Exist.

A further peculiarity about the things which do exist in this universe is the fact that no particular individual thing *need* exist. We cannot find in any single object any special reason why it should exist rather than something else. Individuals exist for a time, and then cease as individuals, generations coming and going. You exist in this world now, or you would not be reading this. At one time you did not exist. Before many years, you will cease to exist in this world. The reason why you in particular should exist cannot be in yourself, nor within your control. If it were, there is no reason why you should ever allow yourself to die. If your existence were not necessary a hundred years ago, it is not *absolutely* necessary now. On the supposition that you do exist, of course, it is necessary that you do exist. But only on the supposition. There is no absolute necessity why you should be rather than not be.

All through nature we find the same thing. And since no individual of all the limited things in this universe necessarily exists, the whole universe must find the reason of its existence, not in itself, but in some Cause which does necessarily exist. A vast collection of things which in themselves are indifferent to existence

or non-existence cannot add up into a necessary being. And the reason for the existence of things characterised by such indifference must be sought in some supreme and necessary being. That being is God. Men have urged that some common substance necessarily exists, and that this common substance is the subject of successive manifestations. But the very next argument proves the absolute impossibility of a changeable self-existent subject.

V.

Things Change.

All the things in this world which God has actually willed to exist are essentially changeable. They are all undergoing a process of becoming something which they are not yet. So pronounced is this phenomenon, that some philosophers have asserted that nothing really is, but that all is a becoming! However, a thing must be before it can commence becoming something which it is not yet. But the acquiring of qualities not yet possessed demands an influence from something else. The changing thing is receiving the perfections of a new state and it cannot be the receiver and giver at once. A giver must be sought elsewhere. Does it receive from another which has received? How far back will you go? Eternal multiplication

of changing things, each handing on a received impulse, may complicate the instrument, but it explains nothing. Put yourself on board ship. You are supported by it, the ship by the influence of the sea, the sea by the earth, the earth by the gravitational and centrifugal forces relating us to the sun, the sun by other centres. Go on forever through causes thus receiving influences, and you have once more Aristotle's eternally insufficient series. Reason demands the existence of One who is radically distinct from all receivers, who possesses and gives what all others acquire, yet never needs to receive Himself, and who is not subject to modification and change. We cannot stop at eternal transformations of energy. We have to explain both the energy and its transformations. Reason is compelled to admit God as the Author of both, and as not subject to modifications and changes due to the influence of any other being.

VI.

Things Are Graded.

Observation shows us that things around us are more or less good, more or less noble, more or less true. The vegetable is more noble than dead and inert matter; animals are more perfect than vegetables; man than animals. There is a gradation of perfections. Reason is forced

to admit that somewhere there is a Being who is absolutely good, the supremely desirable, absolutely true. Somewhere there exists the Source of all truth, the ultimate foundation of all knowledge and morality.

If a man enters a house on a cold night, and notices a steadily increasing sense of warmth as he penetrates more and more within the building, he knows that sooner or later he will come to a fire or radiator from which the warmth he has experienced has derived its existence. Now the world puts before him varying participations of beauty and nobility. There are ever increasing grades of perfection. He notes a progression even in merely material and non-living things. He passes through the vegetative world to the sensitive world. His thoughts rise to a far higher intelligent world, and lifts itself to the realms of spiritual thoughts and aspirations. Spontaneously it asserts an infinitely perfect source of all these perfections, One who is Goodness and Beauty, Intelligence and Truth itself, who is none other than God.

The diversity of perfections in creatures being possessed by one and the same God affords no more difficulty than the diversity of colours contained in the one ray of white light. The colours are there in principle even as, in a higher way, all perfections are in principle or virtually possessed by God.

VII.

Things are Arranged.

Individual things not only differ from one another in grades of perfection. They are united in the wonderful order of co-ordination and subordination pervading the universe. And reason cannot deny an infinitely intelligent God as the designer and author of all. The principle of purpose forbids any other conclusion.

It is obvious that men act, not blindly, but with a purpose in view. It is equally clear that unintelligent beings act consistently with a purpose that must be intentional at least in the author of their instincts. They owe their definite inclinations to a supremely intelligent Agent every bit as much as a blind bullet owes its direction to the guidance of the marksman.

