

227 pp. By J. W. W. - 1850
227 " " " " - 1849

THE
MERCERSBURG REVIEW.

JANUARY, 1850.

VOL. II.—NO. I.

THE NEW CREATION IN CHRIST.

THERE are many valuable thoughts in the article of Prof. Schaff, though some of his declarations seem to us to savor of the transcendental. The affirmation he makes that "the Lord is perpetually born anew in the hearts of believers," sounds strangely to our ears. That his image is created there is indeed true, but that the Lord is born there, is not the teaching of the Bible. Again: "The commencement," he says, "of Church History, is strictly the incarnation of the Son of God, or the entrance of the new principle of light and life into humanity." The incarnation of the Son of God is plain enough, but what is this "new principle of light and life?" And what "new principle" has there been in humanity since the incarnation, that was not in it before that event.—*N. Y. Observer*, Sept. 8, 1848.

THIS paragraph occurs in a short notice of the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for August, the first article of which is a masterly Introduction to Church History from Prof. Schaff. It is significantly characteristic of the system of thinking it represents, and furnishes fit occasion, in such view, for a few remarks.

Here is some approach to a determination of what we are to understand by that most ambiguous term "*transcendentalism*," in the popular vocabulary. It savors of the transcendental, we are told, to say that "the Lord is perpetually born anew in the hearts of believers," or that the mystery of the incarnation in-

VOL. II.—NO. I. • 1

BROWNSON'S QUARTERLY REVIEW.

WE are not among those who consider O. A. Brownson, Esq., a mere weathercock in religion, whose numerous changes of faith are sufficient of themselves to convict his last position of falsehood and folly. We can see easily enough in all his variations, a principle of steady motion in the same general direction. He started on one extreme, only to be carried over by regular gradation finally to another. Unitarianism and Romanism are the contrary poles of Christianity, freedom and authority, the liberty of the individual subject and the binding force of the universal object, carried out each, by violent disjunction from the other, into nerveless pantomime and sham. Thus seemingly far apart, however, they are in reality always closely related; just as all extremes, by the force of their own falsehood, have an innate tendency to react, pendulum-wise, into the very opposites from which they seem to fly. Hence, the familiar observation, that Romanism in many cases leads to rationalism and infidelity. In bursting the bonds of mere blind authority, a Ronge has no power to stop in true Protestantism, but swings clear over into the dark void of full unbelief. So it is not unnatural, on the other side, that Rationalism should lead the way occasionally to popery and superstition. This transition we see exemplified in the case of Mr. Brownson. He himself, indeed, speaks of his conversion at times, as if it had come upon him by a sort of miracle, without any such preparation in his previous life. But it is easy enough to see that such was not the case. Forced to feel the hollowness of the ground on which he first stood, his mind had been for years before seeking some better settlement, by a succession of experiments, which, though not, of course, to his own consciousness, yet in truth and in fact, looked all along towards the full spiritual somerset, in which they came at length to an end. That they reached this end finally, instead of stopping in some intermediate position, was owing in his case, not to the levity and inconstancy of his mind, but to its earnestness rather and logical severity. We should be very sorry to consider him here the counterpart simply of the infamous Ronge. As a general thing, we may say, it requires far more earnestness to pass from rationalism to popery, than it does to make a like transition from popery to rationalism; and it must ever argue a most vitiated state of religious feeling, where the second case is regarded with more toleration and respect than the first; where the conversion of a Ronge,

for instance, is glorified as the triumph of reason and truth, while the conversion of a Brownson is resolved into sheer dishonesty and caprice. Had the last seen proper to bring his wanderings to an end in Orthodox Congregationalism, in Presbyterianism, in old Lutheranism, or in Protestant Episcopacy, his mutability in either case, *thus far*, would have seemed consistent and rational enough, at least within the bosom of his chosen communion. And yet it was simply because he was more consistent and rational than multitudes in these several positions, that he could *not* thus pause in his movement, but found it necessary to leave them all behind, and to seek shelter for his wearied spirit in the bosom of Rome. We mean not by this, that others may not occupy in good faith such intermediate ground, without having been brought to surmount in their own minds the inward difficulty which made this impossible for Mr. Brownson. They may do so, just because they have never come to be sensible at all of the antagonistic powers out of which the difficulty springs. Let the true nature of this antagonism come to be felt, and their position will be found at the same time to involve a contradiction, out of which, with their reigning principle of religion, they can make no rational escape. So it was in the mind of Mr. Brownson. The very principle which led him to renounce Unitarianism, made it impossible for him to stop short of Romanism. With less light in his understanding, or less firmness in his will, he might have forced it to come to a halt somewhere between. But this would have been for him error only and not truth. The case demanded, for its right solution, a new religious principle and theory altogether. Without this, he felt himself shut up to the alternative already mentioned. He could not be a Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, or Episcopalian. He must be either a Rationalist or a Romanist. Had it been possible, he might have liked to be at once both; but as the case could not allow this, he made up his mind finally to bow as he best could to the authority of the Pope. In all this, as we have said, we find no occasion for disparagement or contempt. Our condemnation, rather, is mingled with respect. We reverence earnestness and moral courage, wherever they may come in our way; and we know not that they are more entitled to such homage in the form of perpetual stability and sameness, than they are in the form of necessary revolution and change. Calvin and Melancthon are both great, the one in the uniformity, the other in the fluctuations, of his faith. It is neither by moving, nor by standing still, that men prove the worth of their religion. A faith which has never found occasion to stir an inch from its first moorings, *may be* of far less

value than that which has been carried by wind and wave to a wholly different shore. Nay, even a bad faith, in this view, may be entitled to greater regard, than a faith which is in form more sound; on the well known principle, that a living dog is better than a dead lion.

We are not among those again, who look upon Mr. Brownson's championship of Romanism as either weak or of small account. It is vain to affect, as some do, a supercilious contempt for it, in this view. His mind is naturally of a very acute and strong character; and long, earnest and vigorous exercise has served to clothe it with a measure of dialectical agility and power, such as we rarely meet with on the field at least of our American theology. His reading evidently is extensive and varied; though he is not free from the infirmity, we think, of passing it off frequently, in an indirect way, for something more than its actual worth. He allows himself, for instance, to refer at times, to the German philosophers and theologians, as if he were perfectly at home in their speculations; whereas we have never met with any evidence of his having any more thorough acquaintance with them after all, than that second-hand information which is to be had through the medium of a foreign literature, particularly that of modern France. On the contrary it is sufficiently clear, that he has *not* by any means mastered the best and most profound results of the later German thought; he makes no proper account of the history through which it has passed; affects, indeed, to make light of all history, as applied to the progress of philosophy; and shows himself at fault especially, where the discipline of this thought precisely should come to his help, or, at all events, be intelligently refused, if found wanting, and not merely waved with magisterial hand to the one side. After every necessary drawback, however, in this way, there can be no question of Mr. Brownson's actual knowledge, as going in the walks of philosophy and history, quite beyond the measure of our reigning American education. He is well fitted thus for taking the lead in this country, as a defender of the Roman faith; not because of his having been trained to the science of it in the usual way; for he acknowledges himself that no such study went before his conversion; but in virtue of his general Protestant training, his familiarity with American life, and the dexterity with which, as a practised athlete, he is able to throw his whole strength now into the direction of this new creed. There is a freshness and force in this way in his polemics, which they could not so well possess, perhaps, under any different form. However superior the drilled generalship of a Möhler may be for the theological atmosphere

of Germany, or that of a Wiseman for the ecclesiastical relations of England, it may be doubted whether either of them is as well prepared as Mr. Brownson for carrying the war home to the special habit of thought that prevails with Protestantism on this side of the Atlantic. He is a born Puritan, steeped by education in the element of New England life; the first, probably, who, with anything like the same amount of intellectual culture, has made the transition to Romanism from this most uncatholic coast. He is intimately familiar thus with Puritan modes of thought and forms of life, and is able to take direct account of them continually in the management of his own cause. He deals with Protestantism mainly, as he finds it living and working, at the present time, in these United States, though not without an eye always to its condition and character also in other countries. His Review altogether, for one who is prepared to take any real interest in theology and the Church, must be felt to carry with it more than common weight and force; with all its scholastic subtleties and offensive dogmatism, is possessed of much vivacity and point; and is far more readable, it must be confessed, than a large proportion of our current controversy on the opposite side.

It is just one of the miseries of our fashionable pseudo-protestantism, that it legitimates and accepts so readily every sort of polemical assault upon Rome, without proof or examination; as though it were the easiest thing in the world, to fight this battle to purpose; in consequence of which, we are flooded here with more insipid trash, in the name of religious argument, than is to be met with probably in any other quarter. It is with a most wretched grace, that such easy literature, whether figuring in the newspaper, catch-penny book, rostrum, or pulpit, allows itself to overlook and despise the vigorous pen of such a man as Brownson, as though it were a flourish of mere empty words and nothing more. There is nothing gained in the end, but much lost, rather, by such imbecile self-conceit. Over against its blind though proud pretensions, it is no wonder that true learning on the other side should be excited at times to indignant scorn. Mr. Brownson has full right to retort on this spirit, as he often does with withering sarcasm, its own commonplace charges against Romanism. It will not reason; it sets all logic at defiance; it shrinks from the light; it goes blindly and dumbly by its own tradition; it substitutes cant for argument and thought; it turns the Bible into a nose of wax, to suit its own taste; it plays pope as fully as though it were itself the bearer of the triple crown, and held all the thunders of the vatican in its hand. As compared with a very large amount of our popular literature against

Popery in this form, we are constrained to admit, however humiliating the confession may be, that the Review before us bears away the palm completely, as regards both dignity and strength.

It is not unnatural, that Mr. Brownson himself, with such sense as he must have necessarily of his own superiority to the false Protestantism now noticed, (which he of course is very ready to accept also, as the only proper representative of Protestantism in its true form,) should feel his championship of the Roman faith to be of more than ordinary account. He takes pains, it is true, to speak very modestly and humbly of his own deserts; as though he felt himself to be a learner only in this school, and had no right to open his lips in any other capacity. But it is still plain enough, through all this show, that he secretly considers himself notwithstanding, to be something of a giant in the Protestant controversy, and has good hopes of making himself appear so also to others. His tone is bold, confident, overbearing and harsh. He moves throughout with the air of a man, who takes himself to be thoroughly master both of his own cause, and of that of all his opponents besides.¹ He deals his blows like a conscious Hercules, sent forth on divine errand to reform the world. And what is of still more account in the case, his mission in this view seems to receive, not doubtfully, the approbation and sanction of the Church of which he has now become so zealous and dutiful a son. His conversion is counted an important gain, with that of Hurter and Newman, we may well suppose, throughout the Roman world. At all events, it is felt to form a sort of epoch for Romanism in America. Already he has succeeded in gaining fully, as it would appear, the confidence of his ecclesiastical superiors in this country; and neophyte and layman though he be,

¹ Mr. B. is fond of appealing to his own past history and experience, in a way that shows he has not lost the sense of his personal importance towards the world, however much of a child he may feel himself in the arms of the Church. He takes it for granted always, that he has made the whole circle of Protestant knowledge, and has no need to go beyond himself to understand any question here thrown in his way. "Think you that we," he exclaims, "who, according to your own story, have tried every form of Protestantism, and disputed every inch of Protestant ground, would ever have left the ranks of Protestantism in which we were born, and under whose banner we had fought so long and suffered so much, if there had been any other alternative for us."—*July, 1846, p. 386.* Prof Park, Emerson, Neander, Newman, Schaff, Bushnell, &c., in their most profound attempts to get at the intrinsic reason of things, simply go over ground which was familiar long since to his feet, but which a logic still deeper than theirs compelled him afterwards again to abandon.—*Oct. 1845, p. 511, p. 546.*—*Jan. 1847, p. 84.*—*April, 1847, p. 276.*—*Oct. 1849, p. 497.*

is counted worthy to take a foremost place among the expounders and defenders of the Roman faith. At the close of the late Council in Baltimore, through the suggestion of Bishop Kenrick, of Philadelphia, a brief note was addressed to Mr. Brownson, signed by both the archbishops and twenty-three bishops, for the purpose of seconding and encouraging his literary labors in defence of his newly adopted creed, of which he is acknowledged to have proved himself an able and intrepid advocate. This, it must be confessed, is no ordinary recommendation. Coming from such a quarter, and under such a form, it carries with it peculiar significance and force. No wonder that Mr. Brownson should be pleased with it, and thank the prelates "again and again for their act of unexpected and spontaneous kindness." It is, in truth, a solemn *imprimatur* affixed to his Review, by the universal Roman Catholic Church in America; which, of course, in such view, well deserves the attention also of those who stand on the outside of this Church and seek only its destruction. "No higher testimonial could be asked," says the happy editor, "and no higher, out of Rome, could be given; and to say we are grateful, is to say nothing. We thank the eminent prelate who drew up the letter, and each and all of the illustrious Archbishops and Bishops who generously signed it, and gave us their approbation and a pledge of their support. It was more than we deserved, more than we can deserve, more than any editor can deserve; but we will do our best not to make them regret their generous act. We should be oppressed with their approbation, did we not know that whatever merits this journal may have, as a Catholic journal, they are due not to us, but principally to the distinguished Bishop of this diocese, and his learned and venerable clergy, who have always been ready to instruct our ignorance, and to advise and direct us in the course proper for such a journal to pursue, and in the proper views to be taken of the several important theological questions we have discussed. To them pertain the merits of the Review; to us alone its faults and imperfections, which we hope will diminish with time and experience."—*July, 1849, p. 412.*

