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*Catholic
Common
sense*



Rev. Albert Power, S.J.

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CATHOLIC COMMON SENSE

By REV. A. POWER, S.J.

IT has been often stated that Catholics never think for themselves in matters of religion; that by submitting to the Faith they enslave their intellect and give up their precious birthright of "freedom of thought," as it is called. They are supposed, seemingly, to have handed over their thinking powers to the Pope, and to be ready to accept unrepiningly and swallow unresistingly every dogmatic pill compounded for them in the recesses of the Vatican.

When G. K. Chesterton became a Catholic, a prominent English editor said that he, for his part, could never follow Chesterton's example, because no arguments whatever would ever persuade him to hand over his conscience to the keeping of the Pope. Statements like this from cultured, educated men make one rub one's Catholic eyes and ask oneself: Do these people really think that we are members of a vast, world-wide conspiracy for the suppression of truth; for the enslaving of the intellect and hindering its legitimate activity—a conspiracy which has successfully carried on its wicked machinations for some nineteen hundred years, and has actually managed to entangle in its meshes the vast majority of civilised people and the best and brightest intellects the world has ever known? And, what is still more startling, continues its nefarious career in the broad daylight of twentieth century civilisation, just as vigorous, just as audacious, just as unrepentant as ever? If they really believe this, it seems to me they are accepting as true something so monstrous and incredible that all the miracles which Catholics accept—and for accepting which they are denounced as superstitious—seem mere child's play in comparison.

But, of course, the Catholic Church does not ask her children to blind their intellects, or suppress their zeal for truth. She does not ask you to accept her claims without proof. She lays her credentials before you and begs you to bring to bear upon them all the light which history, logic, science, philosophy can supply; and then, when your *reason* approves of her claims—and not till then—submit to her

teaching authority. Now, is this an irrational mode of proceeding? Certainly, once you submit to the Church you assent to certain propositions (about divine things) which your own unaided reason could never discover or directly investigate. For example, you accept the doctrine of the Trinity, the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, the Infallibility of the Pope, the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, the Virgin Birth of Christ. But although you cannot actually test the truth of these doctrines directly and in themselves, yet you accept them on the authority of one who has the right to teach you about them, one whose authority you have, by careful investigation, found to be reliable.

But then, this is just the way in which you accept the greater part of your knowledge of history, geography, astronomy, and so on—namely, on the strength of some authority whose statements you trust. And in regard to many of the facts thus accepted, the testimony of others is absolutely the *only* way in which you can know them.

Historical Evidence

For example, I am convinced that Henry VIII once reigned as King of England. Why? Simply on the authority of historians and other writers whose testimony I trust. I have no other way of knowing the fact. I have never met Henry VIII, personally: nor am I aware of any means by which I can at present get into direct contact with him, wherever he may be. That is, I cannot *directly prove* that Henry VIII existed. Yet I accept his former existence as King of England as an absolutely certain truth.

Is this unreasonable? Am I cramping my intellect, or giving up my rights to "free thought," because I tie myself down to this dogmatic utterance: "Henry VIII was once King of England, and had six wives"? No, surely. For I do exercise my prerogative of free thought by examining carefully the authority of the historians and the documents that assert his existence. I convince myself by my own reasoning and without any undue influence from others that those authorities are sound and trustworthy; consequently,

I give up all doubt and accept with entire conviction the dogmatic utterances of historians about the English monarch.

Or take this case. Your health is not good—you want to get advice from an expert medical man. You make enquiries, study the evidence, and are at last convinced that a certain eminent specialist is a thoroughly reliable, skilful and conscientious doctor, and, being convinced, submit your case to him. He diagnoses your trouble, prescribes certain treatment, perhaps an operation, or else special diet and medicine, or an ocean trip; and you acquiesce quietly and without discussion both in his diagnosis and his remedies. You take the prescription he writes for you, which you yourself cannot make head or tail of; you have no idea what drugs are contained in it, and even if you did, you would not know the effects they might produce. Yet you get the prescription made up and swallow the concoction, calmly and without any dread of being poisoned, all in blind reliance on the competence and goodwill of Dr. X. Now, is all this unreasonable—I mean the putting yourself thus blindly into the hands of a stranger and accepting his pronouncements about your health as so many authoritative decisions, which you intellectually assent to and act upon without further discussion? Well, most people don't seem to think it unreasonable, for that is just the line of conduct they are following in every city of the world to-day.