Fatality, chance, natural selection, no substitute theories can serve to explain this co-ordination throughout the universe. Reason insists that if intelligence is needed to understand this order, intelligence was necessary to produce it. How can a genius, devoting his lifetime to the study of a small section of this universe, ascribe the whole to an intelligence so much less than his own that he calls it a blind force? Far more credulity is demanded of him who attributes all to fate or to chance than is demanded of the poor ignorant idolator who

to admit that somewhere there is a Being who is absolutely good, the supremely desirable, absolutely true. Somewhere there exists the Source of all truth, the ultimate foundation of all knowledge and morality.

If a man enters a house on a cold night, and notices a steadily increasing sense of warmth as he penetrates more and more within the building, he knows that sooner or later he will come to a fire or radiator from which the warmth he has experienced has derived its existence. Now the world puts before him varying participations of beauty and nobility. There are ever increasing grades of perfection. He notes a progression even in merely material and non-living things. He passes through the vegetative world to the sensitive world. His thoughts rise to a far higher intelligent world, and lifts itself to the realms of spiritual thoughts and aspirations. Spontaneously it asserts an infinitely perfect source of all these perfections, One who is Goodness and Beauty, Intelligence and Truth itself, who is none other than God.

The diversity of perfections in creatures being possessed by one and the same God affords no more difficulty than the diversity of colours contained in the one ray of white light. The colours are there in principle even as, in a higher way, all perfections are in principle or virtually possessed by God.

VII.

Things are Arranged.

Individual things not only differ from one another in grades of perfection. They are united in the wonderful order of co-ordination and subordination pervading the universe. And reason cannot deny an infinitely intelligent God as the designer and author of all. The principle of purpose forbids any other conclusion.

It is obvious that men act, not blindly, but with a purpose in view. It is equally clear that unintelligent beings act consistently with a purpose that must be intentional at least in the author of their instincts. They owe their definite inclinations to a supremely intelligent Agent every bit as much as a blind bullet owes its direction to the guidance of the marksman.

Fatality, chance, natural selection, no substitute theories can serve to explain this co-ordination throughout the universe. Reason insists that if intelligence is needed to understand this order, intelligence was necessary to produce it. How can a genius, devoting his lifetime to the study of a small section of this universe, ascribe the whole to an intelligence so much less than his own that he calls it a blind force? Far more credulity is demanded of him who attributes all to fate or to chance than is demanded of the poor ignorant idolator who

tries to personify some cause by the construction of a wooden god!

Hartmann, in his "Philosophy of the Unconscious," shows from the calculus of probabilities that there are a million chances to one against the realisation of all the conditions required for sight in the human eye, granted that there be no intelligent director. Imagine a host of letters thrown promiscuously into the air, and falling into the order required by one of Cicero's orations! Fate and chance as an explanation of the order of the universe is the most unscientific solution ever proposed by unthinking men. We must come to an infinite intelligence—that of Almighty God.

VIII.

Men Have a Conscience.

We have briefly considered the principle of order in the physical world around us. Not less is there evidence of order in the moral world. Men know good from evil, and that good ought to be done. They can distinguish the merely pleasurable, and the merely useful, from the good. They realise that, although the pleasurable or useful may seem desirable, what is right and good manifests itself as imperative, at least morally. This is simply the rational perception of the principle of moral

purpose. Even Kant, for all his agnosticism, speaks with the utmost respect of this argument, and says that it demands at least the practical recognition of God, even though reason, as reason, cannot prove His existence. But why should Kant rely upon his reason, when it tells him of moral obligation, yet refuse to rely upon it when it concludes to the existence of God? The moral law is not an object of sense-perception. Animals have no moral convictions such as those of which intelligent men are aware. Man knows by reason that he has received his powers not merely to use them, but to use them in accordance with the demands of virtue and justice. He knows that there is a right and a wrong according to standards established by Someone other than himself. No man can make wrong right, and right wrong. There must be a supreme Law-giver, to whom we are responsible in the end. Responsible, for no real law can exist without a proportionate sanction.

"No citizen shall drive a car unless he have a licence," declares the State.

"What if I do?" asks the citizen. "What will happen?"

"Oh, nothing," replies the State, "but you know my law!"

The citizen laughs, and does as he pleases. It is not a law. It is folly.

The supreme Legislator is not foolish; con-

science knows it; moral order demands a true law, a supreme Legislator and Judge; it demands God.

IX.

The Heart's Aspirations.