This extract goes to illustrate both sides of the relation, which it brings ostentatiously into view. The favor of the reigning priesthood is conditioned and reciprocated, by the unlimited obedience that is found basking in its sunshine. Mr. Brownson makes a point of being, in this respect, a Roman of the Romans, with whom no half-way measures can go down. His theory, from the start, is a sort of violent protestation against Protestantism, the absolute negative of all that this affirms, by which he

holds himself bound to part with his own independence altogether in matters of religion, and place his faith submissively in the hands of the Church, as an outward authority ordained of God for such purpose. The alternative with him is, law from within or law from without; one *or* the other, and one always so as to exclude the other; and having satisfied himself that the first, in such abstract view, runs out inevitably into rationalism and nihility, he considers himself shut up to the necessity of accepting the opposite rule, as the only form in which it is possible to have part at all in a really supernatural religion. To this necessity, thus apprehended as a law of logic merely, Mr. Brownson, wearied and worn out with his own long attempt to find bottom in the miserable bog of a churchless independency, holds himself now bound, it would seem, as a rational man, to bring all his powers into subjection, cost what it may in any other view. Such an outward authority of the Church being granted to hold in any form as the necessary medium of faith, it follows plainly enough that the best claim to it lies with the Church of Rome. He is the best Christian, then, who most resolutely brings both his reason and will into captivity to the authority of this Church, as it is found embodied from age to age in the voice of its hierarchy. Having reached this conclusion, Mr. Brownson seems resolved to follow it to the death. He feels rightly enough, that if it be good for anything at all, it must be good for everything; as a well built arch is only made more firm and strong, by piling new weight upon its shoulders; and he is determined, accordingly, to let the world see that he has confidence in his own logic, and power also to bend his New England nature to its iron requisitions. As he tells us himself somewhere, his soul recoils from the mortal sin of being inconsequent, or holding premises which he is not prepared to follow out to their natural and necessary end. Has it become thus a maxim of reason with him, to obey with unquestioning faith the Roman Church? He will be *rational* then in such style, to the full end of the chapter. He will allow no sort of compromise with any rule besides. He will play the very *Yankee* himself in this new game; he will be a Puritan Romanist; making a king still of his own mind, and wilfully forcing his very will itself, to fall in with the new theory of faith he is thus brought to embrace. He will abjure philosophy in religion, and take all in the way simply of authority. It shall be his reason here to silence reasoning, and his will to have no freedom whatever. Thus firmly set in his own mind to follow out his new principle at all hazards, Mr. Brownson has had no trouble apparently in complying with even its

most extreme demands. He is at once a very ultramontanist, a downright Italian, in the plenitude of his obedience and faith, who can swallow even a camel, if need be, in the way of edifying example to less vigorous believers. Not content to affirm the infallibility of the Roman Church, he is willing to lodge this divine attribute, without farther ado, in the person of the ruling Pope.¹ He pays his devotions to the Virgin Mary, as though he had been born and bred to it in the natural way. He makes himself quite at home in the region of Roman Saints, legends, relics and miracles, as if he had been used to it all his life. At all times, and in all things, he carries himself most dutifully towards the priesthood, who form to his eyes the medium of all truth and authority in the Church, and from whose lips in such view the common layman is required to accept both without doubt or contradiction. His tone towards these spiritual superiors, as contrasted especially with the confidence and self-reliance he is accustomed to exhibit in other directions, is to affectation humble, we might almost say at times sycophantic and servile. "It would be presumptuous in us," he says in relation to Bishop Kenrick's work on the Primacy of the Apostolic See, "to speak of the doctrines set forth in this book, either to commend or to censure. The layman, because an editor or reviewer, is not relieved from his obligation to submit to his spiritual superiors, or to learn his faith from those the Holy Ghost has set in the Church to teach and to rule the flock. Yet on matters of private opinion, each man, whether layman or not, may entertain and express, reverently, his own opinions."—*April, 1845, p. 263.* So throughout. He is not simply a learner, but a passive receiver of theological knowledge, professedly, at the feet of the bishops and priests. He is careful to let us know, that in the conduct of his *Review*, he is to be considered, theologically, the echo simply of the proper masters of his faith, the bishop of Boston and his learned clergy. "The Catholic Church, faith and worship, as

¹ "The Papacy is the Church, the Pope the Vicar of our Lord Jesus Christ on earth, and if you war against the Pope, it is either because you would war against God, or because you believe God can lie. If you believe God has commissioned the Pope, and that God will keep his promise, you must believe his authority is that of God, and can be no more dangerous than would be the authority of our Lord, were he present to exercise it in person."—*Jan. 1847, p. 130.*—"We copy below the *Encyclical Letter* of our Holy Father, Pope Pius IX. We have no room for comments, and should not offer any if we had. In it God speaks to us by his Vicegerent on earth, and it is ours to listen, believe, and obey."—*April, 1847, p. 249.* "Certainly, when the Pope decides, we submit, for we recognize his right to decide, and we believe his decisions are infallible."—*Jan. 1846, p. 100.*

they are, always have been, and always will be till the end of time, is what we have embraced, what we love, what we seek to defend, not relying on our own private judgment, but receiving the truth in humility from those Almighty God has commissioned to teach us, and whom he has commanded us to obey." —Jan. 1846. p. 136. This is Romanism in full force; such as may be held to be fairly entitled to its reward, in the smiling approbation with which so many bishops and archbishops have seen fit to honor it before the world.

Mr. Brownson having thus violently given himself away to a theory of the Church which puts an end to all private thinking in religion, makes a merit apparently of the most violent consistency, in following it out to its most difficult consequences on all sides. The Christian salvation is for him a process that goes like clock-work. To his New England mind, the operation of the *machine* is all settled, as clearly as two and two make four, by the fixed nature of its pullies and wheels. The maxim, *Out of the Church no salvation*, he applies at once to the Roman communion exclusively, and takes pains to shut out as much as possible every sort of hope in favor even of the best men beyond. Out of this Roman Church indeed, as his theory requires, he holds that there can be no act of true faith. Protestantism then, in its best shape, is a sham, that leans always towards open infidelity; and its virtues are to be counted hollow and deceitful, even where they may seem to carry the most pious and heavenly show. The Reformation was wholly without reason or necessity, and had its rise in worldly motives far more than in any true zeal for the glory of God. Luther and Calvin were bad men, and tools besides of men worse than themselves. The Church, as it stood before, was steadily moving in the right direction; while this revolution, so far as it prevailed, served only to hinder and embarrass the march of true christian improvement, causing the sun mark to go back on the dial plate of the world's civilization, God only knows how far. Protestantism rolls forward from the very start, by its own weight, to infidelity and nihilism. Its *life* is to be sought always on the side nearest this result, and not in its more respectable forms; for these are always more or less ossified and dead. Its only fair representation at this time accordingly, is found in transcendentalism, pantheistic atheism, and communism. Not only is the history of the Roman Church before the Reformation full of testimony to her divine character, as the patron and prop of all good in the world, whether in the form of religion, science, politics or social life; but her history *since* also, as compared with that of Protestantism, is powerfully suited to in-

culcate the same lesson. The advantage often claimed in favor of Protestant nations, is more specious than solid.¹ Puritanism especially, here in America, is little more than a bag of wind.² Professor Park only raves, when he tell us that "Rome has trained a smaller number of original thinkers, for the last three hundred years, than have arisen from even half the number of Protestant churches." If the assertion mean, not soap bubble blowers, but men of solid learning, and clear as well as profound thought, Mr. Brownson denies it, and pledges himself, "after making all proper allowance for the excess of Catholic population over the Protestant, to produce ten Catholics to every one Protestant the Professor will bring forward."—1845, p. 495. "The Catholic cantons of Switzerland are more truly enlightened than the Protestant." Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, bear comparison favorably with Holland, Denmark, and Scotland.³ The laboring

¹ "We deny, positively deny, that in moral and intellectual science, properly so called, Protestants have made the least progress, or that their philosophers have ascertained a single fact or a single principle not known and recognized by the Schoolmen.—You talk of "the Dark Ages"—dark forsooth, as Coleridge, one of your own number, tells you, because you have not light enough to read them. We know something of your Protestant philosophers, and there are absolutely only four Protestant names, that it is not discreditable to one's own knowledge to call a philosopher, and it is doubtful if any one of these was really a Protestant. We mean Leibnitz, Kant, Hegel and Hobbes.—In theology you are as badly off as you are in philosophy. You have no more respectable theological work than Calvin's *Institutes*, which none of you now accept,—unless with a qualification.—Saving some branches of physical science, in which the progress effected is far less than is imagined, Protestants have really contributed nothing of any real importance to the progress of the human mind. We know the Protestant boasts, and we know what Protestants have done. Not one of the great inventions or discoveries, which have so changed the face of the modern world, with the exception, perhaps, of the mule and jenny, and a few other inventions in labor saving machinery, all of which we look upon as a curse, are due to them. Every thing degenerates, except material industry, in their hands; and yet, they have the singular impudence to accuse the Catholic Church of injuring the mind."—Oct. 1845, p. 492-494.

² "The literature of our country, such as it is, and it is nothing at best to boast of, we owe to authors *not* of the Puritan or Calvinistic school. The profoundest works of the Puritan school in this country are Edwards *on the Will*, and *on the Affections*, Hopkins' *System of Divinity*, and Dwight's *Theology*. The school does little else than republish from England and Scotland, translate from the German, or compile from foreign scholars. And yet our Puritan Professor, (Park,) with the tail of a Dutch goose in his cap for plume, steps boldly forward, and accuses Catholicity of being hostile to the mind, and seriously charges the Catholic Church with being deficient in great philosophers and eminent preachers."—Oct. 1845, p. 494.

³ "Not to Catholicity, but to the policy of England and the Church by law established, must we look for Ireland's degradation. We would willingly let the question itself turn on the instance of Ireland. We want no better evidence to prove the superiority of Catholicity over Protestantism."—1845, p. 496.

classes are much more degraded in England, than they are in Austria, in Italy, or in Spain. The Austrian clergy are not inferior to the Prussian, nor the Bavarian to the Saxon; and "to represent the present body of the French clergy, whether of the first or of the second order, as inferior to the English, betrays an ignorance or a recklessness that we were not prepared for even in our Andover Professor."—1845, p. 495–497. So everywhere. Mr. Brownson forces himself to see only evil in Protestantism, and in Romanism only goodness, beauty and grace. However black this last may seem to other eyes, it is still comely to his as the tents of Kedar or the curtains of Solomon. Out to Ireland and Mexico even, he is ready to say of it: 'Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.'

Now to our mind, all this wholesale sweeping style is adapted to beget distrust, rather than to inspire confidence. It seems to involve a desperate determination to carry out a given theory, at all costs. Mr. Brownson's new orthodoxy sits on him with an air of stiff unnatural mannerism and constraint. It is too much a thing of logic and outward rule. It is so bent on being straight, that the very effort causes it to lean over from its own perpendicular. Its want of full inward security is betrayed, by the perpetual tendency it shows to assert itself in an extreme way.