And why is it not unreasonable thus to surrender or submit your intellect to another and accept his words in this blind way? Simply because your reason has convinced you that the man is trustworthy, is a highly-trained expert in medical matters, knows what he is talking about, and is genuine in his desire to deal honestly and truthfully by you. Consequently you trust him! All the rest—diagnosis, prescription, remedies—you accept as a matter of course.

Now this is just the very process one goes through in acknowledging the authority of the Church and accepting her teaching with unhesitating faith. By our own reason we examine her credentials. We test and probe and criticise and enquire, until we are convinced of the soundness of her claim to be an expert in matters of religion—a duly qualified

physician of souls who can supply effective remedies for our spiritual ailments; and once convinced that she is genuine, we trust ourselves to her guidance and submit to her rule without further misgiving.

The Road from Reason to Faith

I do not, of course, wish to imply that such a logical process is the road by which Catholics—that is, those who are born Catholics—ordinarily acquire their first religious convictions. Knowledge of the truths of faith, like other knowledge, comes in the first place from parents or teachers. It is at his mother's knee the Catholic child learns to believe in the Church as "the pillar and ground of truth," and he will usually have already accepted all the Catholic doctrines before he begins to reflect on and examine his ultimate reasons for doing so. But when he does begin to enquire, his reasoning will run along the lines indicated. Now, let us see more in detail the steps of the process whereby a man may work his way to the conclusion that Catholicism is the true religion—just as he may work his way by study and weighing of evidence to the conclusion that William the Norman invaded England in 1066, or Captain Cook discovered Botany Bay in 1770.

I suggest the following steps as indicating the ordinary method by which the argument proceeds; and remember that these steps or propositions are all to be examined, sifted, and established by ordinary reasoning, apart from any act of religious faith; just as a judge or jury will weigh and examine the evidence placed before them in order to reach a verdict.

First then (and to begin at the very beginning), we know by the light of reason that God exists, Creator of the universe and of our own souls.

Secondly: We are bound (by natural law) to show Him respect, obedience, and service; that is, we are bound to practise religion.

Thirdly: A part of the reverence and submission we owe

to God is to accept His statements—in case He should make any to us.

Fourthly: It is neither impossible nor improbable that God should communicate with mankind and deliver to them certain truths and commands, and should make it quite clear that they proceed from Him.

Fifthly: As a matter of historical fact such divine communications have taken place in the past especially through Jesus of Nazareth.

Sixthly: Jesus of Nazareth was a true Prophet of God—divinely empowered to teach men religious truth.

Seventhly: Jesus claimed to be Himself a Divine Person, and His claim was justified.

Eighthly: He founded a teaching organisation which was to be world-wide in its scope and was to last for all time.

Ninthly: That organisation still exists in the world, and is called the Catholic Church.

The first four of these propositions—about God's existence, the duty of worship, the possibility of Divine Revelation—may, perhaps, for most people be quite obvious, and in no need of proof; but others will wish to have the reasons for them set forth with some fulness—and that is what we now propose to do. In Catholic schools of philosophy and theology these matters are gone into fully and with the most minute care. Every Catholic Priest before his ordination must spend several years studying these questions. The output of books upon them, especially in Latin, is enormous. The policy of the Catholic Church is not a hush-hush policy. She has no desire to shirk difficulties or throw dust in the eyes of her students. To us it is sometimes amusing enough to watch the proceedings of certain people who are anxious to have a tilt at religion. They bring out as a new and original idea some difficulty or other about God's providence, miracles, free-will, etc., which is really as old as the hills. It amuses us because we remember in our seminary days discussing these very problems, wrangling for hours over them in class and out. And we always remember that they were discussed by St. Thomas Aquinas seven hundred years ago, or by St. Augustine eight hundred years earlier still. Yet to

these modern opponents of religion, who are often quite ignorant of history, especially of the history of Christian thought, the difficulties seem something quite new and original.

Intellectual Difficulties

But this is a digression. Let us now go back to our propositions. Before making any attempt to set forth arguments it **may be well** to say a word about the difficulties we may meet on the road. One must not be too much frightened by difficulties—I mean intellectual difficulties—in connection with religion. Experience shows that when you start reasoning in any serious way about the world or anything in it, you find yourself very quickly face to face with “mysteries” which you cannot explain. We are in daily contact with and **constantly speaking** about such things as motion, time, gravity, space, electricity, life, thought, personality; yet no man can define or properly explain what these things are, though they enter so incessantly into our daily life. But the fact that they are mysteries and difficult to understand does not lead us to doubt their existence.

