

amongst a number of systems that have a common origin, all of them are divine, or none are so. "We have found all kinds of virtue and spiritual aspiration in places where, for a long time, we had been taught to look for degradation only; and the conclusion that at once suggests itself is that, since truth is apparently diffused everywhere, it is concentrated nowhere." But from a Catholic point of view this was to be expected. Revealed religion is natural religion with something superadded to it; hence all religions will have much in common. The Catholic Church is a human organism capable of receiving the Divine Spirit, and such have all other religious bodies virtually attempted to be. From the Catholic standpoint they are so many incomplete and abortive Catholicisms, and they tend to confirm the supremacy of the Church. They can no more prove the contrary than the fact of a number of arrows having hit the target prevents our recognising that one has hit the centre. But how are we to know that it is the Catholic Church that has hit the centre. To answer this is a long matter, but it is simplified towards those who have not looked in search of a creed beyond the Christian world. It may be enough to point out that Catholicism alone has recognised what dogmatism really implies, and what will be demanded of it, and has made provision to meet these demands. "She alone has seen that if there is to be any infallible voice in the world at all, this voice must be an ever living one, as capable of speaking now as it ever was in the past; and that, as the world's capacities for knowledge grow, the teacher shall be always able to unfold to it a fuller teaching. The Catholic Church is the only historical religion that can conceivably adapt itself to the wants of the present day, without virtually ceasing to be itself. It is the only religion that can keep its identity without losing its life, and keep its life without losing its identity; that can enlarge its teachings without changing them; that can be always the same, and yet be always developing." There remain the moral and historical objections; a part of the former have already been removed. "The conception of Catholicism will be seen to involve no real want of charity; and it will have been seen also, in some degree, how little the complexity of theology, and still less of its constitution, destroys the simplicity of its religion." Let us consider the point more fully: many writers contrast natural religion with orthodoxy in general, particularly Catholicism, praising the former as simple, and deiding the latter as the very reverse. Natural religion is in one sense simpler than revealed, but merely because it can have no authoritative science of itself. "It is simpler for the same reason that a boy's account of having given himself a headache is simpler than the physician's would be." The boy's account would be the simplest but not the truest. "The simplicity of a religion and the complexity of theology are not opposed to each other; and the contrast between the two is an essentially false and superficial one." But, setting aside theology, the simplicity of a religion cannot test its probable truth. "And in the case of natural religion, what is called simplicity is in general nothing more than vagueness. . . . The religion of the Catholic Church, however, as apart from its theology, is something far simpler than is supposed by the outside world; and there is not a point in it that has not a direct moral meaning for us, and is not calculated to have a direct effect on the spirit." The outside world can only reach all this through explanations, and the explanation is always far more complex than the apprehension of the thing itself; thus the outside world misjudges. It is so, for instance, with regard to the invocation of saints. The doctrine of purgatory, too, has long been a stumbling-block to the Protestant world, but the view men take of it is changing. "It is becoming fast recognised on all sides that it is the only doctrine that can bring a belief in future rewards and punishments into anything like accordance with our notions of what is just or reasonable, and, so far from its being a superfluous superstition, it will be seen to be just what is demanded at once by reason and morality; and a belief in it amounts not only to an intellectual assent, but to a harmonising and completion of the whole moral ideal. The same too will be found to hold true of the whole Catholic religion. . . . To sum up, then, if we would obtain a true view of Catholicism, we must begin by making a clean sweep of all the views that, as outsiders, we have been taught to entertain about her. We must, in the first place, learn to conceive of her as a living, spiritual body, as infallible and authoritative now as she ever was, with her eyes undimmed and her strength not abated; continuing to grow still as she has continued to grow hitherto; and the growth of the new dogmas that she may from time to time enunciate, we must learn to see are, from her standpoint, signs of life and not signs of corruption. And further, when we come to look into her more closely, we must separate carefully the diverse elements we find in her—her discipline, her pious opinions, her theology, and her religion." If she be fairly looked at in this way, and it be admitted that we belong to a spiritual world, and that we there are free and responsible agents, there will be no new difficulty encountered in admitting to the full the supernatural claims of Catholicism. The historical difficulty now alone remains to be considered, but it is impossible here to deal with it. "I do not underrate it; but I think others have overrated it. . . . Any apology for Romanism is to many a very distasteful thing; but such petulant and vulgar prejudice as this should never be given way to. The Roman

Church exists, and exists as a power in the world; and whether she be an enemy to be destroyed, or a saviour to be clung to, it is equally important that we should estimate her full strength. It is idle to waste our arguments and our sarcasm on Protestantism only. If we think that Christianity is false, and is doing an evil work in the world, let us meet it and combat it in its strongest and most coherent form. The Church will not shrink from these attacks. She will rather court them. Only see me, she says, what I really am, and then strike me as forcibly as you will or can."