The man draws enormously on our faith, who requires us to take the vast fact of the Reformation, with all its consequences down to the present time, as either a mere zero, or as something far worse than zero, in the history of the world and the Church. It comes before us, not as a side current simply in the stream of life, but as a force belonging plainly to its central channel. It had its ground and necessity in what went before. Whole ages looked towards it previously as their proper end. It is not more clear that the civilization of the modern world grew up in Europe, than it is that its growth and progress produced the Reformation. The fact carries in itself a universal significance, a force that reaches into politics, literature, and philosophy, as well as religion, and is capable thus of scientific exposition, as a necessary crisis in the course of Christianity. That it was in truth of such universal sense and force, is made evident by the vast agitations and changes that grew out of it in the sixteenth century, and the consequences, broad, mighty, and deep, that have continued to proceed from it down to the present time. Whatever our estimate may be of the worth of these, in themselves considered, it seems not possible for any sober mind to call in question their historical significance and moment. Protestantism, plainly, has not been an interlude simply, during the past three hundred years, in the

drama of the world's life. It belongs to the *history* of the period, in the fullest sense of the term. So far as the world can be said to have had a universal historical life at all, since the time of Luther, it must be acknowledged to have had its stream mainly in the line of Protestantism. Whether for weal or for woe, Protestant nations have taken the lead in the onward movement of humanity; and Protestant principles and interests have controlled, to a great extent, all its more prominent developments and positions. Unless, then, we choose to give up all faith in history, as a revelation of God's mind and will, we must bow before this great fact of three hundred years with earnest reverence, and admit that it has a meaning in it for the kingdom of God, in some way worthy of its vast proportions. Suppose the worst even in its case, that Protestantism, namely, is destined to prove a failure altogether, still it would be in the highest degree unphilosophical and irrational to deny its significance at least in this view, as the medium of transition for the Church to a better and brighter state, that could not have been reached without such a period of inward contradiction going before. The honor of God, the credit of religion, require that a movement which has so covered the field of history for so long a time, should in *some* form be acknowledged to carry with it a truly historical force, and to enter into the universal mission and plan of Christianity for the salvation of the world. If the space filled by Protestantism may be violently set aside as a blank in history, it would be hard to name any other period of equal duration which we might not as easily set aside in the same way. We ought to have no patience with men, who turn the first three centuries of Christianity into a sheer waste of sand, to suit their own miserable prejudices; and just as little too with those, who see only a long night of unmeaning desolation in the centuries that follow the downfall of the old Roman civilization; regardless, in the first case, of the world triumph by which Christianity was steadily conducted to the throne of the Cæsars, and in the second case, making no account of the no less magnificent new world triumph, which was accomplished in its mastery of the wild elements from which Europe draws its present life. Our faith in God, above all our reliance on Christ's special promise *not* to forsake his Church to the end of the world, will not allow us to acquiesce in the thought of any such vast hiatus or inorganic chaos in the history of Christianity. But why, we ask, should we have any more patience with this style of thinking, when we find it applied to the period since the Reformation, than we have for it as applied to the period before? Is it less arbitrary and pedantic, less frivolous and profane, to treat

the great fact of Protestantism, clearly belonging for three hundred years past to the central history of the world, as a nullity, a dream, the oversight of a sleeping Christ, than it is to look upon a like term of centuries a thousand years since, in the same dishonorable light? The fact is too wide, too deep, too overwhelmingly significant, to be set aside in that way. Make Protestantism to be as bad as you please, still springing as it has done from the inmost depths of modern civilization, and filling as it does the middle channel of modern history, we are bound by all faith in God and in Christ, to hold it of necessary sense and value in some way, for the final triumph of Christianity under its true and right form. History here, as well as elsewhere, must be allowed to be *rational*, worthy of the Mind by which it is actuated, and not the sport simply of wild winds and waves. Christ, Head over all things to the Church, has not been asleep, nor out of the way, in the rise and progress thus far, of a movement so vast in its consequences. It is something monstrous, on the part of Mr. Brownson, then, that he affects to make such small account of Protestantism, and will not allow it to be of any historical significance whatever, for the last end of Christianity. Such an assumption is a great deal too violent; and for one who has come to have any sense at all of the divine character of history, overthrows itself, while it destroys at the same time the credit of the source from which it proceeds. Romanists must learn to find some sense, and not mere Devil's play, in the Reformation, if they expect to be heard respectfully in the scientific world in opposition to its claims. If Mr. Brownson should set himself to denounce and ridicule the Allegheny mountains or the Mississippi river, as useless or absurd accidents in nature, we do not see why it would be more reproachful to his philosophy and religion, than it is for him to put scorn in like style on the vast creations of history, that come before us during the past three hundred years in the form of Protestantism; for sure we are, that a continent, shorn of its highest mountains and mightiest streams, would not miss its own universal sense more, than the tract of the world's general life must do, if the events of the last three hundred years were swept from the face of it as a mere impertinence or blank nothing.

Mr. Brownson however, is consistent with himself, and true also to the genius of his Church, in this violence offered to history. He abjures the true idea of history, and will not allow it to be of force for the period before the Reformation, any more than for the period following. History, in its very conception, implies progress; not fixed sameness, but unity in the form of

movement and change; the counterpart in time of what the manifold is in space, for an organic whole, as distinguished from mere number without unity. The sense of this is what we mean by historical feeling, and faith in history as the immanent force of a divine, and so of course supremely rational thought. But all such sense Mr. Brownson appears entirely to lack, or else resolutely to resist. History for him is no continuous living creation, that actualizes always more and more its own interior sense, and never falls away from a steady urgency towards its own last end; but a system rather of outward combinations and changes, over which God presides in a mechanical way, much at best as a chess player, whose business it is to keep the game in his own hands, through every new phase of the checkered board on which it is carried forward. The celebrated English convert, Mr. Newman, made an attempt to enlist the idea of *development*, which it is becoming so hard, in the face of modern science, for any truly scientific mind to withstand, in the service of the Roman Catholic Church. Against this pretension, however, it will be remembered, Mr. Brownson, a mere novice himself still in Romanism, but under the safe guidance of course of the powers above him, came out with the most determined contradiction and opposition. He saw and felt, correctly enough, that Romanism could not stand successfully on that ground; and he is to be acknowledged here, accordingly, a true and faithful expounder of its proper spirit and sense. Romanism is, by its very constitution, unhistorical. It lays claim indeed to history and tradition as wholly on its side, over against the abstract thinking that pretends to fetch all faith plump from the Bible; but the claim is overthrown by the fact, that it withdraws from history the idea of inward moving life, without which it has no title to its own name, and turns it thus into an existence, which is just as abstract on its own side, as the abstraction it pretends to fly from on the other. Romanism takes the truth of Christianity for an outward fact, entrusted for safe-keeping to its own hands, out of which it is to be dispensed of course in an outward way for the use of men in all ages. In this form, it must be taken to be perpetually the same, not simply as a living law in the life of the world itself, but as a formal deposit, also, and tradition in such outward style. Its history in such view, is that of a mountain, always the same through all changes of sun and storm that may play upon it from age to age. Only so, can the conception of its line-and-plumbet infallibility be fairly carried through. Immense difficulties, it is true, lie in the way of this view, when we try to make it square with facts. Romanism, as it now stands, seems

to be anything but a facsimile of primitive Christianity, and the evidences of change may be said to meet us from almost every page of Church history. No two centuries appear to be alike. Still the theory requires it to be otherwise, and to this all facts must be made to bend, by violent hypothesis at least, if in no other way. Mr. Brownson has his fixed *idea* here, like every other good Romanist, and shows himself a perfect Hegelian in requiring it to underlie and rule the construction of history from first to last. The Church has been monotonously one and the same, if we are to take his word for it, from the beginning. Only error and heresy change; truth stands like a rock, against the face of which their rolling waves beat, age after age, without impression or effect. All Christian doctrines came forth from God full and complete in the beginning, and have been handed down by the Church, as an outward deposit, to the present time. The law of history is allowed to hold in other spheres of life. There is growth in nature. Humanity too, in its natural form, subsists by evolution and progress. Religion moreover meets us as a moving fact in the Old Testament. But all such growth contradicts, we are told, the proper conception of Christianity. Only sects here have any development; and then it is always away from the truth and against it.' Mr. Newman's theory is applicable to the sects, but not at all to the Church. "He forgets that she sprung into existence full grown, and armed at all points, as Minerva from the brain of Jupiter; and that she is withdrawn from the ordinary law of human systems and institutions by her supernatural origin, nature, character, and protection. If he had left out the Church, and entitled his book, *An Essay on the development of Christian Doctrine, when withdrawn from the Authority and supervision of the Church*, he would have written, with slight modifications, a great, and valuable book. It would then have been a sort of natural history of sectarianism, and been substantially true. But applying his theory to the Church,

"Catholicity is immovable and inflexible, one and the same always and everywhere; for the truth never varies. He who knows it in one age or country, knows it in all. But with the sects it is far otherwise. They must needs obey the natural laws of development, strengthened and intensified by demoniacal influence. Their spirit and tendency, indeed, are always and everywhere the same, but their forms change under the very eye of the spectator, and are rarely the same for any two successive moments. Strike where Protestantism is, and it is not there. It is in perpetual motion, and exemplifies, so far as itself is concerned, the old heathen doctrine, that all things are in a perpetual flux. You can never count on its remaining stationary long enough for you to bring your piece to a rest and take deliberate aim. You must shoot it on the wing."—*Oct. 1847, p. 417.*

and thus subjecting her to the law which presides over all human systems and institutions, he has, unintentionally, struck at her divine and supernatural character. The Church has no natural history, for she is not in the order of nature, but of grace."—*July*, 1846, *p.* 366. This is sufficiently clear. Christianity has no history, and enters not into the law of time, as this holds of all human existence besides. It owes nothing to history, but in truth stands wholly on the outside of it, as an unvarying supernatural fact, preserved by mechanical tradition from the start exactly as it is now held and taught in the Roman Church. With such a theory, it is easy to set aside Protestantism as a nullity; just as false Protestantism on the other hand, finds it easy to set aside all that crosses its humor in the ancient Church; in the same way precisely, in both cases, that the facts of geology are shorn of all their force, for those who have no sense of what belongs to the organic constitution of nature, and think it enough simply to resolve all phenomena into the abstract fiat of Jehovah.

Here, however, Mr. Brownson stands on common ground, for the most part, with those who have entered the lists with him in this controversy; and it must be admitted that the advantage, in such view, falls altogether to his side. He will have it that it is only sectarianism, or dissent from Rome, that moves in the way of history. But our Protestant sects generally deny this. Rome has moved, they tell us, by apostacy and corruption; *they* represent the primitive faith, as we find it in the Bible. History, in the true sense, they reject and disown. Christianity must be accepted as "a full grown Minerva;" only not from the living Church, but from the written word; or as the Episcopalians take it, from the word and ancient tradition combined. It becomes necessary, accordingly, to assert and defend Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, or whatever else it may be, as the identical form of primitive Christianity, rightly of force for all ages, and to treat all intervening variations in Church history, as corruptions and aberrations from the truth. It is easy to see, however, that no form of modern Protestantism can successfully affirm its identity with primitive Christianity; if such identity be taken to stand in the same forms of Church thought and Church life. And if this be laid down as the necessary condition of ecclesiastical legitimacy, we see not truly how any effectual stand can be made, by any of these bodies, against the pretensions of Rome. Both sides claim divine right, in the same unhistorical way, in defiance of all historical difficulties, on the ground simply of abstract supernatural revelation. It needs of a truth a supernatural commission, to legitimate such a claim under such

circumstances. This Romanism pretends at least to show in favor of itself; while the opposite interest requires us to take in lieu of it, simply what is by confession its own merely human judgment and word. If Christianity be thus unhistorical, it is easier on the whole to accept it under the Roman form, than it is to be satisfied with it under any other. The theory still remains unreasonable and violent in its own nature; but it wins at least a relative apology, by being made to appear the necessary alternative of a scheme still more at war with reason than itself.

The false position thus taken by such unhistorical Protestantism, serves to entangle it in other wrong views, which it is not hard to turn to the advantage of the opposite side. In this way, candor constrains us to acknowledge, Mr. Brownson too often triumphs in argument over his opponents, not so much because he is himself absolutely right, as because they unhappily place themselves in the wrong.

In this warfare he wields a most active pen; not confining himself by any means, as some of his opposers might wish, to the business of parrying and warding off thrusts from the contrary side; but seeking rather to carry the main brunt of battle into the very heart of the enemy's country; fiercely assailing Protestantism in its own strongholds, and defying it to mortal combat where it is accustomed to look upon itself as most secure and strong. His attacks in this way have been renewed and repeated in various forms, particularly during the first two-years after his conversion, according to the different aspects under which the war was to be met; for Protestantism, though a common interest in one view as opposed to Romanism, is still a divided interest within itself, that is not to be approached from all sides exactly in the same way. Mr. Brownson seemed to lay himself out systematically, from the start, for the demolition of its several divisions and sections in detail. We have him at one time, accordingly, directing his artillery against the pretensions of the High Church Episcopalians; then in an article on the British Reformers, against Bishop Hopkins, routing the theory of Low Church Episcopalians; then, against the Unitarian Examiner, exposing the vanity of the No-church theory, which admits the Church in name, but denies it in fact—a theory not confined by any means to Unitarians. Again we find him doing battle with Methodism, then with Presbyterianism, then with Congregationalism, then with Transcendentalism and Socialism, which form in his view the natural and proper end of the whole Protestant movement. In the midst however of all this variety of warfare, conducted in all these different directions with so much versatility

and spirit, the fundamental argument of Mr. Brownson against Protestantism remains always the same, and is capable of being reduced to comparatively narrow dimensions. He may be said thus to have exhausted the whole force of it in his first onset, or series of assaults, so that his later polemical articles involve necessarily, in this respect, a considerable amount of self-repetition, which for the intelligent reader can hardly fail to detract somewhat at times from their interest.