Astronomy tells us of the amazing, unthinkable distances of the so-called fixed stars, and informs us that light, in order to reach us, must travel from those stars, perhaps for hundreds or thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of years, seemingly without diminution or loss. This ceaseless journeying of light through space, is a scientifically ascertained fact, admitted by all. Yet how it takes place, no man can tell.

Theories of light have been propounded—such as the wave or undulatory theory. According to this theory, light is a tiny wave or disturbance or strain produced in the ether, and travelling at the enormous speed of 180,000 miles per second—that is, about a million miles in six seconds. On the other hand, Professor Einstein and the supporters of relativity deny the existence of ether, and, consequently, deny also that light travels in waves, and they propose another explanation far too difficult to enter into here. In fact, the

impression many people get when they first hear it propounded is that it is quite unintelligible. At any rate, it is only a theory; and we can say quite simply that the nature of light is still an unsolved mystery—its existence still surrounded with difficulties. Yet the fact of the existence of light surely no one who is blest with eyesight will deny.

Now this principle—that an absolutely certain fact may be encompassed with insoluble difficulties—**must be kept in mind** when dealing with religious truths. The existence of God is the most fundamental as well as the **most certain** of all doctrine—and yet it is the one most surrounded by mysteries.

Cardinal Newman

Cardinal Newman, in his “Apologia,” has a famous passage dealing with this matter, of which I will quote a few lines:—

Many persons are very sensitive of the difficulties of religion. I am as sensitive of them as anyone, but I have never been able to see a connection between apprehending these difficulties, however keenly, and multiplying them to any extent, and, on the other hand, **doubting** the doctrines to which they are attached. Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt, as I understand the subject: difficulty and doubt are incommensurate. A man may be annoyed that he cannot work out a mathematical problem, of which the answer is, or is not, given to him, without doubting that it admits the answer. Of all points of faith, the being of a God is, to my apprehension, encompassed with most difficulty, and yet borne in upon our minds with most power.

Thus far Cardinal Newman in his own incomparable style. Remark his words: “Ten thousand difficulties do not make one doubt.” Let us illustrate this by one or two examples: Suppose you send me a letter containing some sentences which I cannot understand, no matter how I puzzle over them. These passages constitute a difficulty which I cannot solve. But they in no way lead me to doubt that you wrote the letter. The handwriting and other circumstances make me quite certain of your authorship. Or again, suppose you are my superior officer in war time. You issue an order which

seems to me unreasonable. I do not see why this order is given; to me it seems likely to lead to disaster. But do I for a moment doubt the fact that you issued the order, even though I can't explain why you issued it? Here again you see all my difficulties about the *nature* of the event do not constitute the least doubt as to the truth or reality of it.

So in like manner a man may have serious difficulties about God's providence, the existence of evil, the moral state of the world, and find himself hopelessly unable to explain these and other aspects of the universe, without being in any way led to doubt either the existence of God or the reality of His providence over mankind. It was such difficulties Cardinal Newman referred to when he wrote in the passage quoted above: "Of all points of faith, the being of a God is encompassed with most difficulty, and yet borne in upon our minds with most power." For he says a little later on:—

The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living, busy world and see no reflection of its Creator. This is to me one of those great difficulties of this absolute primary truth to which I referred just now.

Then he goes on, in a passage of great power, to describe the chaotic state of mankind—the moral degradation and sufferings of the human race, and the endless tangle of insoluble problems of which life is so full, and which press so heavily upon the heart of any man whose thoughts are bent on higher things.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN

Christianity claims to be a revealed religion; that is, it holds that the special doctrines it teaches—the special message it has to deliver—have been received from God by Divine Revelation.

The word "Revelation" is from the Latin *revelare*, to unveil, to disclose hence to communicate information, especially information hitherto withheld or inaccessible. The

word is used both in a strict and a wider sense. Strictly speaking, Revelation means communicating information through a *formal statement in words*, whether spoken or written. In a wider sense, it means giving knowledge about oneself in some other way—for example, by one's external conduct—or the works one produces. Hence, we say that a man's character is *revealed* by the way he dresses, the company he frequents, the pastimes he indulges in, the books he reads. For it is the prerogative of an intellectual being to stamp its own likeness on everything it handles or shapes to its use. Hence, the building reveals the soul of the architect, the poem the quality of the poet's mind; your own handwriting is a record from which experts can judge your character.

