CHRISTIAN·ETHICS

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BY

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LONDON
T. C. & E. C. JACK
16 HENRIETTA STREET, W.C.
AND EDINBURGH
1909

To

MISS ISABEL GRACE CHALMERS

IN REMEMBRANCE

OF MUCH KINDNESS AND

A GREAT SORROW

1879 1909

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS

CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS AND CAUTIONS

Christian ethics are a systematic study of the duties of Christians as individuals and in society. It differs from general ethics in that it takes express cognisance of the Christian facts, forces, and motives. Thus, primarily at least, it is ethics for Christians. It differs from Christian doctrine in that it considers the Christian man or the Christian society as the agent in well-doing, though helped and inspired by God, whereas doctrine rather studies God as the doer of all things in providence and redemption.

We must not expect too much from Christian ethics. If systematic knowledge could save, the law, not the gospel, would be the way of redemption. Neither Christ nor St. Paul deals in ethical system; almost the only approach to it in the New Testament being the table of Family Duties in Colossians, Ephesians, and I. Peter.

This lack of formal teaching is no accident; still less is it a defect. The hampering letter is obsolete. Christians are to act from loving hearts, as led by God's Spirit. It is a grievous relapse when legalism becomes master of the Christian Church throughout the Middle Ages. On the other hand, **there is room for Christian ethics.** The disciples of Christ are to act from conscious intelligent deliberate choice. It is our duty as well as our privilege to study from every side the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, and to learn lessons by means of reflective study. Only, let us remember that our task is secondary. Practical godliness and personal conscientiousness come first.

As a separate branch of study, Christian ethics is **comparatively young.** The theological systems, or *Summæ*, of the mediæval schoolmen included everything —duty no less than doctrine. It was only after the Reformation that theology, Roman Catholic and Protestant, began to divide and subdivide into different branches and sections. **The Roman Catholic name** for what we call Christian Ethics is "**Moral Theology**"; and the Roman Church always aims mainly, though not exclusively, at manuals for father confessors—handbooks of Church law for the treatment of sinful souls. There is thus a gulf fixed between Roman and Protestant ideals. "**Christian Ethics**" **appears for the first time** as the name of a treatise by a French Protestant theologian settled at Geneva—Daneau, or "**Danæus**"; a Reformed theologian

in the stricter sense (Calvinist-Zwinglian, in contrast to the Lutherans). The main feature of Daneau's treatise is his exposition of the Ten Commandments. Christianity is gloriously pre-eminent in having this perfect Divine revelation of duty! That is not quite our modern view (chap. x.); nor should we claim superiority to Moral Philosophy on the special ground of the Decalogue. Daneau seems to us, in a way, legalist—just as Puritanism was in many ways legalist. To live up to the programme of liberty is a hard task; and Protestantism was in no small danger of falling to pieces when Daneau's master, Calvin, stretched forth his strong, grim hands and—at a pretty heavy price—saved the situation. The **first** recorded **Lutheran** treatise on our subject is by the godly and peace-loving **Georg Calixtus** (*Theologia Moralis*, 1634).

But the **modern study** of Christian ethics as a science among Protestants **dates from** the life-work of **Schleiermacher** (1768–1834). Even where his doctrines are distrusted, his views on questions of system have had great influence. He concluded, with some hesitation, that Christian doctrine and Christian ethics were the two independent, co-ordinate branches of systematic theology, and—with less hesitation—that Christian ethics and philosophical ethics were independent, co-ordinate sciences, studying duty. In agreement with these views, he wrote himself (more than once) upon philosophical

ethics; wrote also upon Christian ethics; and wrote (of course) upon Christian doctrine. In his principal treatise upon philosophical ethics, Schleiermacher made use of a threefold subdivision, discussing ethics from the point of view of Virtue, of Duty (or of the moral law), and of the Chief Good. Schleiermacher did not himself apply this scheme to Christian ethics; but the example of another illustrious German Protestant divine, **Richard Rothe** (*Theological Ethics*, 1845, and later), made this threefold subdivision dominant for a long time in the text-books of our own study. Lately, it has become unpopular because of the repetition it involves. At the present day there is no accepted method of analysing Christian ethics into detail. Every teacher takes his own way. Of course, the three studies, or sciences, stand—Dogmatic Theology, Christian Ethics, Philosophical Ethics; though authorities, Roman Catholic and Protestant, sometimes repeat Schleiermacher's doubt—whether it is wise to separate the treatment of Christian ethics from that of doctrine.