The course of reasoning, which thus underlies Mr. Brownson's whole faith in Romanism,¹ and to which we are continually referred as the ultimate argument in his manifold debates with Protestantism, may be reduced briefly to the following statement :

I. Christianity is a revelation made to men by God through his Son, Jesus Christ, in other words, "the truth which Jesus Christ taught or revealed." As such, it belongs, at least in part, to the *supernatural* order, transcends nature, comes from beyond the limits of human knowledge. It is something superadded to nature. "Grace, though having the same origin, is above the order of creation, is not included in it, nor promised by it. It is, so to speak, an excess of the Divine Fulness not exhausted in creation, but reserved to be superadded to it according to the Divine will and pleasure." In this form, it is indispensably necessary for our salvation, but can be apprehended only by faith, whose vocation and prerogative it is, as distinguished from science, thus to make us sure of what transcends sense and reason. The object of faith here must be the very truth itself of this supernatural revelation, and not something else in its stead. The problem of our salvation requires, that the supernatural, as revealed by Christ and transcending our knowledge, should be appropriated to our minds notwithstanding in the way of faith or sure belief, so as to act upon us with the reality which belongs to it in its own sphere.—II. "Faith, as distinguished from knowledge and science, rests on authority extrinsic both to the believer and to the matter believed. Knowledge is intuitive, finds its motives of assent in the subject or person knowing. Science is discursive

¹ "We had already convinced ourselves of the insufficiency of Naturalism, Rationalism, and Transcendentalism; we had also convinced ourselves of the necessity of Divine revelation and of the fact that the Christian revelation was such a revelation. From this, by a process of reasoning which may be seen in the first article of this number, we arrived infallibly at the Catholic Church. The process is simple and easy. It requires no metaphysical subtlety, no long train of metaphysical reasoning. All it needs is good common sense, a reverent spirit, and a disposition to believe on sufficient evidence."—*April, 1845, p. 262.*

sive, finds its motives of assent in the object or thing known. "But in belief I must go out of myself, and also out of the object, for my motives of assent." It rests on *testimony*. All turns then of course on the authority or credibility of the witness, extrinsically considered. The supernatural cannot be attested or made sure in this way by any merely natural witness; but only by supernatural authority, that is, by God himself. Nothing less than Divine testimony can be a sufficient ground for faith in what transcends nature. This however, we may rationally trust in such case, if we have it; "because enough is clearly seen of God from the creation of the world, and understood by the things that are made, to establish on a scientific basis the fact that he can neither deceive nor be deceived; for we can *demonstrate scientifically*, from principles furnished by the light of natural reason, that God is infinitely wise and good, and no being infinitely wise and good can deceive or be deceived." But now to place our faith in contact truly with the authority of God, in the case of a Divine revelation, the fact of the revelation must be authenticated to us by a competent witness, and also the true sense of it made certain in intelligible propositions; for if it be a question whether the revelation is really from God, or if it be taken in a wrong or doubtful sense, there can be no apprehension of God's testimony as it is, in the case, and so no apprehension through this of the supernatural to which it bears witness, "Faith in the supernatural requires, then, in addition to the witness that vouches for the fact that God has made the revelation, an interpreter competent to declare the true meaning of the revelation." And as faith is required in all times and places, these necessary conditions of its exercise must be no less universal, at hand for all nations and through all ages, and of unmistakable authority for the poor and illiterate as well as for the high and learned. The witness and interpreter, moreover, must be *infallible*. Faith is a theological virtue, which consists in believing, without doubting, what God has revealed, on the veracity of God alone. "He who has for his faith only the testimony of a fallible witness, who may both deceive and be deceived, has always a reasonable ground for doubt, and therefore no solid ground for faith. Therefore, since, with a fallible witness, or fallible interpreter, we can never be sure that we are not mistaken, it follows, if we are to have faith at all, we must have a witness and interpreter that cannot err, therefore infallible."—III. As God requires faith in his word, in order to salvation, and this can have no place without the conditions now mentioned, we are bound to believe that these conditions *sine qua non* are by him provided for this

end. Where then is the infallible witness and interpreter of God's word, thus indispensable to the exercise of faith in what it reveals, to be sought and found. It is not *reason*, whether as intuitive or discursive. It is not the *Bible*; because this itself needs to be authenticated and interpreted by some infallible authority beyond itself. It is not *private illumination*; for that at best would give only a private faith, while what we are required to have is a public faith, such as can be sustained by public evidence, by arguments which are open to all and common to all. "No witness, then, remains to be introduced but the Apostolic ministry, or *Ecclesia docens*." Either this, or we have no witness.—IV. This conclusion is abundantly supported and made good also, in the way of historical fact. "The ministry is the organ through which Jesus Christ *supernaturally* bears witness to his own revelation." It is infallible, not in virtue of what it is naturally, but by his supernatural presence. Such supernatural qualification or competency might seem to be a fact itself requiring again supernatural witness; but it is not so; the credibility of the witness may be "supernaturally established to natural reason by means of miracles." A miracle connects the natural and supernatural, "so that natural reason can pass from the one to the other. Natural reason can determine whether a fact be or be not a miracle; and if it be so, can conclude from it legitimately to the supernatural cause, and to the Divine commission or authority of him by whom it is wrought. The miracle is God's own assurance to natural reason, that he speaks in and by the person who performs it; in which case we have the veracity of God for the truth of what the miracle-worker declares, and therefore infallible certainty; for God can neither deceive nor be deceived. So then the process of proof for the fact before us, namely the infallible authority of the *Ecclesia docens*, is simple and easy." The miracles of Christ, historically certified or made sure for natural reason, are sufficient to accredit his Divine commission," and authorize the conclusion that whatever he said or promised was infallible truth; for whether you say Jesus was himself truly God as well as truly man, or that he was only divinely commissioned, you have in either case the veracity of God as the ground of faith in what he said or promised. Suppose then the fact that Jesus Christ appointed a body of teachers, and promised to be always with them to make them infallible, and suppose also this fact made infallibly certain to natural reason, by proper historical evidence; have we not, in such case, infallible certainty that Jesus Christ does speak in and through this body, and that it is absolutely secure thus from error in all

it believes and teaches? Here we have recourse to the New Testament, which as a simple historical document may be infallibly clear for private reason alone, in *some* of its contents, though not in the whole. In Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20, Mark xvi. 15, Eph. iv. 11, we have the well known apostolical commission; which is declared to reach to the end of the world, and to have regard to all nations. In such view, it requires and implies a corporation or body, always identical with itself. This is the *Ecclesia docens*, which with such constitution must be considered corporately infallible, and whose voice all men consequently are bound to obey as the voice of God.—V. Where now is this corporate ministry to be found, at the present time. It cannot be in the Greek communion; still less in the Protestant. It is then the Roman Catholic ministry; because it can be found nowhere else, and because also its regular succession can be clearly identified here from the beginning. “Then we sum up by repeating, that Jesus Christ has instituted and commissioned an infallible and indefectible body of teachers, and this body is the congregation of the Roman Catholic pastors in communion with their chief. The Catholic Church then is the witness to the fact of revelation. What its pastors declare to be the word of God, is the word of God; what they enjoin as the faith, is the faith without which it is impossible to please God, and without which we are condemned and the wrath of God abideth on us. What they teach is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; for God himself has commissioned them, and will not suffer them to fall into error in what concerns the things they have been commissioned to teach.” Out of this Church, of course, no act of faith can take place; for faith is a theological virtue, which can be elicited only in obedience to God’s authority, propounding truth in a supernatural and also public way; which we have only in the body of pastors, and teachers belonging to the Roman Catholic Church. See the article particularly entitled, *The Church against No-Church*.—April, 1845; also *The British Reformation* in the same volume; *Faith not Possible without the Church*.—Jan., 1846; *The Two Brothers, or why are you a Protestant*.—July, 1847; &c., &c.

The main force of this reasoning lies in this, that the view maintained is made to appear the only and necessary alternative to another view, starting from the same premises, which is found to be irrational and untenable. In both cases, Christianity is taken to be a revelation of supernatural truth, which men are to receive by faith, as something wholly out of themselves, that is brought near to them for their use in a purely outward way.

As it has its source and seat beyond their proper nature altogether, so it cannot be allowed to find in this any rule or measure whatever for its apprehension. It must be taken as a matter of mere authority. The relation between the receptivity of faith on the one side, and the propounded truth on the other, the subject natural and the object supernatural, is held to be in no sense inward and living, but mechanical only and juxtapositional, the one remaining always on the outside of the other. How now is the necessary connection between the two to be mediated, so as to secure for faith a real possession of the heteronomic supernatural? We take it only on God's testimony; God is true, and we may rationally trust his word, if we have it, in so great a case. Very good; agreed so far on all sides. Now comes however another question, How are we to be sure that God has spoken in the first place, and then in the next place that we have his very mind or sense in what he has spoken? It is not enough here to send us to the Bible; the question still returns, How do we know that the Bible is his word, and how are we to ascertain the mind of the Spirit in what it teaches? Inspiration is itself something supernatural, of which faith needs to be infallibly assured, in order that it may be infallibly sure of what it reveals. Here however a certain system of thought, which claims to be Protestantism, although it is not Protestantism in its true and genuine sense but a corruption of it rather on the side towards Rationalism, is ready at once to respond: "We need no infallible witness to assure us of the revelation, other than the inspired Bible itself; the proofs of its divinity lie open to reason, and every man may there get the mind of God out of it for himself." But with the theory of revelation before noticed, by which it is taken to be wholly outward and transcendent, and which resolves faith into an assent to grounds which are extrinsic both to the object and the subject, and to be found only in an authority that lies between, it is plain that this short method of settling the matter must land us at last in something very like infidelity itself. It is in truth to subordinate the supernatural to the natural, and to make the private reason of every man the seal and certification of God's oracles, sounded forth from a world which has this same reason wholly on its outside. To say "Man needs no revelation, but only the full development of his nature;" and to say: "He may by his nature assure himself infallibly that he has a revelation on the outside of him, and also make out what it means in the same outward view;" are declarations that come to very much the same result in the end. In either case we have substantial rationalism, or a faith that has to do immediately and really, not

with the supernatural at all in its own kind, but only with the natural shoved in as a supposed intermediate witness in its name and stead. Faith becomes a conclusion of logic, and not the substantiation of things invisible, immediately and directly, as they are in their own nature. The case labors under a twofold difficulty. First, the merely individual judgment is made to be the measure of truth, without regard to the claims of mind in its general character; which is in contradiction to the idea of humanity itself, as it comes before us on all other sides. Private judgment, like private will, has no force of reason ever as *private*, but becomes rational only by ceasing to be private and showing itself to be truly general. Then again, if it *could* be regarded as sufficient and complete, it must still be held of no power to bridge over effectually, in a real way, the impassable gulph by which it is here taken to be sundered from the object, of which faith needs to be infallibly certified and assured. The theory of the *Bible and Private Judgment* then, under this abstract form, cannot possibly bear examination. It is not only false, but pernicious to the very life of faith. It runs at last into mere naturalism and rationalism. Over against it, the argument for the idea of the Church, the claims of Christianity in its universal or catholic and historical character, and the necessity of a truly Divine certification or witness of supernatural truth for faith, is overwhelmingly conclusive. Without all this, Christianity has no power to save its proper divine credit. The alternative is, faith in this form or infidelity.¹ Romanism thus far is fully in the right; and if it can cause it to appear that its own theory, as exhibited by Mr. Brownson, is the only way of escape from what is thus opposed, we must feel ourselves bound certainly, as we fear God and value his salvation, to throw ourselves into its arms.

At present, however, we do not see this theory to be such a necessary way of escape from the ruinous system it so justly condemns on the opposite side. On the contrary, it seems to us intrinsically defective in its own constitution, as being nothing less in truth than the reverse side of that same bad system itself; which as such is found, on close inspection, to labor under substantially the same difficulty and contradiction. Here, as there, the difficulty is again of a double sort. The general is made to

¹ We propose to take up this subject again, some time hereafter, in the way of a review of two interesting and profound tracts by the justly celebrated Dr. Owen, on the *Reason of Faith* and the *Causes, Ways and Means of understanding the mind of God as revealed in his word.*

exclude the individual, as there the reverse; in contradiction to the idea of humanity, as we find it in the natural world. And then, as before, no real bridge is made to span the gulph that divides the visible from the invisible. Both views are alike in this, that they make faith to rest on a conclusion of mere natural reason, and will not allow the supernatural, as such, to come by means of it into any real union with the natural. We will try to make our meaning clear, as regards Romanism, by the following general observations, in the way of criticism on Mr. Brownson's argument in its defence.

I. The theory involves a general wrong against our human constitution, naturally considered, inasmuch as it will not allow its ordinary law of freedom to have force in the sphere of religion, which is that precisely in which it is required to make itself complete. The general law of our nature is that mind must fulfil its mission, not by following blindly a mere outward force of any sort, but by the activity of its own intelligence and will, both as general and individual. It must move in the light that springs from itself, and by the power it generates continually from within. This moral constitution includes complex relations, laws, organic interdependence, action and reaction, as in the world of nature, on a vast and magnificent scale. Still to the idea of it as a whole the conception of freedom appertains, in the form now stated, as a necessary universal distinction. The theory of Mr. Brownson however, if we rightly understand it, requires us to assume that in the highest form of religion, that which is reached in Christianity, the human mind ceases to be directly active in the accomplishment of what is brought to pass in its favor, and is a passive recipient simply of foreign action brought to bear on it in an outward way. It does not help the matter, that it is taken to be active with regard to Christianity in a different sphere; the difficulty is that no activity is allowed to it in the realization of Christianity itself, as the highest fact of the world. Christianity claims to be the perfection of man's life; this, in its ordinary constitution, unfolds itself by its own self-movement, in the way of thought and will; but just here all this is superseded by another law altogether; the supernatural comes in as the outward complement of the natural, in such sort as to make the force of this last null and void in all that pertains to its higher sphere.