Now, in this wider sense God reveals Himself to us in the Universe, just as the artist in the works of his hands. The Universe is the poem God has written—the picture He has painted—the music He has composed—the palace He has built; and by studying that great work of art we learn something of the qualities and attributes of the Artist Mind that planned and produced it. In other words, God is *revealed* to us through His Creation; and this is what is called Natural Revelation.

When we gaze out upon this vast panorama of Being around us, three qualities specially impress themselves—Beauty, Strength and seeming Infinitude. That is, we recognise in the Universe marvellous order and beauty; we see incalculable forces at play there, and in extent it is apparently boundless. Man with all his efforts, can find no limit to it.

Need we prove that the Universe is beautiful? Ask the artists whose whole ambition is to reproduce in colour or marble or music some dim reflection of the loveliness that fascinates them when they gaze on the world around them. Ask the poet, lost in ecstasy at the enchanting vision of earth and sea and sky, and telling in rapturous words the glory of that vision. Yes, the world is beautiful—so exceedingly beautiful that men become enamoured of it, pour out their hearts upon it, and forget the Creator who spread it out be-

fore their eyes. They are so fascinated by the gift that they cease to worship the Giver; as if a bride should fall in love with the diamond ring bestowed upon her by her lover and for the sake of the glittering jewel forget him of whose love it is a token.

Now, why is the world beautiful? Because it reflects something of the infinite beauty of the Artist Mind that planned it. So the old Hebrew Psalmist understood when he sang: "The Heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

The Wheeling Universe

In the second place, think of the incredible forces at play in this vast workshop of a Universe. This planet on which we live is racing along in its orbit round the sun at the rate of about nineteen miles per second. That is a speed we can hardly conceive. The record speed for a motor-car is about four miles per minute; for an aeroplane about six miles per minute.* Now, nineteen miles per *minute* would be three times as fast, and nineteen miles per *second* means sixty times as fast again. Think of the force required to propel the earth through space at that enormous velocity—twenty times faster than the fastest cannon-ball. Yet, what is the earth compared with the sun—that huge bonfire of blazing chemicals nearly a million miles in diameter—which sends off heat to such an extent that it is calculated to be losing weight at the rate of two hundred and fifty million tons per minute, or thirty-six thousand million tons daily. Recent science conjures that the temperature of the interior of the sun must be about thirty million degrees Fahrenheit. Sir James Jeans states that this heat is so great that a small pinhead of matter raised to that temperature would burn to a cinder everything and everybody within a radius of a thousand miles! Yet, the sun is just one rather ordinary star in the midst of a blazing Universe of stars, some of which are four or five hundred times as large as the sun.

* These figures relate to circa 1930-32.

Think, then, of the forces at work around us, and of the omnipotence of Him Who called these forces into being and controls and guides them to certain definite ends, just as surely as the pilot on a great ocean liner controls the movements of the vessel and brings her gently to rest at the harbour pier.

Infinitude

And then the limitless extent of the Universe—the third quality mentioned above! Who can fathom the depths of that glittering ocean into which we gaze at night, on which we are all adrift, rushing at incredible speed towards some unknown destination? Scientists have sought to plumb those depths with their instruments, but all in vain. The larger and more perfect the telescope that is used, the more numerous and endless the stars appear to be. Photography has been brought into play, and the piercing eye of the sensitised plate, along with the spectroscope, have probed the mysteries of the sky more effectively than any other instruments devised by man, and the result is the same—to leave us gasping with amazement at the seeing infinitude of the material Universe.

I once saw in a museum a model constructed to convey some notion of the distance of the nearest so-called fixed star—that is, the star or sun that is nearest in space to our solar system. This star is Alph Centauri, one of the "pointers" of the Southern Cross, the bright constellation of the Southern hemisphere. This star is so distant that its light, travelling at the rate of 180 thousand miles per second, takes about four years to reach us. Now, the model was this: At one end of a large hall the earth was represented by a tiny globe the size of a boy's marble, the moon by a bead placed four inches from the globe. That is, four inches on the model represented the quarter of a million miles that actually separate the moon from us. On the same scale, the sun is represented by a large golden ball 125 feet away at the other end of the hall. This 125 feet represented 90 million miles—our distance from the sun. Close by there was a printed placard

stating where Alph Centauri—the nearest star—would be on the same scale—namely, in *California*, 6,000 miles away. So you see the solar system—the sun and all his planets—have plenty of room to tumble about in without danger of collision with their nearest neighbour! There is as little risk of such a collision as there is of a dog playing in a suburban garden in Dublin colliding with the Town Hall of San Francisco! Thus, the Universe, by its vastness, gives us a hint of the infinitude of God.