The good may be considered, not only as pleasurable and useful, but also as right and honest; and we dealt with the latter aspect in the preceding section. But the good as satisfying to ourselves, as desirable, appealing, and the road to happiness in its possession, is not without deep significance. It fills a certain void in our lives. But the idea of happiness must be considered in conjunction with the aspect of honesty. It is only the right and honest good which can give us true happiness. Duty and happiness are co-relatives. Yet as duty postulates God, so also does the innate desire of happiness. Every man is naturally desirous of happiness, and indeed of perfect happiness. He is not so much drawn to *a* good as to *the* good. Individual goods are sought in an endeavour to satisfy the innate craving for goodness and happiness as such.

Now every natural power demands its proper object. Is it conceivable that we should have been endowed with ears to hear, yet no single body ever have been endowed with the power of causing vibration and sound? That

the eye, so perfectly adapted to sight, should lack the light necessary for its operation? Reason similarly asserts that the deep natural desire for perfect happiness has also its true co-relative. Finite and limited goods can never satisfy, can never fill the void every man experiences in spite of himself. Health, riches, and honours are possessed with anxiety; no man can attain such knowledge in this life that he is desirous of knowing no more. Even were we to multiply finite goods to infinity, they would yet be imperfect and limited in their nature, and leave human desire still unsatisfied. Thus St. Augustine rightly exclaimed, after his own fruitless search for happiness in lesser things, "Our hearts are made for Thee, O God, and they will know no rest till they rest in Thee." There is a God.

X.

All Men Say!

Men do not have to persuade themselves that there is a God. They try to persuade themselves that there is no God. These pages are not an effort to persuade men that there is a God. They are but to confirm the reader's original persuasion, and safeguard him from being over-impressed by the specious reasons alleged against the existence of a God by a

few individual writers. A study of the various nations, and of the most ancient documents, shows a universal conviction of the existence of God. Every language contains words which signify God. Men have ever been conscious of their dependence upon God, and of the need of acknowledging Him. Some people have perverted the spontaneous concept, and have fallen into error regarding the true nature of God; but the fact of a supreme and intelligent Power men have never universally denied. Many adversaries, unable to deny this fact of universal conviction, have endeavoured to explain it away. They attribute it to educational influences, to the invention of earthly rulers and its imposition upon the people for the benefit of legislators, or to fear and ignorance. The education theory fails when we find this conviction the same amongst all nations, and that men are unable to lay it aside even when the notion is most contrary to their own desires. Had the idea been imposed by the force or deception of legislators, the spread of knowledge and liberty in civilisation would have destroyed it long ago. Fear cannot account for it. It is common to the fearful and the fearless; to the good as well as to the bad. As for ignorance, the conviction deepens with study and deep thought. True science and philosophy lead to God, not from Him. The thought of God promotes virtue; the denial of God leads

to vice. It is impossible that a conviction which of itself always tends to express itself in virtue should be false, whilst that which promotes vice should be true. Reason perceives that the human race is not deceived in this conviction; that it is based upon the intuitive perception of solid evidence; that God does indeed exist.

XI.

When God Acts.

This proof is not an appeal to faith. The Sacred Scriptures are definite historical books. Reject them, and you can place no trust even in the biography of a man who lived within this very century. That biography, if still in existence, would be as valuable two thousand years hence as now. Mere lapse of time does not sap it of its authority. Now in the Old Testament God directly intervened many times over in the affairs of men. In the New we have the fact of the Incarnation. Christ was certainly a historical Person. He declared Himself to be, and proved Himself to be the Son of God. Reason cannot validly deny the value of the Books, claims and proofs. If a man wants evidence before his eyes, let him study the Catholic Church. She is here to-day. "The monument of God is standing," writes Lacordaire, "and every power has touched it; every

science has scrutinised it; every blasphemy has cursed it. Examine it well—it is there before you.” Without the intervention of God, the Catholic Church is inexplicable. Visit Lourdes, in the south of France. Go to the Medical Bureau, and ask to see the official records of works which baffle all scientific explanation, which cannot be accounted for except by the honest declaration, “The finger of God is here.”

XII.

Truly the Fool Hath Said!

Such are the main evidences for the existence of God. They give not only moral and physical certainty, but absolute and metaphysical certainty. God is a reality. There is no more need to know fully *what* God is in order to know *that* He is, than it is necessary to know the true inner nature of electricity before we can admit its existence. The denial of the existence of God leads not only to the destruction of the basis of all real morality; it violates the fundamental principles of reason itself. From both aspects it is the fool who says in his heart, “There is no God.”