II. This wrong against human nature becomes most immediately plain, in the violence which the individual mind is made to suffer, by the theory, in favor of what is taken to be general. The existence of truth is objective, and in such view of course

universal and independent of all private thought or will ; but as thus objective it must be at the same time subjective, must enter into particular thought and will, in order to be real. As object merely, without subject, it becomes a pure abstraction. Mere single mind can never be, in and by itself, the measure of either truth or right ; it must be ruled, and so bound, by the objective or the authority of the general. On the other hand, however, the general as such, mere law or object, is no such measure either, in and by itself ; to be so, it must take concrete form in the life of the world, which resolves itself at last into the thinking and willing of single minds. But now, in the case before us, Romanism sets aside the authority of this order, which is found to be of such universal force for the constitution of our nature in every other view. Christianity is taken to be of force for the world under a simply abstract form ; an outwardly supernatural revelation, transcending the whole order of our common life, and not needing nor allowing the activity of man himself, as an intelligent and free subject, to be the medium in any way of its presence and power. Authority is made to be all, and freedom nothing. The authority too is cut off and sundered from the proper life of the subject, and in this way comes to no real union with his intelligence and will. It comes from abroad, stands over him in an outward way, and requires him to submit to it as a foreign forcé. Authority thus is not mediated at all by man's actual life ; is in no sense living and concrete, but altogether mechanical, rigid, and fixed. It is from the start a given quantity, just so much, and nothing either more or less. It excludes private thought and will, according to Mr. Brownson. "The two authorities," that of private thought and that of the Church, "may indeed co-exist," we are told, "but not in regard to the same matters ; for one is the negation of the other." The right of private judgment is taken to be of force only where the authority of the Church ceases ; as though each had its own territory separate from that of the other, without the possibility ever of any truly common jurisdiction. "To assume the authority of both private judgment and the Church on the same matters, is absurd. One authority necessarily excludes the other. If it is private judgment, then not the Church ; if the Church, then not private judgment." The office of reason ends, where authority begins. "We accept private judgment, as well as the Bishop (Hopkins), and give full scope to the individual reason, but only within its legitimate province. We reconcile reason and authority by ascertaining the province of reason, and confining it within its legitimate province. Questions of reason are to be decided

by reason, but questions of faith are to be decided by authority ; for all faith rests on authority, and would not be faith if it did not." See article on the *British Reformation*.—*Jan.* 1845. Authority may override private reason, and make it null. Its teachings and commands, in the case of the Church, "constitute the rule of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, good and evil. It is no matter what you prove she teaches and commands ; for if it be clear that she teaches and commands it, we will maintain that it is true, right, and good, against all gainsayers, even to the dungeon, exile, or the stake, if need be." Articles of faith are first principles, or axioms in religion, over which "reason has no natural rights, never had any, never can have any ; because they lie out of her province, and belong to the supernatural, where her authority does not extend." So again : "The articles of faith are not taken from the dominions of reason, but they are certain grants made gratuitously to her, extending, instead of abridging, her authority, and therefore serve instead of injuring her."—*Oct.* 1845, p. 448-451. This, and a great deal more to the same purpose, shows clearly enough the relation in which Mr. Brownson makes faith stand to reason ; and so the view he takes of authority, or the claims of the general, as related to the rights of the individual mind. He sees rightly enough that a purely unbound freedom, liberty without law, is the very conception of slavery itself ; but does not stop to take into view the other side of the truth, this namely, that a purely bound authority, law without liberty, is slavery also. "Liberty to hold and teach," he tells us, "what the Sovereign Pontiff says we may, is all the liberty we ask ;" for this is liberty to obey God's law, the only liberty he allows to any man. "Law is the basis of liberty, and where there is no sovereign authority there is no law. Liberty is not in being free of all law, but in being held only to the law. We believe the Church, and the Pope as visible head of the Church, is the organ through which Almighty God promulgates the law. Consequently, in our own estimation at least, in submitting to the Pope, we find, instead of losing our liberty."—*Jan.* 1846, p. 101. Good. No law, no liberty. But still, the planet is not free in being true simply to the law that carries it round the sun ; and the animal is not free, that follows the law of its own instincts. Law here is not enough. It must be met by the spontaneity of a free subject, which with the power to go aside from its orbit, makes the law notwithstanding the very form of its own action, producing its authority purely and truly from within. Certainly, the theory before us is ready to say, the law must be obeyed freely, by the option and choice of the obeying

subject ; but this requires no autonomy of the subject, in the constitution of the law, no voice in its legislation ; all the case demands or allows, is that on grounds extrinsic wholly to its constitution the subject be rationally persuaded that obedience is wise and right. Is this however, more at last, we ask, than mere prudence, or a skilful calculation of profit and loss ? Is the man free who obeys the law, *Thou shalt not kill*, to avoid the gallows ? Is it liberty to say white is black or black white, though it should be said never so pleasantly and glibly, because we are required to do so by an authority which we feel it unsafe to resist ? Am I free when I renounce my own intelligence and will, and accept in their place another measure of truth altogether *in no union whatever with my personal reason*, whether from the hand of an earthly prince to buy political distinction, or from the hand of a pope to buy a place in heaven ? Freedom is more, a great deal, than any such outward consent to the authority of law. It is life *in* the law, union with it, the very form in which it comes to its revelation in the moral world. Place the law as an objective force on the outside wholly of the intelligence and will of those who are to be its subjects, and at once you convert it into an abstract nothing. This is the natural extreme of Romanism. Against it, the Reformation formed a legitimate and absolutely necessary reaction and protest. It is quite in the order of history, that this protest should itself lead again to extreme results on the opposite side, making the subjective everything and the supernatural objective next to nothing. But the cure for this is not just the old error ; and however much of force there may be in Mr. Brownson's polemics, as directed against Parkerism, Socialism, and Pseudo-protestantism universally, (a force which *we* have no wish certainly to deny or oppose.) it does not follow by any means that Protestantism, as simply opening the way for such abuse, is to be considered unsound and false from the start ; just as little as the abuses of Popery show the Catholic truths to be false, from which they can be shown to have taken their rise. It is still as true now, as it was at the beginning of the sixteenth century, that the *actualization* of truth in the world, is something which can be accomplished only through the medium of intelligence and will on the part of the world itself ; that liberty, in its genuine sense, is not simply the outward echo of authority, but the very element of its life, and the co-efficient of its power, in that which it brings to pass ; that man is no passive machine merely in the business of his own salvation ; that the free activity of the individual subject in the world of mind, never can be paralyzed or overwhelmed by the sense of law, as a

nature foreign and transcendent wholly to its own nature, without such bondage as involves in the end the overthrow of reason altogether.

The force of this position does not depend on the kind of authority, that is to be obeyed. Whether it be divine or human is all the same thing, if it is taken to be something wholly on the outside of the subject, in no way congenerous with his natural constitution, a law beyond his own reason altogether and foreign from his life. It is not in such view, that God exercises authority. His will is never arbitrary, and so never abstract. Where it touches men, it forms in truth the inmost and deepest reason always of their own being; and in such view, though it may not be fully comprehensible, and though it could never have been dreamed of without supernatural revelation, still it must be allowed, even to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity itself, to carry in itself such an organic agreement with the world's life as otherwise known, and such a felt suitableness to the demands of reason, as may serve to evidence its rationality at least afar off, and create thus a presumption in its favor from the start. It will not do to say, that reason is absolutely passive in the reception of what is propounded by Divine authority; in such way, for instance, that it would be as easy to allow five persons in the Godhead as it is to allow three, or that a Hindoo avatar might be believed as fully as the Christian Incarnation, on the strength simply of God's outward word. It may be said indeed, and with truth also, that to be sure of God's word in the case is to be sure of the intrinsic rationality of what it is thus supposed to proclaim; but this just shows, that we *cannot* be sure of his word without some regard to the intrinsic reasonableness of what it propounds, and that this itself accordingly is ever to be taken as part of the evidence for the other fact. In other words, the authority of the revelation is not abstract and foreign wholly from the nature of the life, for which it is made. Our difficulty here with Mr. Brownson, then, is not just that he arms the Pope with divine authority, whereas he might seem to be only a common man; but that such authority, in the hands of the Pope or anywhere else, should be taken to supersede and nullify so completely the true idea of human freedom. The theory rests on a wrong conception of what authority is in the world of mind, and so on a wrong conception of the true nature of the Church, as the divinely constituted organ and bearer of Christ's will among men, (as we too take it to be,) to the end of time.

III. For as already intimated in some measure, the necessary result of such a separation of liberty and law, the rights of the

subjective and the claims of the objective, is vast wrong in the end to the second of these interests as well as to the first. The true idea of authority in the moral world, requires that it should come to its revelation, under a concrete form, through the medium of the general life and in the way of history. With the theory of Mr. Brownson, however, all this fails. The Church is taken to be the infallible witness of God's mind in the Christian revelation; but not in virtue of her living wholeness as the Body of him that filleth all in all, her life serving in such universal form, as the natural medium for unfolding the full sense of its own contents; all this is precluded by the conception of an abstract ministry, or *ecclesia docens*, on which the gift of infallibility is conferred in a purely outward supernatural way. This gift is not mediated at all, in any way, by the life of the Church as a whole. The *ecclesia docens* is no organic product and outbirth of the new creation generally, which it is appointed to serve. Its prophetic, priestly and kingly functions, are not the activity of Christ's mystical body working itself forth collectively in such form, by appropriate organs created for the purpose. The ministry rather is independent of the Church; it has a life of its own; it is a separate organization, through which the higher powers of Christianity are carried forward, by a wholly distinct channel, for the use of the world from age to age. These higher powers too belong to it in a mechanical, magical way, and not according to the ordinary law of truth and power among men. It is objected to Mr. Newman, that he makes the general mind of the Church the medium of christian knowledge. "This view, if followed out," we are told, "would suppress entirely the proper teaching authority of the Church, competent at any moment to declare infallibly what is the precise truth revealed; or at least would raise the *ecclesia credens* above the *ecclesia docens*, and reduce the office of the Church teaching to that of defining, from time to time, the dogmatic truth which the Church believing has gradually and slowly worked out from her implicit feelings. The secret supernatural assistance would then attach to the Church believing, and superintend the elaboration, rather than to the Church teaching; and if to the Church teaching at all, only so far as to enable it faithfully to collect and truly define what the Church believing elaborates."—*July, 1846, p. 354.* There is no room with this view, of course, for the conception of anything like a progressive actualization of the life of the Church, in the form of authority. As the infallibility which belongs to her is independent of her natural constitution, abstract and not concrete, so it lies also wholly on the outside of her proper hu-

man presence in the world. To be out of history, is to be out of humanity. All this is encumbered with difficulty. We find no clear account of it in the New Testament. What is said there of the Church and its ministry, leads of itself to no such conception. The two forms of existence are exhibited rather as one; the second proceeding organically from the first; the entire constitution holding moreover under the character of life, real human life, in unity with itself throughout. It is not easy again, to withstand the universal analogy of the actual world in favor of the same view. Humanity, in all other cases, accomplishes its destiny by organic co-operation, carried forward in the form of history. Truth is brought to pass for it, through the medium of its own activity, the whole working towards its appointed end by the joint ministry of the parts, in such a way however, as to be something more always than these separately taken. So it is in the sphere of science; so in the sphere of art; so in the sphere of politics and social life. In each case, we have association, organization, historical movement; intercommunity of powers and functions; in one direction activity to guide and rule, in another direction activity to obey and follow; but this distinction conditioned by the life of the corporation itself in its whole character, and so always more or less free and flowing, not fixed by arbitrary ordination from abroad. The same law is allowed to have place in the sphere of religion too, beyond the precincts of Christianity. Even Judaism, we are told, was not exempt from its operation. But in the sphere of the Church, as it stands since Christ, we are required to take all differently. As a supernatural constitution, it must not conform to the order of nature. It must be neither organic, nor historical, nor human, in its higher life; but one long monotony rather of mere outward law and authority, superseding the natural order of the world, and contradicting it, age after age, to the end of time. The Roman system carries in itself thus a constant tendency to resolve the force of Christianity into magic, and to fall into the snare of the mere *opus operatum* in its bad sense. It must be confessed, at all events, that the theory, right or wrong, labors herè under a difficulty, which it is by no means easy for a truly thoughtful mind to surmount.