The Evidence of Mind

I will now ask you to use the wings of fancy and take your stand beside one of those great machines that are the triumph of modern engineering skill—say, a motor-car of the newest type, or a monster steam locomotive, or a great printing-press. What is the explanation of such a machine? The answer is: Man's intellect. There is *one* force, and *only one* force, in the world capable of producing a motor-car, a railway engine, or a printing-press, just as there is only one force that is capable of composing a poem, painting a picture, or building a cathedral, and that force is *man's thinking soul*. And the greater and the more complicated the machine or work produced, the more we recognise and admire the skill and power of the *mind* that planned it.

Now, what would you say if a person were to argue thus: When a machine becomes very large and very complicated, it does not require a planning and constructive mind to explain it—it explains itself; a boy's toy-boat may need a clever workman to make it, but the great liners that carry the mails across the ocean, just because they are so vast, are more independent and stand less in need of a human mind to plan and construct them? You would, of course, call that a very ridiculous way of arguing; yet, in reality, that is just the way in which many infidels have argued when doubting or denying the existence of God. The Universe, after all, is like a great and infinitely complicated machine, with endless revolving wheels and interlacing parts, dependent each on each. We, petty men, peep about amidst the whirr and racing

motion of that vast engine and try to discover the principle on which it works—the secret of its revolutions.

And yet there are people who, although they would regard as ridiculous the idea of a machine like a motor-car coming into existence by chance and of its own accord, do actually assert that the Universe, which exhibits far more evidence of design than any man-made machine, has somehow come into being and evolved itself without any guiding intellect whatever. When a man speaks thus, surely he is contradicting reason and taking up a position which violates all the laws of thought. In plain words, he is talking nonsense.

The Rights of Reason

After all, reason is our only safeguard—in this as in all other matters. When I assert that intellect produces order—that intellect is capable of constructing delicate instruments and complicated machinery—I am stating an evident fact known to all from daily experience. But if I assert that such instruments or complicated machinery may come into being of their own accord and without the guidance of intellect, whether the machine is a fountain-pen, an aeroplane, a living organism, or a whole Universe (since size makes no difference), I am making a wild assertion, which flies in the face of reason and common sense, and is contrary to every piece of evidence which we can possibly appeal to.

A Thinking Cog

Perhaps I may illustrate the matter thus: Think of one of the machines just referred to—say a motor-car. Now, imagine that one small piece of its mechanism—let us say, the cog of a wheel—becomes suddenly endowed with reason and the power of thinking, and, looking round its little universe, finds itself fulfilling a certain definite but limited function in the general car scheme. The sphere of its activity is circumscribed—it pursues a fixed round outside of which it cannot go. But, looking forth from its position, it can watch the general march of events, and sets to work to

solve, if possible, the problem of motor-car action; and by constant observation finally unravels the process whereby a certain operation in the sparking-plug and carburettor develops energy which, in the end, causes the wheels to revolve and the car to move. By vigorously using its little iron head, this enterprising cog has now achieved that knowledge of the mechanism of the car which you or I might acquire by studying the matter. But when it has got hold of that knowledge, there still remains a problem which it has not even touched: *How did all this mechanism come into being?* By whom was it all so arranged as to secure such splendid rapidity and smoothness of movement? Such a line of investigation might lead the inquisitive cog to make the acquaintance, let us say, of Henry Ford, and find in his busy brain the ultimate and satisfying explanation of the car.

Applying the Parable

Now to apply this parable. The great Universe around us is a vast machine, in which we are very tiny parts—cogs of a wheel, if you like, but *thinking* cogs—confined in our physical movements to one small globe that is like an insignificant wheel in the whirling cosmos around us. But, although thus circumscribed in our movements, we have a capacity for looking out and exploring the nature and working of the machine of which we form a part; and the knowledge resulting from these investigations constitutes what we call Physical Science. This science gives us a more or less accurate (though inadequate) knowledge of the machine and its operations and the interdependence of its parts.