Theologians, then, regard Christian ethics primarily as a **science**. That is to say, it is meant, first of all, not to edify, but to enlighten; not to make us better, but wiser. The same thing is still more plainly true of doctrinal theology; although of course, indirectly, all theology exists for the edifying of the Church, and a so-called "scientific" theology—in the sense of being indifferent

to the Christian life—is a monstrosity. Nor must we press too far the conception of scientific Christian ethics even in the narrower sense in which **scientific means systematic.** It might be a task for an archangel, upon a holiday afternoon in heaven, to discuss in systematic shape the duty of all Christians everywhere in every age. But on earth we do better to follow the example of the Master and His apostles, and to speak, so far as we can, to the hour. What else, indeed, could a brief, popular book attempt? Even the larger treatises on our subject include a good deal of practical or applied ethics. And that is nothing to be ashamed of.

The separation from doctrine has its difficulties. If we ask—first, what am I to believe? secondly, what am I to do? we tend to separate treatment. (So, substantially, in the Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism*.) We ought very carefully to examine these questions before we accept them as guiding clues! For, if we ask instead, What is *the truth* about doctrine? and, What is *the truth* about my duty? it looks as if the two discussions ought to be closely combined. The author of a memorable treatment on the Atonement, **John M'Leod Campbell,** suggested[1] that if our doctrine was what it ought to be—thoroughly ethical and spiritual—we should not need to bring in Christian ethics as a counterpoise. This is indeed a home-thrust.

[1] *Nature of the Atonement*, chap. xv.

Perhaps we may admit that the **Johannine type** of New Testament teaching does **not** lend itself to such **division.** And our Scottish St. John had himself a Johannine or—as it is sometimes (wisely or unwisely) termed—a "mystical" mind, seeing the unity in all truth rather than the distinctions. But there are many mansions in our Father's house. **Christ's** own teaching, as found in the Synoptic Gospels, is a teaching of duty with doctrine implied in it; and **St. Paul** separates the two (*e.g.* Rom. i.–xi. and Rom. xii.–xv.), though with him doctrine predominates and duty comes in as a corollary, introduced with a mighty "therefore" (Rom. xii. 1). The last thing which students of Christian ethics contemplate is to allow doctrine to be less than ethical. We rather wish to watch over the ethical implications of doctrine. On the whole, both subjects ought to gain in ethical quality by separate and detailed treatment.

The frontier between Christian and philosophical ethics is also hard to define. On the one hand, what is Christian is to be found with Christ alone. On the other hand, whatever is truly Christian appeals to the universal conscience, and Christ is the Saviour of the world. We here strike upon the vexed problem of faith and reason; or reason and revelation; or God's immanence and His transcendent action; or of the natural and the supernatural. Put into a different

region, that of outward institutions, our problem takes a new form—that of Church and State. Let us compare with each other the following proposals. Thomas **Arnold** (of Rugby) held that the Church was identical with the State. His State was to maintain a Christian creed, while practising the widest possible comprehension within Christianity. Hence Arnold nearly broke his heart when Jews were admitted to Parliament. Next, we have **Rothe's** view. As the State becomes more and more efficient, moralised, godly, the Church (as an external institution) must shrink to smaller and smaller dimensions. The State must increase and the Church decrease. When all the lump is leavened, what need for the separate existence of the leaven? The State will gradually assume all Church functions. Again, a rather more recent German writer, **I. A. Dorner**, held that as general philosophical ethics ripened, separate treatment of Christian ethics must fade away. And once more a brilliant, if erratic, Scottish teacher of a generation ago, Dr. Jas. **Macgregor** (afterwards of New Zealand) poured contempt on the very idea of separating Christian ethics from general ethics. Duty is the same thing everywhere (under like circumstances) to all men; and their consciences know it to be so. This is the standpoint of Intuitionalist ethics (below, chap. iii. p. 23). Very similarly, one of the most profound and spiritual of recent German writers on our subject, Dr. **Herrmann**

of Marburg, calls his treatise *Ethics*, not Christian ethics. His view (if we may put it roughly) is that, while all morally earnest men know what the ideal is, the only motive which shows itself capable of fulfilling the ideal is the knowledge and love of Christ.