IV. This brings us to notice more particularly, in the next place, the general relation in which the supernatural is taken by this system to stand to the natural, and its corresponding view of divine revelation. The two worlds are held to be wholly disjoined and separate the one from the other, so that any connection which is formed between them is regarded as outward only and not in

the way of common life. The truth with which faith has to do belongs to the "supernatural order," which transcends altogether, we are told, the order of nature; holds out of it, above it and beyond it; and cannot come to any organic union with it, under its own form. The two worlds are sundered by an impassable gulph, as regards inward constitution and being; only by the word of God, as an outward report, it is possible for faith, in the sphere of nature, to be infallibly assured of what lies beyond in a higher sphere.¹ This abstract conception of the supernatural, as something that refuses utterly to flow into one life in any way with the natural, may be said to underlie the whole theory of Romanism, as we find it set forth by Mr. Brownson; and it is of so much the more force to lend it plausibility, as it is for substance very generally accepted as correct, only with a less broad application, by those who are most forward to oppose the pretensions of this system as vain and false. Much of our Protestant orthodoxy, it must be confessed, rests on precisely the same abstract supernaturalism, in the view it takes of the Bible as the medium of divine revelation; without seeing that from such premises we are shut up at last, without help or escape, to the Romanist conclusion; since if the matter of revelation be wholly without self-evidencing power for faith, and such that it can be received on the ground of outward divine authority or testimony only, it follows plainly that we need also an infallible outward witness in the Church, to assure us in like mechanical style

¹ We have a strong assertion of such *transcendence* in the article, "*Natural and Supernatural*."—*Jun.* 1847, p. 110, 111, in reply to the allegation of an opponent that man's capacity of knowing God, as far as it goes, can be only through kindred powers. "Why could not Newton's dog know Newton? Because he had not the kindred powers." Mr. Brownson accepts the case as in point, and turns it to his own use. The dog *did* know his master within the range of a dog's nature; but not in the order in which Newton transcended this; "no one can know naturally above the order of his nature," and so no one can know naturally the supernatural. But will the objector deny, asks Mr. B., "that Almighty God, if he had chosen, could, by a special act of his power, have so elevated the dog's powers as to have enabled him to know his master in the full sense in which one man may know another?" And so the mind of man may be supernaturalized, by the gift of faith, into a capacity for apprehending the supernatural; while all this implies no fitness in his nature previously for any such apprehension. But is not this now, we ask, to set the higher sphere wholly on the outside of the lower, and to make the translation from the second to the first a simple miracle? The dog, to ascend into the order of man's life, must be *essentially* changed, created over again altogether; and if the supernatural entering man's life be a like process, it must be virtually his demolition and the construction of a new being, by Divine fiat, in his place.

where this authority is really and truly at hand. The reasonableness of faith turns not at all, according to this school, on any correspondence in which it stands directly with its own contents, but purely and exclusively on its relation to the extrinsic authority on which they are accepted as true. The principle, that we must judge the speaker by the word, however sound within the sphere of nature, is taken to involve infidelity, or at least a strong leaning to it, when adopted in the sphere of religion; "for it cannot be adopted in the sphere of religion without first denying, that in religion there is anything to be believed which transcends natural reason; therefore it cannot be adopted without denying supernatural revelation; and to deny supernatural revelation is what is meant by infidelity."—*Oct. 1845, p. 510.*

It might seem enough to convict this theory of error, so far as the Bible is concerned, that this bears on the face of it throughout clear proof of a real union of the supernatural with the natural, in the persons of the sacred writers. The truth it reveals is conditioned in the form of its manifestation always, by the mind and education of the men who give it utterance, and through them by the living human relations in the midst of which they stood. No two prophets think alike or speak alike. Their inspiration then is no abstraction, no divine mechanism, but something that truly descends, with all its divinity, into the order of nature. And what shall we say of Him, in whom all prophecy and inspiration became at last complete? Was it his office simply to stand between the two worlds that met in his person, and report *mysteries* over from one to the other, for the use of faith, in a purely outward way? What is meant then by the declaration: The *Word* became *Flesh*, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Surely if the gospel means anything, we have here at least the supernatural order linked in real organic union with the natural, and showing thus the capacity of this last, as well as its need, to receive into itself such higher life as its own proper complement and end. It will not do, in the face of such a fact as the *Incarnation*, to say that the realities with which faith has to do in distinction from reason are wholly without light or evidence for this last in their own nature, and as such to be taken on the mere authority of God ascertained in some other way; in such sense that a man might be supposed to be infallibly sure first that he has this authority to go upon, and so be prepared to accept any and every proposition as true, on the strength of it, with equal readiness and ease. What is revelation, if it be not the actual entrance of the supernatural in some way over into the sphere of the natural? That which remains wholly beyond the orb of man's life, naturally considered, and in no living contact with it at any point, cannot be said surely to be revealed at all for his

apprehension and use. All revelation, as distinguished from magic, implies the self-exhibition of God, in a real way, through the medium of the world in its natural form. To a certain extent, we have such a revelation in the material universe. The outward creation is the symbol, mirror, shrine and sacrament, of God's presence and glory, as a supernatural fact, in the most actual way. The word of prophecy and inspiration is the gradual coming forth of eternal truth into time, in a like real way, through the medium of human thought and speech; a process, which completes itself finally in the full domiciliation, we may say, of the Infinite Word itself in the life of the world by Jesus Christ. It is an utterly unevangelical conception of this fact, to think of Christ only as an outward teacher or reporter of secrets, belonging to another order of existence wholly from that in which he appeared among men. Such a conception involves in fact the old Gnostic imagination, by which the supernatural side of his existence was never allowed to come to any really inward and organic union with its natural or simply human side; in consequence of which this last became always a phantom, and the first at the same time an extra-mundane abstraction. In Christ, most literally and truly, the supernatural order came to a living and perpetual marriage with the order of nature; which it could not have done, if the constitution of the one had not been of like sort with that of the other, (man made in the image truly of God.) so as to admit and require such union as the last and only perfect expression of the world's life. It lies then in the nature of the case, that Christ can be no abstraction, no solitary portent, in the midst of the world. If his incarnation involved a real entrance into its life at all, (and not simply an avatar, whether for an hour or for ten thousand years,) it must stand in living inward relation, and this fundamental too and central, with its entire organization and history under every other view. The lines of truth must fall in upon it as their necessary centre, from all sides, out to the farthest periphery of nature. It must be found to carry in it the inmost and deepest sense of the universal sphere to which it belongs. It is a fact therefore which must come harbingered and heralded by voices from the deep, and long shadows thrown before, signs, prophecies, and types, from every quarter; all made clear at last indeed only by the event itself; whilst with equal necessity, the powers of history may be expected to throw themselves subsequently, always more and more, into its train, the world before and the world behind joining thus in one and the same loud acclamation: "Hosannah to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name

of the Lord!" But now, if this be the relation of the supernatural in Christ himself to the sphere of nature, it is not easy—certainly to acquiesce in any theory of the Church, by which this is taken to be the medium of divine revelation in a wholly different style. An abstract Church, is as much at war with the true mystery of Christianity, as an abstract Christ. The Church, according to Mr. Brownson, is the infallible witness of God's word, not in the way of any really human mediation in the case, but in a wholly outward and unearthly way, by a special fiat of grace investing it with such infallibility, as a fixed mechanical fact, in no union whatever with the laws of our life under its ordinary form.¹ This we find it by no means easy to admit. The view works back unfavorably on the whole idea of revelation; and especially wrongs, in the end, the character of Jesus Christ. We are very far from believing, that the divinity of a revelation turns on its having no common life with humanity; on the contrary it seems to us to become complete, in proportion precisely as the supernatural, by means of it, is brought to enter most fully and truly into the conditions of the natural.

V. The theory carries with it finally, as it seems to us, a wrong conception of the true nature and power of faith, involving in the end the very consequence it seeks professedly to shun, namely the subordination of faith to reason or its resolution into mere logic. It goes on the assumption that the supernatural, with which faith has to do, is so sundered from the natural, as to admit no direct approach or apprehension from that side; that truth in such form is inevident for the mind wholly in its own nature, and without force of reason intrinsically to engage its assent; that the mind is moved to such assent in its case accordingly, not by any motives either in itself or in the object set before it, but by something extrinsic to both, the weight of an

¹ Mr. Brownson sees the Church always as an order extrinsic to the life of nature, or to humanity in its own proper form. Human institutions, he admits, allow a mixture of good and bad; but the Church, he will have it, is no human institution. "If Christian, she is divine—for Christ is God; and then she is not a human institution, unless God and man are identical;" and so she must be taken as only and wholly true, right, and good.—*July*, 1849, p. 310. But Christianity in the individual believer is divine too; does it then make him to be also free from all error and sin? Even an apostle, it seems, might do wrong. And is the Church in fact so good, as to be literally *sinless* as well as infallible? Her divine side of course is both one and the other; but she has also her human side, her divinity shines through humanity; she is not only the heavenly leaven of Christ's life in the world, but the true and proper life of the world itself also in the progress of being leavened. The progress here is not at once the end.

intermediate authority which is felt to be fully valid as a ground of certainty, without regard to the nature of what is thus taken on trust one way or another. "In belief," says Mr. Brownson, "I must go out of myself, and also out of the object, for my motives of assent." Subjective and objective come to no union or contact whatever. The gulph between them is sprung only by means of outward *testimony*. The case requires indeed Divine testimony; but still it is this always as something *between* the subject and object, in a purely separate and external way. As such, the testimony itself needs of course to be authenticated, before it can be rested upon as sure and certain; and this authentication must be again infallible. Such a witness of God's veracity we have in the Church, whose voice accordingly is to be taken as the true sense always of his word. The Divine authority of the Church, it is supposed, may be established for natural reason in its own sphere; although this of itself is not enough to produce faith. For that we need what is termed the *donum fidei*, a supernatural benefit conferred by the ministry of the Church itself through the holy sacrament of Baptism.

We object to the way in which faith is here opposed to reason. Its opposition is properly to sense, and to nature as known through sense; to reason, only so far as this is taken for the understanding in its relation to such knowledge. Faith is the capacity of perceiving the invisible and supernatural, the substantiation of things hoped for, the certification of things not seen (Heb. xi. 1); which, as such, does not hold on the outside of reason, any more than this can be said of sense, but opens to view rather a higher form of what may be called its own proper life, in which it is required to become complete, and without which it must always remain comparatively helpless, blind, and dark. It requires of a truth, in our present circumstances, a supernatural influence to call faith into exercise; no force of logic, and no simply natural motives, can bring it to pass; there must be for the purpose a new life by the Spirit of Christ. But still all this forms at last but the proper education, or drawing out, of the true sense of man's life as it stood before. Faith does not serve simply to furnish new *data* for thought in an outward way, but includes in itself also, potentially at least, the force of reason and knowledge in regard to its own objects. It stands in rational correspondence with its contents, and involves such an apprehension of them as makes the mind to be in some measure actually in their sphere. Faith touches its object as truly as sense. This requires indeed the medium of God's veracity; we can perceive the supernatural, only as we feel and know that

God exists; faith thus sees all things in God. But the veracity of God here is no abstraction; it reaches us in and by the things it verifies and affirms. So in the world of nature. Mr. Brownson will not allow the revelation of God in nature to be for faith at all; we have it, he says, by mere reason; "regarded solely as the author, upholder, and governor of nature, he is natural, and hence the knowledge of him as such is always termed *natural theology*." In this character, "he is naturally cognoscible, according to what St. Paul tells us, Rom. i. 20."—*April, 1845, p. 146.* But surely mere logic can never conclude from the world of sense to the world of spirit, from the finite to the infinite. To perceive God in nature requires far more than any syllogism. We see him there, only when he authenticates himself to us by his works, as the immediate felt symbol of his presence; and then our perception is faith. So St. Paul, Heb. xi. 3: "*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*" Through the world of sense, faith looks continually, not the logical understanding, to the vast and glorious Reality that lies beyond, and of which it is only the outward type or shadow. Nature in this view is a divine word, (as in the 19th psalm.) always showing forth the supernatural; having its seal or witness too in the veracity of God, that is, in his being, as a fact underlying the phenomenal creation; while however, at the same time, this fact makes itself immediately certain, not from beyond, but in and by the very document, which it thus seals and certifies for faith. And why should it be different in the case of revelation, under its higher view? God speaks in the Bible; and he must himself authenticate his own voice. This implies however no merely outward certification, apart from the word itself. He reveals himself for faith, in and by the word, as the very medium of his own presence. This becomes most clear in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word Incarnate, by whom all previous revelation is made at last complete. How is *He* authenticated for faith? By Divine testimony. In what form? Miracles, according to Mr. Brownson. "From the miracle the reason concludes legitimately to the supernatural cause, and to the Divine commission or authority of him by whom it is wrought." Jesus Christ performed miracles, and stands accredited by them as a Divine teacher. But could a miracle legitimate the pretensions of the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith? Certainly not. The miracle itself needs to be authenticated, by the living person and word of him whose commission it is appointed to seal. This is plain from Deut. xiii. 1-3; which is of itself

sufficient to show that reason is concerned, in faith, not simply with the seal of God's word outwardly considered, but with the intrinsic reasonableness also of the word itself. A miracle in favor of a lie proves nothing. Is the word itself then enough, without the miracle? By no means. Only they are not to be sundered one from the other. They are wedded together as body and soul. The body authenticates the presence of the soul; but it is only as the soul, at the same time, authenticates the life of the body. Christ's miracles then are indeed a divine attestation of his character and mission; but their true force for this end holds at last in their relation to his person. *That* underlies all truth in the world besides; and how then could it be proved or made sure by any other form of truth, taken as something separate from itself? Christ thus authenticates himself, and all else that is true. Not abstractly again however, but concretely, in and by the living relations of his presence in the world. The supernatural in his life, including his miracles, forms but the natural and proper expression of what his life was in its own power. The force of all falls back finally on his person itself; and it is with this accordingly that faith has to do primarily, in accepting his Divine mission. The voice of God for it, attesting the revelation comes not from abroad, but in and through the revelation itself. Thou art the Christ, it says with Peter, and to whom else shall we go; thou hast the words of eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son of God," says St. John, "hath the witness in himself; he that believeth not God—in and by this revelation—hath made him a liar" (1 John v. 10). Not to own and obey Christ, is the greatest possible wrong to truth which any man can commit. It is such a blow at God's veracity as can be aimed at it in no other way; for the Truth of truth itself is Christ, the alpha and omega of life, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Faith here is not indifferent to the word and work of Christ; but still it sees these in the light of his person, and does not so much conclude to this as from it, in the view it takes of their significance. It is not by establishing his miraculous conception, or the fact of his resurrection, in an abstract separate view, that we prove him to be the Son of God; but we must feel him in the first place to be the Son of God, with Peter, before we can truly believe, on any evidence, either the first of these facts or the last. *He* is the last proof of both. So in the Creed. Christ authenticates himself for faith, not by mere outward warrant and seal of any sort, but by direct communication, in some way, with the rational nature of men, as being himself indeed the life of reason and the only true light.

of the world. Faith here, as in all other cases, is led by motives of assent in its object, and not simply by motives drawn from some other quarter; or in other words, the authority of God moving it is not on the outside of the object, but comes to view in and by the object bearing its proper seals, these last having no conclusive force save in union and connection with the first.