But when we have acquired all the *scientific* knowledge possible about *how* the Universe works, there still remains the question: Who pieced it all together? Who so planned and arranged all its parts that they work with such accuracy and smoothness? To this question only *one* rational answer has ever been given, viz.: *An intelligent Being is responsible for the order of the Universe, and that intelligent Being is God.*

To leave out God in our efforts to solve the riddle of the

Universe is like leaving out *man* when trying to explain the existence of the motor-car. Of course, a man may be interested merely in finding out how the car works without bothering about its inventor; but if he wishes to get a complete and final explanation of the car he must not stop till he gets back to the mind that planned it.

So if you want a final explanation of the Universe you cannot rest satisfied with mere mechanical theories (such as Evolution). You must reach a thinking, planning Intellect behind it all; only then will your Reason be satisfied.

Difficulties

Certain difficulties or objections are sometimes brought against this argument. I will briefly touch on one or two. The first is that there is so much evil—both physical and moral—in the world that we cannot ascribe the Universe to a wise, intelligent Being.

Now, of course, the existence of evil is a problem that weighs heavily on everyone, and we hope later on to go into this subject and discuss solutions of the problem. I am here concerned with it merely as an objection against the Argument from Design.

And surely it is amazing that anyone should urge the fact that there are aspects of the Universe which we cannot explain, as an argument against its having an Intelligent Creator! It is like this: Suppose you buy a new typewriter, and discover what seem to be defects in its construction. Do you immediately say: "This typewriter cannot be the work of an intelligent person"? You may be quite unable to explain how these seeming defects come to be there, but you will not dream for a moment of saying that it had *no* maker, and that the typewriter made itself or came into existence by chance.

So, in like manner, even if I am unable to explain satisfactorily why there is so much evil in the world or so much suffering, and even if other aspects of creation puzzle me hopelessly, that does not lead me to deny the existence of an Intelligent Creator; nor will I be so insane as to describe

this radiant home of light and beauty as the outcome of the blind dance of an infinite ocean of atoms, racing eternally through the void, and by their casual collision producing all things that exist, including the brain of a Da Vinci, a Shakespeare, or a Napoleon. Yet that is the amazing, fantastic theory developed and defended in sonorous hexameters by the atheistical Roman poet, Lucretius, in his work on the Nature of Things, and borrowed from him by later materialistic philosophers.

Again, in modern times one hears the statement sometimes made that by means of Evolution we can explain the Universe without God. (So, e.g., Haeckel.) But Evolution, even if true, does nothing more than describe the process whereby one thing develops from another, growing all the while more perfect, more complicated, and climbing higher in the scale of things. But it offers no explanation as to *why* or *how* such development should take place at all. The acorn evolves into an oak tree; and if you ask me to say how this oak tree comes to be in existence, I point to the acorn as the explanation. Very good. But is that all? What about the acorn itself? Does it need no explanation? Suppose Evolution were true, and that the Universe has reached its present state through a gradual process of development from lower to higher—from the simpler to the more highly organised forms of existence; then it is like a huge oak tree evolving from a primeval acorn. But what about that primeval acorn itself—fiery nebula, or chaos, or whatever other name you like to give it? Whence did it derive the amazing power of thus gradually evolving into the myriad forms of being that surround us to-day in the Universe?

That is a question which modern science will not even tackle, and to which it has no answer to give; it is a question to which no answer can be given except the one which we maintain and which Reason approves—namely, that the final explanation is God, the self-existent Creator.

CALLING PLAIN CHRISTIANS

by FATHER OLIVER, O.Cist.

(Mount St. Joseph's, Roscrea).

This little book (Cr. 8vo., 68pp., paper cover) is, according to the author, "a very ordinary one," addressed to what, for want of a better phrase are called "ordinary souls." The definition of "Ordinary souls" is "ordinary people"—not those who have devoted their lives to the service of God in the priesthood or religion. In short, the book is addressed to the laity; the ordinary laity, not the tertiary (though many tertiaries will benefit by it): its purpose is to tell them how to pray in the midst of the tear and toil of existence.

Father Oliver's breezy, sympathetic style will be appreciated by those whom he is addressing.

The book is uniform in format with "The Science of Love," and is sold at 1/-.

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