The mere rationalists have violated the noblest faculty in man. Pretending that the acceptance of God leads to insoluble difficulties which cannot be admitted, because they

violate the principle of contradiction, these men have gone from contradiction to contradiction until Hegel, to save philosophy, denied all value to this principle, asserting that being is non-being and that contradiction is the fruitful principle of evolution without God.

There is no more wretched intellectual servitude than to imprison reason in sense-phenomena and inadmissible contradictions. As J. Maritain wisely remarks in his book, *L'Esprit de la Philosophie Scholastique*, p. 524, "It is not in the misery and isolation of naturalism, but in the fruitful contact with Divine Truth, in ruling itself and adapting itself to God that the mind attains full spontaneity and freedom." And again, on p. 535, "Between Christian thought and the spirit of modern philosophy there is an unbridgeable abyss. On the one side, submission of mind to God and to Truth, with liberty of soul. On the other side, vindication of absolute independence of reason, leading to servitude and the inevitable dissolution of human thought in atheism and absurdity."

"Beware," prophetically warns St. Paul, "lest any man cheat you by philosophy and vain deceit." Coloss. II., 8.

However, abstracting from revelation, the choice remains, God or radical absurdity. Against the charge of rationalists that it is really God *and* radical absurdity we must glance at their objections in the following section.

PART IV.

THE MAIN DIFFICULTIES.

I.

A Common Sense Prelude.

IN this brief treatise we cannot possibly solve all individual difficulties urged against the existence of God. But we can at least set out the principles which will avail for the solution of practically every difficulty that could be proposed.

In the first place, a difficulty does not at once refute any doctrine. And if a doctrine is solidly established, then inability to solve an objection does not disprove the doctrine, but merely proves man's inability to solve a problem beyond his capacity. The objection is soluble, but not by this particular man.

If premises are certain, and logic sure, then it is absurd to deny the certain premises or tamper with logic because we are not altogether pleased with the conclusion. Did we want the truth? Or did we want what we would prefer to be true? True reason says, "God certainly exists. This fact is certainly difficult for me to

reconcile with His existence. But since both are facts, they must be reconcilable, even if I cannot see the reconciliation."

However let us review the basic difficulties.

II.

God Too Human.

One of the stock charges of agnostics is that men speak of God as if He were a man. "You people," they say, "seem to think that God is an old man with a flowing white beard. You attribute to Him qualities which you perceive in those around you. We could not be expected to believe in a God like that!"

We believers never expected them to believe in a God like that, nor do we believe in such a God ourselves. But that makes no difference to the clever agnostic. He still rejoices in his witticisms concerning doctrines nobody ever held and which he has imagined for himself.

He is like the non-Catholic so frequently encountered. "The Pope is infallible," I tell him, "only when he speaks on matters connected with faith and morals."

"It is no good," he replies, "you will never persuade me that the Pope can infallibly predict the weather!" I had no desire to persuade him on a point which I myself deny. But that is little to him. He goes his way convinced that the Pope is not infallible at all because he

is not infallible when he is not supposed to be. We perceive many perfections in God's creative work. We attribute all these perfections to God, but not in the way in which they exist in creatures. They exist in God in a way proper to God and conditioned by the Divine and Infinite Nature of God. Men's perfections are in God, but not as in men. We forbid people to think anthropomorphically of God.

It is the agnostic who is anthropomorphic. He cannot rise above his sense perceptions. He imagines the qualities of man in God as they are in man, and laughs. It is wasted mirth.

Take this example. Science tells us that blue rays are a constituent of white light. Our agnostic friend would look steadily at a blue ray, shake his head, and say, "This ray is blue. White is not blue. I don't believe you!" The trouble is that he wants to find blue as blue in white light. We never said that it was there as blue. We hold, and scientifically, that blue is in white light in the way proper to, and conditioned by the nature of white light. So, too, with God. We cannot help it if the agnostic insists upon thinking anthropomorphically, but let him not dream that in refuting his own anthropomorphic notions, he is refuting our notion of God.

All difficulties resulting from comparisons between God and man will find their solution in these principles.

III.

Speak Not of the Absolute!