Mr. Brownson himself is forced to allow something like this in the end, though as it seems to us not without contradiction to his own general theory. Reason may conclude in its own sphere, he says, from the natural to the supernatural by the miracle; but not so as to generate faith; this comes in another way as a free donation from God. It is not given to us in the fact that we are human beings, but supernaturally, so as to lift us from the order of nature to the order of grace. Supernaturalized in this way, "the creditive subject is placed on the plane of the supernatural credible object, and they are thus *correlatively* creditive and credible; and if no obstacle intervene, the act of faith is not only elicitable, but elicited, *without other motive than is contained in the subject and object*, as is the case with every act of faith, whether human or divine." Faith then is not blind and regardless of its object. "The *donum fidei* is not a general *vis creditiva*, but simply *vis creditiva* in relation to its special correlative, the supernatural credible object." What it believes is the authority of God, but this authority in identification always with the object it commends to faith; just as light, in the natural world, bears witness to the objects of sense, shows them as they are for the eye, by making them at the same time the medium of its own revelation. Such is the view given of the subject in the article, *Liberalism and Catholicity*.—July, 1846; which however, as we have just said, seems not to agree fully with what is said, when we are told, *April*, 1845, "that faith or belief, as distinguished from knowledge and science, rests on authority extrinsic both to the believer and the matter believed." If this be meant simply to exclude the notion that reason is the mother of faith, the so-called *Vulgar Rationalism*, it is all very well. But in the hands of Mr. Brownson, it is made to mean much more. It sets faith out of the sphere of reason altogether, and reduces it to the character of a mere blind assent to outward authority; contrary to what we find him saying again of the *donum fidei*, as an actual bringing of the subject into inward correlation with the object believed. Where the authority for faith is thus taken to be extrinsic to the supernatural object, as with the system generally, we are thrown at last on the very *rationalism*, which it is sought in this way to avoid. So our

common abstract supernaturalism, on the Protestant side, is in the habit of concluding *logically*, from miracles and other evidence in the sphere of nature, to the supernatural authority of the Bible, and then pretends to make this, in such outward view, a complete succedaneum subsequently for all reason besides—as though reason and revelation were only contiguous spheres, the one ending where the other begins; not considering, that the whole authority of the Bible itself thus can be no better at last than the strength of the logic, on which as an arch it is made in this way fundamentally to rest. To make the Church however a succedaneum for reason, in like outward style, comes precisely to the same thing. Allow the *donum fidei*, as an elevation of the mind to the plane of the supernatural, and the case is changed; but then also it is no longer easy to see, why faith should be bound so mechanically to the voice of the Church, as an authority extrinsic to the truth itself. The Church we hold too to be the medium of the Christian revelation, the organ by which Christ makes himself known in the world, and which is to be revered on this account, through all ages, as his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. But it is all this, not in a mechanical quasi-magical way, as a witness set forward to propound the truth in outward style only, a supernatural automaton with the Pope at Rome for its mouth piece. The Church is the body of Christ, only as it serves to reveal Christ, under a truly living and historical form, in the history of the world; in which view all the power it has to propound Christ as an object of faith, is found in the fact of its being itself an object of faith through Christ and from him, the form in which his life completes itself among men. Faith starts then in Christ. *Because* we believe in him, we believe also the Holy Catholic Church; and not in the reverse order. The Church is still necessary as an indefectible witness to the truth; but her indefectibility is a moral fact, not a physical necessity, made good through the activity of the general Christian life itself, the life of Christ in his people, working out its own problem in a truly human way. Why should not the supernatural in this form be quite as accessible for the *donum fidei*, as when exhibited or propounded in a purely outward and abstract style? Nature, we know, is not grace. This pertains to a higher order. But why may not the higher order reveal itself through the very life and constitution of the lower, supernaturalizing it for its own ends, as well as in an abrupt outside way; in such sort as to be for faith still all the authority that is needed, to place it in the infallible possession of Christ's word?

It may be made a question, whether the Roman system itself, rightly understood, actually claims in its own favor any such purely outward and mechanical infallibility, as we find attributed to it by Mr. Brownson and others of like wholesale zeal. At least, there is much in its order and history to conflict with the supposition, and to show that it is not the true original sense of what the Church is required to be for our faith in this view. A somewhat curious exemplification is furnished here by a late work entitled, *Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome*; in which, among other discussions, there occurs a friendly disputation with two learned professors of the Roman University on this very topic, the infallibility of the Church. The ground is taken on the Protestant side, that the Church of Rome does not formally claim to be infallible, that there is no decree of any general council, no bull of any pope, no canon or article of an authoritative nature, asserting any such attribute in her favor. This was at first treated with derision by the Jesuit professors; but on being seriously challenged to prefer proof to the contrary, they showed themselves completely puzzled and perplexed, and in the end were compelled fairly to give up the point. With all their learning, no such decree, bull, or canon, could be quoted.¹ It is one thing to affirm that the Church is indefectible, as the

¹ *Mornings among the Jesuits at Rome. Being Notes of conversations held with certain Jesuits on the Subject of Religion in the City of Rome. By the Rev. M. Hobart Seymour, M. A.—p. 138-144.* The work has some things that read strangely. So far as we know, however, it is allowed to pass as authentic. Since the date of these conversations, we have a pretty explicit claim to infallibility, in the form required, on the part of the present Pope, if his Encyclical Epistle, Nov. 9, 1846, is to be taken as of any canonical force. "Hinc plane apparet," he says, "in quanto errore illi etiam versentur, qui ratione abutentes, ac Dei eloquia tamquam humanum opus existimantes, proprio arbitrio illa explicare, interpretari temere audent, cum Deus ipse jam constituerit auctoritatem, quæ verum legitimumque celestis suæ revelationis sensum doceret, constabiliret, omnesque controversias in rebus fidei et morum *infallibili* judicio dirimeret, ne fideles circumferantur omni vento doctrinæ in nequitia hominum ad circumventionem erroris. Quæ quidem *viva et infallibilis* auctoritas in ea tantum viget Ecclesia, quæ a Christo Domino supra Petrum edificata, suos legitimos semper habet Pontifices sine intermissione ab ipso Petro ducentes originem, in ejus Cathedra collocatos, et ejusdem etiam doctrinæ, dignitatis, honoris ac potestatis hæredes et vindices. Et quoniam ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia, ac Petrus per Romanum Pontificem loquitur, et semper, in suis successoribus vivit, et judicium exercet, ac præstat quærentibus fidei veritatem, iccirco divina eloquia eo plane sensu sunt accipienda, quem tenuit ac tenet hæc Romana Beatissimi Petri Cathedra, quæ omnium Ecclesiarum mater et magistra fidem a Christo Domino traditam integram inviolatamque semper servavit."—This is sufficiently bold and strong, it must be confessed.

pillar and ground of the truth, and another thing quite to predicate infallibility of all her judgments and decisions in an abstract magical way. The Church is constitutionally holy, called to holiness and formed for holiness; yet never in such form as to be absolutely free, here on earth, from corruption and sin. So too she is constitutionally true, and the truth can never fail from her communion, as it can have no place also beyond it; yet all this in the midst of present error, confusion and contradiction. The truth is in her life, considered as a whole, and is to be sought in such form by the individual believer, with child-like though still free and independent docility and obedience. Even the Church of Rome is compelled to allow this to some extent, in her own way. If the case required only an outward oracle on the one side, and implicit passive obedience on the other, how has it happened that the authority after all is not offered, in every case, in the most direct and universally accessible form, for all to read or hear at any moment without the possibility of mistake? This, we all know, is not the case. The infallibility attaches, not to the ministers of the Church separately, but to the ministry as a whole; and so it is only in certain circumstances, and under certain conditions, that the Pope himself, the head of the corporation, is to be taken as its true voice. Seven requisites must be at hand, we are told, to show a decision of the pope infallible; 1st. communication with the bishops of the universal Church, asking the assistance of their prayers; 2nd. the possession of all available information on the point in hand; 3d. a formal assertion of authority; 4th. universal promulgation; 5th. universal reception by the Church as infallible authority; 6th. limitation to proper sphere, having for its matter a question of faith or morals; 7th. freedom, on the part of the pope, from all outward compulsion or constraint. This is something wide away from a mere mechanical infallibility. There is no safety in the mind of the pope, any farther than it is found to hold in *living* communion with the mind of the universal Church; and of this no assurance can be had by the common christian, without active, waking, and earnest attention on his own part. Plainly the infallibility here claimed is not inspiration. Mr. Brownson himself makes it to be different. If however it were wholly above the ordinary law of knowledge, by which truth is apprehended through the activity of mind in its general living character, it must be fully equivalent to inspiration or else mere magic. The very fact then that this is disclaimed, goes to show that the infallibility in question is conditioned after all by the working of the universal mind of the Church, that it is a result

of the concrete life of the Church, and that it belongs thus to the process of history and must bear also a truly historical form. If it were not so, why should the pope ever hesitate or pause, when any new decision is to be made, instead of fetching forth at once from the promptuary of his infallible stewardship the precise answer required. Just now, it seems, he is travailing in pain with the article of the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary, and has called on the bishops of the universal Church to assist him by their prayers, in the business of bringing it, if possible, to a satisfactory official decision.¹ But if there be no *history* for christian doctrine, no development, no growth or progress; if on the contrary all is to be regarded as a full grown Minerva from the beginning; why, we may well ask, the suspense of centuries on this great article heretofore, in the midst of interminable strife and war; and why this difficulty in bringing the infallibility of the pope to bear upon it forthwith, for its final settlement at the present time. It shows two things; first, that Christianity, for Rome itself, is *not* full grown from the start, and one always in the form of its faith; secondly, that the pope, to have authority even for Rome, must be more than a divine automaton, must be incorporated actively with the life of the Church, must be the organ of truth for it through the mediation

¹ See his late Encyclical, dated Gaeta, Feb. 2, 1849; where he represents the subject as weighing heavily on his mind, announces that he has appointed a special commission of eminent theologians and cardinals to investigate its claims, and calls upon the bishops to have prayers solemnly offered in all the churches for his illumination and guidance in so great a concern, as well as to report to him the mind and feeling of the faithful in regard to it throughout the Catholic world. This surely is something more than simply affirming an old truth, clearly possessed from the beginning, in the face of a new error. "If there be anything in which Catholic theologians are agreed," says Mr. Brownson, "it is in these two points; that the revelation in the beginning was perfect, and that nothing can be proposed by the Church to be believed, *fide divina*, not revealed from the beginning."—1847, p. 66. "If there be anything uniformly taught by our theologians, it is that the faith of the Fathers was perfect, that the revelation committed to the Church was complete and entire, and that the Church has, from the first, faithfully, infallibly, taught or proposed it. If this be true, as it would at least be temerity to question, there can be, there can have been, no latent or merely virtual doctrine, waiting for heresy and controversy to call it forth, and to render it formal and actual. There is implicit belief,—for individuals may be ignorant, some on one point, and some on another; but there is, save in a very restricted sense indeed, no implicit teaching."—p. 77. Has the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin been part of this formal teaching from the time of the Apostles? If so, why all this hesitation and care on the part of the Pope, about erecting it into an article of faith in the year 1849?

of this life itself, reaching him at last in a perfectly human and historical way. With any such view as this, however, the theory of infallibility against which we have been arguing, and which seems to us to be held by Mr. Brownson, at once falls to the ground.