The present writer **cannot accept** any of the drastic solutions mentioned above. As far ahead as we can see, Christian ethics and philosophical must stand apart, and the Church must complement the State. The philosophers as such, studying reason and the natural conscience, is not in a position to say that "**the love of Christ constrains us.**" Can the Christian ever cease to say that? So profound a **motive** must also cast fuller light upon the scope and meaning of duty.

One more caution. There is danger of our supposing that we have fully fathomed Christ's calling. On ethics, if anywhere, **the Lord hath yet more light** to break forth from His Holy Word. The ethic practised by Christians always falls short of truly Christian ethics. It seems right, therefore, to conclude this short study by some reference to unsolved or half-solved **problems.**

Books for English readers. The most interesting of the older books on Christian ethics is the Danish bishop **Martensen's,** translated in three volumes. The first volume especially has a fine literary touch and a true spiritual ring. Of course it is pretty diffuse. Dr. **Newman Smyth's** volume in the *International Theological Series* is

the interesting talk of a kind and broad-minded American Christian. Dr. T. B. **Strong's** Bampton Lecture shows how far an Anglican can go towards the Roman Catholic outlook in matters of Christian ethics. On a smaller scale, with good practical and devotional quality, if again with an emphasis upon sacraments which evangelical Protestants may distrust, is Dr. J. R. **Illingworth's** *Christian Character.* Dr. T. B. **Kilpatrick's** book with the same title—incorporating discussions on "Christian Character" and on "Christian Conduct"—is also in manageable compass, and is probably the best thing on Christian ethics in our language for zeal and enthusiasm.

In teaching a class of Christian Ethics, the writer has found it a very good plan to read in class selected chapters from **Butler's** *Analogy* (to enforce the foundation truth of responsibility) and selected chapters from **Ecce Homo** (to enforce the new social enthusiasm which Jesus Christ lived and taught).

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL POSTULATES OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Can we define more exactly how Christian ethics compare with dogmatic (or doctrinal) theology? The Westminster Assembly's *Shorter Catechism* (p. 5) spoke of "what man is to believe concerning God," as contrasted with "what duty God requires of man." But doctrine includes other truths besides those which deal with God or Christ; it speaks about man, about sin, about salvation, about the last things. What is left over for Christian ethics? **We must approach the subject from a different point of view,** covering part of the same ground, but with a fresh outlook (p. 1). Christian ethic will **be a view of the Christian life from the inside, while** it is **still** in progress and **unfinished.** There cannot but be this twofold way of looking at the divine life. "Not I, but Christ" (Gal. ii. 20) is a deep, deep truth. "Workers together with God" (I. Cor. iii. 9; II. Cor. vi. 1)—that is deep truth too.

We might **further define** our relation to doctrine by saying that Christian ethic makes certain doctrinal **postulates** or assumptions. If there are theological teachings which make no difference in the life of duty, they are irrelevant to Christian ethics. But doctrine generally will either help or hinder. We demand what helps; we refuse what hinders—unless it can be reinterpreted, or have its character changed through being associated with other complementary views of truth. **Part of the business of Christian ethic is to keep doctrine ethical.**

(1) The first "theological postulate of Christian ethics," according to Dr. Newman Smyth, is the **Christian**, or, as he prefers to write, the "**ethical idea of God.**" God's **power** must be qualified in our thoughts by what we term His **moral attributes**, and we must place the latter **higher**. Not that we deny His omnipotence. He is "stronger than we" (I. Cor. x. 22). And this boundless strength is ours, in Christ, to save us. Yet we look beyond it to "the love that tops the power, the Christ in God."