If God is the Cause of creatures, He is relative to creatures, and therefore not absolute as you say. Thus rationalists. But they are mistaken. It is true that creatures are not absolute; they are relative to God. But God is Absolute, and not relative to creatures. An object visualised causes knowledge in my mind. My knowledge is relative to that object and is conditioned by it; but the object is not relative to my knowledge, and is absolute in its own order. If I did not know of it, it would still go on existing, although my knowledge of it could never have existed without it.

Thus God causes us. We are dependent upon and related to Him, and He expects us to acknowledge our dependence. But He is not dependent upon us. He is absolute in His own Infinite Order. There is no more contradiction here than in the example given from the relations between my real knowledge and the real object known.

IV.

Changing the Immutable!

Rationalists pretend to find supposed changes in the Unchangeable God. "When God became the Creator," they say, "He became something

He was not before!" That is nonsense. If He began to will creation there might be something in the objection. But He always willed creation to begin, and that is a very different matter. There is no change in Him. All the change is in mutable creation. God's eternal and immutable Will was fulfilled, not changed, when creatures began to be.

"But at least," they urge, "all prayer supposes a changeable God. By your prayers you hope to change His attitude towards you!" That is not really so, although people speak in such a way popularly. But what is the true explanation? The truth is that prayer really changes our attitude towards God, and fits us to receive what He always intended to give in answer to prayer. God gives many things unconditionally. Thus He willed our existence. But grace, and many temporal goods He wills conditionally. He wills that we should obtain them if we pray; that we should not obtain them if we do not. If we pray, we obtain them, and God always intended it; if we do not pray, we forfeit them; again as God always intended. There is no change in God; all the change is in us. We are with or without God's gifts. If we pray, and are mistaken in our notions of what God intends to give in answer to prayer, God does not give what we ask, but answers the prayer as He originally intended. But no sincere prayer is unheard. If I intend

now to go next week to Melbourne, my going next week is the fulfilment, not the alteration of my constant will. Thus when God grants an answer to prayer, His Will is fulfilled, not changed. But if I neglect prayer, the graces God willed to give only in answer to prayer are forfeited, and the change in myself is from the prospects of salvation to the prospects of eternal loss. With Cardinal Manning we can say, "Alas for the man too busy to pray; he is too busy to save his soul."

But in no case is there a contradiction between our notions of mutability, and the immutability of God.

V.

If Just—Not Merciful!

"Mercy," insists the rationalist, "is the relaxation of justice, and therefore cannot be in God, if God be Justice itself." The rationalist is mistaken. Justice and mercy are not in conflict, nor are they mutually exclusive. Justice gives a man what is due to him. Mercy gives more than that to which he has a strict right. And to be generous is not to be unjust.

God would be unjust if He ever punished a crime beyond its deserts; but God never does this.

But He is not bound to punish every crime

as fully as it deserves. When He forgives, He makes a present of what is owing, and this is really the gratuitous donation of Christ, who has paid the debt and satisfied justice for all who sincerely wish to accept His liberality. The objection from mercy avails only with the man who has not seen all the facts, who understands the true nature neither of justice nor of mercy, and who has no real knowledge of Christianity.

VI.

God Knew—I Had to Do It.

God certainly knows what I shall do to-morrow. But His foreknowledge does not make me do it. If you see me walking down the street, I do not walk because you see me; you see me walking because I am doing so. Or take an example, not of simultaneous knowledge, but of foreknowledge. If the government astronomer knows that it will rain next week, rain does not fall because he knew it; he knew it because it would rain, detecting the signs in antecedent causes. From the heights of eternity God looks down upon all the successive actions in time; all are present to Him. If a man were to look down upon a city street from a great height, he would see all the individuals moving along that street, although the indivi-

duals in a long street perceive few of those in front of them, and none of those behind them. But the sight of all on the part of the onlooker from the heights in no way interferes with the self-chosen movements of the individuals. The streets of time are even so visible to God, but His sight of all things in no way interferes with the liberty He has given to men. He knows what I shall freely choose to do next week, or next year if He still leaves me in this world; but He also knows that I shall not have to do the things I freely choose to do.

VII.

The Problem of Evil.

This is the difficulty which impresses the majority of men, who hear it and repeat it daily. Its solution therefore must be given at greater length than the limits of this booklet have permitted in the case of the preceding difficulties.

We must begin by enunciating three general principles; afterwards we shall see their application.

VIII.

General Principles Towards a Solution.