We have a striking, and as it appears to us very significant, illustration of Mr. Brownson's wrong view of history, in an article on *The Church in the Dark Ages*, published July, 1849. While he shows off with just severity the stupidity of the slang, which is often employed against this period, by men who show themselves profoundly ignorant of the whole glorious mission accomplished by the Church after the downfall of the Roman empire,¹ he has no mind at the same time to fall in with the undue glorification of mediæval history into which some have been carried latterly, by a sort of reaction against that other extreme. Digby's *Mores Catholici, or Ages of Faith*, he considers not sufficiently guarded on this side. With all that was good in the Church, as such, those ages were full of abominations under a different view. She had by no means a clear field and her own way, for a thousand years, as her enemies now say, but stood in constant battle with hostile forces that sought to bring her down to the dust. It is well enough, Mr. Brownson thinks, for Protestants, of the Romantic and Puseyite Schools, to seek a rehabilitation of this old, long misunderstood and abused, mediæval life; their own Church is a mere corpse, and they may be pardoned for seeking to deck her off in the robes of the dead past, instead of those that belong to the present; but with Catholics (Roman) it is different. "They seek their Lord not

¹ "Never indeed did she give more unequivocal proofs of her supernatural origin and support, than in those ages of ignorance, violence and blood; never did she struggle with more manifest supernatural constancy and force, or with more glorious trophies to her celestial prowess." Those ages open with the destruction of the Western Roman Empire, and the permanent settlement of the Northern Barbarians on its ruins. Society was reduced almost to chaos, a new civilization was to be created out of the most wild and rude material. The church, after having subdued the world as it stood before had her own work to do over again. "Far more disheartening were her prospects than when she concealed herself, in the catacombs, or bled under Nero, Decius, Maximian, and Diocletian; and far more laborious was the task now before her, than that which she had accomplished in passing from that upper room in Jerusalem to the throne of the Cæsars." Alas, how much of the argument for the divine power of christianity as found in the form of church history, is obscured or altogether lost for those who yield themselves to the prejudice, (blind as Erebus, though wiser in its own conceit than seven men who can render a reason,) that the darkness of the Middle Ages sprang from the Catholic Church.

in the dead past, but in the living present, in the Church that is, and is to be until the consummation of the world, unvaried and invariable." The distinctive human side of the Middle Ages, the new element which then came into society, Mr. Brownson seems anxious rather to disown, as something outward and foreign altogether to the proper Christian life. As far as the Church was active in the phenomena of the time, we accept them and glory in them, he tells us, but as it regards all lying beyond, we feel comparatively indifferent. "Under the point of view of humanity, it matters little to us, as Catholics, how dark, how superstitious, how turbulent, violent, or barbarous" these ages were. Strange to say, we find the advocate of Romanism here joining hands, to some extent, with Pseudo-protestantism, in the view that the proper sense of the world was interrupted and stopped by the overthrow of the old Roman civilization; that there is no meaning in the chaos that follows, farther than it gave room to labor for the recovery of what had been lost; and that the great task and problem for a whole millenium of years following, was simply to fill up its own blank by the reconstruction of the Christian life once more in its first form. How does this happen? Pseudo-protestantism sees in the Middle Ages only the growing power of Rome, and gives them up accordingly as a "grand apostasy" from first to last, (the Devil's millenium, Christ asleep and the gates of hell triumphant,) for the purpose of making short and easy its own argument against the Pope. Mr. Brownson, on the other side, with much better perspicacity, begins to see in these same Middle Ages, Dark Ages, or as they are sometimes called Ages of Faith, the embryonic life of Protestantism itself, ripening in the womb of Catholicism, by a pregnancy of centuries instead of months, under the forms of the Roman faith and worship, for the mighty birth that followed by due course of time in the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Such undoubtedly is the true view of this great fact. Protestants, who insist on sundering the Reformation from the Church life of the previous period, do as much as they well can to ruin their own cause. Unless it be the product of all earlier church history, it can deserve no faith. Let it appear on the other hand, that the causes which led to it, under God, were in full force for centuries before; that they were seated in the life of the modern world as a part of its intrinsic nature and constitution; that their operation is to be traced back even to the world-historical epoch, which laid the foundations of modern society amid the crumbling ruins of that which went before; and it becomes at once to the same extent

difficult to resist the conviction, that it belongs to the true sense of Christianity, and that it came to pass by the finger of God. Such in truth is the actual state of the case. The new form of humanity brought in by the Northern Barbarians did not merely furnish material for re-civilizing Europe in its old form, but offered elements which were not previously at hand for the creation also of another order of civilization ; by which in the end Christianity was to become more complete, than it could ever have become under the first order. Out of this new order of the Christian life, made possible only through the Germanic nature as distinguished from the old Roman, sprang with inward necessity at last the *Protest* of the Reformation. Mr. Brownson, as we have said, sees this ; more quick of vision here than many Protestants ; and sets himself to forestall, as he best can, the weight it carries against his own cause. "We frankly confess," he says, "we are Græco-Roman, and to us all tribes and nations are barbarian, just in proportion as they recede from the Græco Roman standard." This is the climax of culture, humanly considered. "Nowhere else does history show us man receiving, under all the aspects of his nature, so high, so thorough, so symmetrical, and so masculine a cultivation, as under this wonderful civilization." Add Christianity to it, "and you have a civilization beyond which there is nothing to seek." Tried by this standard, the Middle Ages cannot stand the test. The Church labored to re-civilize them, as well as she could, according to the old norm, with which she has a native affinity ; but this could be done only so far as the nations were brought to exchange the Barbaric nature for the Roman. "Wherever the barbaric element has remained predominant in the national life, as in Russia, Scandinavia, Prussia, Saxony, Northern Germany, or where, through exterior or interior causes, it has regained the preponderance, as in England and the once Christianized Oriental nations, the nation has relapsed into heathenism, or fallen off into heresy or schism. In several of the nations which have fallen off from the Church, the old barbaric institutions, traditions, customs, and hereditary hatred of Græco-Roman civilization, always survived in the heart of the people, and nourished a schism between its national life and its Christian faith." In all this there is much truth. The Romanic nations remain Papal ; while the Germanic nations, in virtue of a new element peculiar to themselves, could never make over their will in the same way to mere outward rule, and so in the end have become Protestant. It is perfectly clear that *nationality* has exercised a determining influence on this great issue, from the beginning.

Protestantism is the child of the modern civilization, the Teutonic life, and not of the Græco-Roman.¹

But what now is the true significance of this fact? The old Græco Roman civilization, says Mr. Brownson, must be held normal for all ages; your Teutonic life consequently is at fault, just in the measure of its variation from this rule; and so Protestantism is found to be simply part and parcel of the same general abnormality, the final upshot, we may say, of the war carried on with the authority of the church by the refractory spirit of these Northern Barbarians from the beginning. A convenient theory truly. But how violent, at the same time, and arbitrary. Only see what it involves. The normal order of the world naturally considered, its best possible form and true ultimate sense, just as it was ready to go fully into the arms of Christianity, suddenly dashed to the ground and turned into universal wreck by the inundation of an entirely new life, uncivilized, unlettered, absolutely wild and rude: Europe planted with elementary nations, requiring the growth of centuries to bring them to any mature and settled political form: The work of a thousand years laid upon the church, only to regain in some measure the loss created by this sad catastrophe: A new civilization in time, which refuses however to fall fully into the true Christian order; carries in it more or less a semi-barbarous, heathenish character; and issues finally in an open rebellion against the

¹ American life might seem to be, in this view, the very efflorescence of the Protestant spirit, and as such the worst possible for the admission of Catholic influences. Mr. Brownson, however, judges differently. "Our civilization," he tells us, "is founded on a right basis, is Roman and Christian in its ground work; and there never has been a State constituted throughout more in harmony with Catholic principles than the American." True, our American fathers had unhappily turned their backs upon the Church; but they had been nursed, notwithstanding, in the bosom of her civilization. "That civilization they brought with them to this New World, purged of the barbaric leaven which was still in some measure retained in the Mother country, and against which the Popes and the whole spiritual society had protested for ten centuries. Whoever will examine the respective civil institutions of England and this country, will hardly fail to perceive, that what of England we have rejected is what she owes to her barbarous ancestors, and what we have added, which she has not, has been borrowed from Roman and Catholic civilization. Indeed, just in proportion, under a civil and political point of view, as we have receded from England, we have approached Rome and Catholicity."—*Civil and Religious Toleration*.—July, 1849, p. 307. Here is a discovery worth looking at certainly. The precious spark of liberty, to which we owe our Constitution, is after all not from Geneva but from Rome! The Pilgrim Fathers stand in the same line, politically, with the Popes! Puritanism belongs of right to Popery. The body is here already prepared; "it is moulded from fine, rich, red earth, in a form of majestic proportions, and of surpassing beauty, wanting nothing but the Divine Breath to be breathed into its nostrils in order to become a living soul."

Church, which at the same time bears away with it palpably the central powers and activities of the world's natural life, with a momentum which centuries have no power to check or restrain. It needs surely no small gift of faith seriously and steadily to give credit to all this. Was the wreck of Græco Roman culture an *accident*? Did the Northern Barbarians come on the stage of Europe, without God's will and plan? Was there no end to be answered for Christianity and the world, by the taking down of the former civilization, the bringing in of new material, the open field created for the building up of another life, and the work of so many centuries employed in the accomplishment of this great object? These questions, it seems to us, carry in them their own answers. The true use to be made of the whole case, then is just the reverse of Mr. Brownson's view. God moves in history. It must therefore have meaning. It must especially minister to Christ and his Church; for is not *he* head over the whole of it, for this very end? If a sparrow fall not without his eye, how could the *Volkerwanderung* take place by chance? The fact that he should so remove the old, and make room for the new, and call in the historical process of a thousand years to come to his object, is itself enough to show, not only that the new civilization thus sought was to be different from that which was rejected in its favor, but also that it was to be of a superior order, of more vigorous constitution, better suited to the wants of humanity and more answerable to the interior demands of Christianity. This superiority of the modern civilization, then, turns on the new element which has been brought into it by the Germanic or Barbarian life, in distinction from the old Roman. It amounts to nothing that Mr. Brownson stigmatizes this as heathen; for the old Roman life was originally heathen too; and it is purely gratuitous to assume that Christianity might not appropriate and assimilate to itself the peculiarities of a Barbarian nationality as fully and completely as those of the Græco-Roman. Its province is not to stand on the outside of nature in the way of foreign help, but to enter into it, to clarify it, and to fill it with divinity after its own form and type. The new civilization thus brought to pass carried in itself, from the beginning, the principle of *freedom*, which gave birth finally, as Christ had all along designed, to the fact of Protestantism. Its distinctive power, of course, fell in with this fact. The Romanic nations were left behind; not without some great ulterior purpose, we presume; while the Germanic nations, obedient to the law of their life, are carrying the sense of history in the Protestant direction. It does not follow at once, we know, that Protestantism is all that the world needs for its salvation, because it now carries all temporal interests in its stream. Outward activity and

strength are not of themselves the guaranty of grace. The Protestant movement *may* prove morally unequal to its own problem. Still this cannot change the significance of the fact as now stated. It belongs to the reigning power of the world's civilization. It has its seat in the spirit of the nations that go with it, and their spirit now rules the course of humanity, as something plainly in advance of the spirit that meets us in nations still bound to the authority of Rome. In this view, if we believe in Christ, we are bound to acknowledge in it, if nothing more, yet surely the necessary medium of transition at least for the Church of God into a higher and better state. Not to do so, turns the past into a riddle and shrouds the future in despair. Protestantism, as the world now stands at all events, has the floor of history, carries the word of the age; and the last sense of Christianity, the grand scope of Christ's Mediatorial reign, is to be reached *through* it, by its help and intervention in some way, and not by its being hurled aside as an impertinent accident, or mere nullity, in the course of this all conquering dispensation.

It is high time for us, however, to bring this long article to a conclusion. It will be perceived that our object has been, to convict the general Roman principle of falsehood, by showing it to run into untenable consequences and to be at war with the true conception of our life. This is not with us, of course, an argument for the mere negation or denial of the same principle, as the true meaning and force of Protestantism. We have before tried to expose the rock on that side; and our object now in setting forth the dangers of the whirlpool, is not certainly to recommend the first, as on the whole less false and terrible than the second. Rationalism, the resolution of faith into the mere mind and will of man, (with the Bible or without it,) under all its forms and shapes, we religiously abhor and hate. With the reigning slang on that side, we have no sympathy whatever. Here then the question comes, How are these extremes to be at once both avoided? And no question can well be more great and solemn. We pretend not now, however, to answer it. Enough so far, if we have been able to show that it needs and demands an answer; that the truth is not, in this case, in either of the alternatives, separately taken, which for the common understanding seem to cover the whole ground; that Christianity, in one word, must find its true sense between them, in a form of life which shall be the union of both. It is much to be sure of what is false and wrong here, even if at a loss still to master the full meaning of what is right. The best preparation for solving the problem of the age, is to be well satisfied that the problem really exists, and so to feel earnestly that it calls for a solution.

J. W. N.