Further: **within the ethical** attributes we recognise a certain **gradation**. (a) The first truth confessed of the Christian God beyond mere power is benevolence or **kindness**. This is much dwelt on by the pleasure philosophy (pp. 18, 23). (b) More deeply ethical is the view of God—in seeming contrast to His benevolence—as

just, and so (Bp. Butler would insist) **punishing** evil-doers rather than displaying indiscriminate benevolence towards all men (p. 25). (c) Supreme in the scale stands God's **love** or **grace**, which we might describe as benevolence at a higher level; or, benevolence which has taken justice into its heart; or, a justice that is more than just —a mercy "glorying against" mere "judgment" (Jas. ii. 13). This love or grace of God **saves sinners.** The Christian or ethical idea of God includes the great doctrine of Salvation. The God we presuppose is God **in Christ.**

(2) We have therefore to discuss our relation in Christian ethics to the doctrine of **sin.** Dr. Strong has specially emphasised this doctrine. Sin for the Christian cannot be mere "defect," as it may be for the "metaphysician," but must be "rebellion." This is a reasonable warning. The moral consciousness (which philosophical ethics study) contains all the materials for a doctrine of sin; and yet it is plain historical fact that man when conscious of the presence of a holy God thinks of sin as sinful—never besides. But is all sin a wilful and deliberate rebellion? Dr. D. W. Simon[1] has pointed out how easy it is to exaggerate this solemn doctrine, and how dangerous the consequences may be. Men come into this world, not as free agents unpledged to right or wrong, but as little children born into a tainted

[1] *Reconciliation by Incarnation*, chap. viii.

society, and in-breathing its sin-stained life from every word and custom and institution.

There seem to be **two views of sin** taught in the Bible and commending themselves to the Christian conscience. **One** view dwells upon the **identity** in quality of all evil decisions. Every sin is—sin. In the most secret and (so to speak) the smallest wrong-doing (or wrong-feeling), there exists, however latent, the fatal element of **rebellion** against a higher known good, and of preference for what is known to be evil. Yet, **on the other hand**, sin has its **degrees** and stages. It is unchristian to say that all sins weigh equally heavy in the scales of justice; that was one of the strained paradoxes of the Stoics. As there is a decision for Christ in every happy human life, so there comes to be a **decision against Christ**, against God, against goodness, in every miserable human life. We have no right to affirm that any fellow-man has arrived at that awful decision; we have no right to ignore that we ourselves may be drifting towards such a decision, and may be very near it. Not until such a decision is come to—"wilfully" (Heb. x. 26), by a sin "unto death" (I. John v. 16)—do we have the fatal separation from God and goodness which the other doctrine might seem to impute to every human child.

We need to combine these two doctrines. Just as Salvation may (and must) be interpreted both as God's gift and as man's choice, even so sin may and must be

interpreted both as one hideous evil, uniform throughout because everywhere sinful, and as a thing that grows from less to more till in the end—if the awful end is ever reached—it proves fatal. A reconciliation might be found in the fact that you cannot limit the evil potentialities of a single "small" sin. It is not done with. It lives on, working corruption, unless it is dried up and healed by the miracle-working grace of God. You cannot measure it "from side to side," just "three feet long and two feet wide." It is an infinite spring of woe; "a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. iii. 8). Yet there are other acts of sin which have ripened further towards the final and fatal corruption.

If it were necessary to choose between these two doctrines, then the doctrine of sin as one in **process** of growth would be the one proper to **Christian ethics.**

(3) Christian ethic treats man, even in sin, as **responsible**, and so as capable of choosing the better part and of grasping the means of deliverance. We are in a world which it seems impossible that any child of man (save One) should traverse without something of shame, and of the sickness of an evil conscience. This is indeed a mystery; yet we know it not merely as a doctrine, but as an experience that every man has made for himself. On the other hand, Christian ethic **protests against** the doctrine that man is **unfree yet responsible.** (a) Primarily, **freedom is the lot of Christians.**

They alone thoroughly escape from evil in loving God and goodness through the love of Christ. It is true, every one who loves wife or child or country or friend is, so far, a free man. But the central victory is gained in loving God. And it is Christ who invites us to that love, and makes it possible. For Christ shows us God's love towards us, and brings us His pardon. (b) Ethic implies that **no individual act of sin is necessitated.** We could not treat man as responsible if, at any single point, he were forced into wrong-doing. Therefore, **at least in this limited sense**, Christian ethics, like all genuine ethics, affirms the **freedom of the will in all men.**