1st General Principle. Reason proves the existence of an infinitely perfect God. Reason admits the existence of physical and moral

evil. As Fr. Maturin so well says, "A religion of breezy sunshine which ignores the presence of sorrow and suffering, or explains them away, or treats them as unrealities, can have little lasting hold upon suffering humanity." *Laws of the Spiritual Life*, p. 95. Since therefore God and evil exist, they cannot be incompatible.

2nd General Principle. There is no such thing as a bad *being*. All evil, whether physical or moral, is the absence of *being* which normally should be present. In physical evil, such as cancer, the patient is really and miserably conscious of the absence of healthy being. All positive being is good. The being of the cancerous growth, as a cancer, is good. It is a good cancer. So, too, a broken leg is the absence of right order. Moral evil is absence of rectitude. We do not know good by contrast with evil; we directly know the good, and all evil is measured according to the degree in which it interferes with the good.

This principle is of the utmost importance. The problem does not involve a God creating positively evil being, but a God who permits deficiencies in nature. We admit that the question would be insoluble if positively evil being were involved, since God is the Cause of all positive being. Restricting the question to the permission of defect in created being, however, even if every element of mystery cannot be re-

moved, the arguments against God urged by human reason, and based upon this problem, can be solved by human reason. God does not directly produce any evil. He directly produces being, and all being, as being, is good. Indirectly He wills that limitation or privation of being which we call physical evil, and for very good reasons; He never wills moral evil either directly or indirectly, and absolutely forbids it.

3rd General Principle. St. Augustine formulates this principle so exactly that we cannot do better than give his own words; he writes, "If evil exists, it is not that God lacks power and goodness; but, on the contrary, He permits evil only because He is so powerful and good that He is able to draw good from the existence of evil. Never would He permit any evil to occur in His works unless He were so omnipotent and good that He could make good result from the evil." *Enchiridion*, c. 2.

The General Principles Applied.

God's Point of View. Since we are dealing with the problem of evil in relation to God, we must endeavour to abstract from our own limited conceptions and try to visualise things from the aspect of the One responsible for creation.

Granted an Absolute and Infinite God who cannot but be all Perfect, we are compelled to admit that He is not bound to answer at the bar of human reason for His actions. In other words, His permission of evil is, as far as man is concerned, sufficient justification for His permitting it. St. Paul rightly argues in complete accordance with reason, "O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it: Why hast thou made me thus? Or hath not the potter power over the clay . . ." Rom. IX., 20. God foresaw all the evils, physical and moral, which would occur during the ages. But He saw the good also. He had not to choose between allowing this or that particular evil occur or not occur. Generations of good and evil together presented themselves to His prophetic glance, and He was confronted by the choice between the creating of a universe or not doing so. In His sight, the sum-total of good prevailed, and He created it. Neither the lesser physical evils, nor the moral caprice of individual rational creatures can rightly be expected to determine the Absolute in a decree that fully harmonised with His own Infinite Wisdom. God is not conditioned by creatures, nor can they expect to be the norm of His activities. However, granting God's rights, the problem remains as regards the reconciliation of such evils as we perceive with such a God as reason

demands. Let us therefore view more closely physical and moral evil.

IX.

Physical Suffering.

Almost before we begin the whole problem is solved. Physical suffering is not nearly so great an evil as moral evil. Thousands of men have chosen death rather than the violation of conscience. They daily choose poverty rather than wealth secured by unjust means. And even those who have not such courage, who are prepared to use evil means to avoid physical suffering, spontaneously admit that the patriot who dies rather than betray his country, or the man who forfeits all bodily comfort rather than violate a moral principle, is a better man than they themselves can pretend to be. Moral evil, therefore, is worse than physical evil. *Now moral evil, far from disproving the existence of God, supposes it.*

Moral evil is an offence against the moral law established independently of men by the Supreme Legislator. It is an offence against God, and, if God be taken away, one thing is not more immoral than another. Even were we to say, "Things are not wrong because God forbids them, but God forbids them because

they are wrong," we have not escaped the difficulty. Things are wrong in themselves. Admitted. But why are they wrong in themselves? Because they violate the purpose intended when man was created, and the purpose of each separate faculty bestowed upon him. We are back again with the Creator and His purpose, measuring all morality by His Will. This solution, therefore, *proves* the existence of God, and saps the problem of evil of all weight as an *argument against it*. All that is left for us to do is to endeavour to see the good which can be derived from the permission of evil, and inability to comprehend everything proves only our inability, and nothing else.