THE CHURCH IN AMERICA.

(From the American letter of the Wellington *Chronicle*.)

THE progress of Roman Catholicism upon this Continent is one of the most phenomenal things upon record. For the first half of this century, and later, Catholicism was at a discount in the United States. The second generation of immigrants rarely remained true to the church. Now, all this is changed. Catholicism is an aggressive force, and numbers more converts than all other religious bodies put together. Two causes are credited with this result, perhaps three. The Catholic Hierarchy was well chosen, and counted in its ranks scholars and politicians of great piety and courtly manners. They concentrated their efforts in large centres of population, and surrounded themselves with clergy largely imbued with a missionary spirit—men of clean lives and pure manners. They founded schools and charities, and built splendid churches in most conspicuous places, in the very heart of American Protestantism. Their female schools and seminaries were especially well managed, and gradually gave tone to the richer classes who did not care to subject their daughters to the levelling method of the public schools. The poor were attracted by their munificent charities, the rich by their culture, refinement, and liberal views. Soon they extended from town to hamlet, until now the Catholic Church is indubitably the most active religious agency in America. No going back from the faith among the new-comers now; Catholicism is not the religion of the poor and uneducated, but rises above all other systems by its generous culture and attention to the wants of the poor. Of course this is the outline as men see it, and the Catholics from the old country are proud of the standing of their Church, and cling to it tenaciously. The third cause is found in the utter worldliness and insincerity of Protestant communions. If ever dry-rot may be said to have taken hold upon a religious system, then dry-rot has taken possession of the Protestantism of this country. It is without vitality or sympathy, and repels rather than attracts the masses. It is no exaggeration to say that were Jesus Christ to walk into one of our fashionable churches, just as he appeared in the temple, he would be expelled by the janitor lest he should soil the velvet cushions of the sanctuary raised for his worship. Protestantism, as a religious system, exists only for the rich in this country; and I am compelled to say that it bears fruit in season, judging by the plentiful crop of pious "high-toned" swindlers.

These general remarks lead me to mention the bankruptcy of Archbishop Purcell, the venerable Archbishop of Cincinnati. He has been so deeply humiliated that he has forwarded his resignation home. He founded a number of orphan asylums in Cincinnati, built a magnificent church, and built and endowed three large schools. Thousands of the poor and neglected had their daily bread there. But the Archbishop was not a financier. He became deeply involved in debt, and just when these charities were wanted most they utterly failed. He attempted too much. The work of a life-time was spoilt by failure at the close, and although an effort is being made to liquidate his debt by private subscription, the stigma of failure remains. I mention this, because the magnitude of the charities of the Catholic Church in Cincinnati is not greater in degree than in other cities. In New Orleans, for example, there are charities conducted by the Catholic Church which would do honour to any age or civilisation. But as many subjects, especially church structures and schools, are undertaken in faith, it follows that in dull years or periods of general stagnation, the funds will be short and failure or embarrassment ensue. The example of Archbishop Purcell should not be worthless. A little worldly wisdom, as a seasoning to faith, would not be without value in the administration of the American branch of the Catholic Church. Protestant churches are run on a business basis, and faith has no place in the calculation of those who manage them.

CELESTIAL SKILL.

THE skill displayed by the Chinese in carving ivory balls into each other has excited the wonder and admiration of Europeans. Nothing can afford a greater proof of patience and perseverance, as well as of the taste of a Chinese handicraftsman, than one of these elegant baubles, each ball being exquisitely carved, and no two alike in pattern. Each of these balls rolls freely within that which encloses it, and is visible through apertures, so that, however many there may be, the beauties of each may be examined and the number of the whole counted. The labor of two years is not unfrequently bestowed on the production of a single toy, which is formed out of a solid globe of ivory, and has no junction in any part. The outside of this globe is first carved in some very open pattern, and is then carefully cut with a fine, sharp instrument through the openings, until a complete coating is detached from the solid part inside, as the peel of an orange might be loosened with a scoop from the fruit without being taken off. One hollow ball is thus formed, with a solid ball inside of it. The surface of the inner ball is then carved through the interstices of the outer one, and, when finished, is subjected to the same operations as the first, and thus a second hollow ball is produced, still with a solid one of smaller dimensions inside. This process is repeated again and again, the difficulties increasing as the work proceeds, till at length a small ball, of the size of a marble, is left in the centre, which is also ornamented with figures cut upon it, and then the ingenious but useless bauble is completed. This process is said to be performed under water.—*Boston Herald*.