It is not repugnant that God should create that which does not necessarily involve any moral evil, and which can always lead to a good of a higher order. Now physical sufferings do not necessarily lead to moral evils, and they certainly can contribute to a higher good.

The first good is the existence itself of finite creatures. Their very finite nature means limitation of perfection, and physical evils are essentially bound up with co-ordinated finite beings. Physical evil is relative, and is a necessary factor in the perfection of the universe as a whole. We are dealing with the existing order, and it is certain, for example, that we live only because previous generations died, many from physical illnesses. A general re-

surrection under present conditions would be worse than a general massacre. If the good of higher beings did not involve the death and consumption of lower beings, the latter would multiply beyond all proportion, and the original design of nutrition in man would be quite destroyed. And God in His Wisdom willed the present order in view of the general good.

Besides this economic value of physical ills and sufferings, there are definite values for the individual.

Man has a sensitive nature. He cannot have a sensitive nature, yet never experience sensations. Variations in weather are necessary to his health, yet cannot but interfere with his comfort. Pain warns of disease, and moves him to seek remedies in time. Physical suffering also enlightens the understanding. It forces men to think. The positive good in man is a guarantee that he is of God. The absence of good entailed by privation of health is a relic of his original nothingness, or total privation of good, and leads to that humility so proper to his nature. The true meaning of life is the normal intellectual lesson taught by physical suffering, proving that earthly happiness is not man's destiny, and lifting him to a sense of higher responsibility.

The moral good resulting, or at least possible to be attained, is obvious. Fear of physical suffering impels the will to resist the crav-

ings of a lower nature, whether it be for excessive food, or drink, or any other form of sensuality, and thus paves the way for the self-control of a truly noble character. All pain can be the expiation of sin, and, if rightly accepted, draws a man to God.

X.

Moral Evil or Sin.

God is in no way the Cause of moral evil. He prohibits it, and could never give permission to any being so to offend Him. However, whilst denying to men moral freedom in this matter, He can leave them physically free without contradicting any of His own attributes.

Let us take the original plan of God. He could have created us in such a way that we could not but love Him. We would have to love Him as necessarily as the eye has to see if it is wide open in broad daylight. It would be, as it were, a forced love. But He preferred to be loved *freely* by man. That, however, involves necessarily that man is free also to reject Him. The freely given love of those who would choose to serve Him was a greater good than the loss of those whom He would have to risk losing. He created men free.

He forbade sin. He gives sufficient grace to all men who ask for it that they may not

sin. And if the freedom of the will carries with it the power to sin, it also carries with it the power to merit an eternal reward. Moreover, even if a man chooses to sin, his moral lapse can turn to his spiritual good after repentance, in a greater diffidence in self and more practical reliance upon God's grace. Man cannot do good without God's help, but he is sufficient of himself to default. Evil is the only work man can really call his own. Thus God permitted Judas to betray Christ, and the betrayal was condemned. God was not bound to prevent it, and would not do so by depriving Judas of that freewill which is essential to a human being. Judas was given sufficient grace and many warnings. God never abandons, but is first abandoned by men. Even at the last moment, after the betrayal, Judas could have repented had he not refused to believe in the Divine Mercy. God is ever ready to manifest His Mercy, and thus derive an eternal good from forgiven sin. But forgiveness must be asked for; we cannot refuse it and have it. If sin is not forgiven, or, rather, if men will not have forgiveness, then at least the eternal good of God's justice and holiness will be manifested in its punishment.

We do not pretend that suffering is rendered any less real by the above explanation. We cannot explain away suffering; we can but try to explain it. The Christian answer is not that

there is no suffering. It says that love of God gives peace in the midst of suffering, and that it is the only thing that can. The denial of God is no remedy. The good that can result we have shown. Indeed "to every life trial and peril and weariness must come," wrote Janet Stuart, "unless the life be quite without dignity and value." And there is no life of this description.

For a Christian, the problem is immeasurably diminished. Whatever the difficulty, the mystery of the Cross has a great lesson. There was no evil in Christ, yet He suffered physical pain; and if God Himself came to share our sufferings and teach us how to bear them, we cannot say that God and pain are repugnant, nor that He has no interest in us. The rationalist has not considered all the facts, and a judgment based upon defective information carries little weight. But, even apart from revelation, we cannot deny the principles of reason demonstrated in the earlier part of this book nor shall we tamper with logic, in order to have no solution of things at all. God exists.