(c) It is a more difficult problem whether Christian ethics has anything to affirm, by way of postulate, regarding the possibility of making the grand **decision, in favour of goodness**, apart from the knowledge of Christ. Christian ethics are ethics for Christians; do such ethics include assertions about non-Christians? Only if such assertions are bound up, by strict logical necessity, with others more proper to our subject—assertions regarding Christians themselves. One thing is plain. **We cannot hold that mankind are in any full sense responsible beings if they have not this larger freedom.** If non-Christian humanity are fated, do what they may, to prefer evil to good, they have no probation; but, when there is no chance of doing better, no fresh guilt can be

incurred. It seems in every way probable that, not merely isolated good actions, but a sincere love and preference for goodness may be found even apart from knowledge of the historical Christ, however the mind may be darkened by error and the will entangled among uncut bonds of sin.

(d) When **God's message** is delivered, it **is possible for men to accept** it. Christian ethics can never tolerate the opposite doctrine. (e) When the Gospel message is heard, **responsibility must rise.** "Times of ignorance" are over; "God commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts xvii. 30). More is given and more will be required (Luke xii. 48). Yet **the most notable effect** of preaching Christ will be, ethically, to make **God's appeal almost infinitely stronger** and more persuasive, and to bind together those who accept the call in a conscious and glorious fellowship, not only of faith but of service, as workers together with God. Also Christ promises us final deliverance from evil (in the heavenly life). No other authority can give that pledge. (f) **We sum up** these positions by saying that, **while it seems possible men should lean towards the good amid great darkness, Christ remains the Saviour of the world, and as such the only Saviour.**

(g) It has been the **general teaching** of the Christian Church that **sinless perfection is never reached** in this life. "In many things we all stumble" (Jas. iii. 2),

and Christ teaches disciples to pray, as for daily bread, so also for pardon (Matt. vi. 12). When it is taught in serious quarters—*e.g.* by **John Wesley** and his followers —that **a certain perfection** is **possible** on earth, the desire is, that we should not limit the power of God's grace. The New Testament itself, with what some moderns call its **enthusiastic** morals (pp. 56, 60), contains very strong affirmations: He that is begotten of God sinneth not (I. John v. 18); He cannot sin (iii. 9). This is one of the points where curious analysis seems rather to hinder than to help the moral life. What do we gain by laying down the Puritan doctrine, that we must "daily" sin "in thought, word, and deed"? It will be better to content ourselves with teaching that **as long as we live, we must take the sinner's place.** We have sinned; the possibility remains; the dreadful fact too often recurs. How often, God knows.[1]

[1] Some further remarks on free-will occur pp. 19, 27.

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

Our study must postulate at the hands of philosophy a scheme of ethics which admits the Christian view of the world. True, many different schools of ethical opinion may find adherents among Christian men. And that is well, for different aspects of the many-sided truth will thus be elucidated. Yet necessarily some schools of philosophy are nearer the Christian position than others. And (see p. 8) Christianity has its own peculiar and crowning ethical truths.

Our school of ethics defines the aim of life as happiness, and takes happiness to mean exactly the same thing as **pleasure**. We call this doctrine (by a word formed from the Greek word for pleasure) **Hedonism**. It is a plausible view. It seems to make the study of human welfare, and of the things promoting welfare, agreeably simple. Yet difficulties begin at once. The only thoroughly logical form of the doctrine is "individual

hedonism," or **Egoism.** It is my own pleasure that I am to seek. If I include one pleasure of yours in my ideal, I break with the strict principles of the system. Something else comes in besides the pleasantness of pleasant things. For the pleasure of another person is not, to me, mere pleasure.

Egoism is the doctrine which most completely **denies the freedom of the will.** We have to go where pleasure invites, to flee from where pain deters us; conduct is an automatic resultant of all the pleasures and pains that come into our reckoning. We cannot do otherwise (this has been called **psychological hedonism**). It is not reasonable that we should do otherwise (this has been called **ethical hedonism**). These two forms of hedonism generally go together! And yet, if the first is well-founded, what room is left for the second? If we needs must go where pleasure allures, it is foolish to say either that we ought or that we ought not to do so; we are machines, and cannot help ourselves. On such a view, ethics disappear. This would-be plain and easy method explains away the thing it undertook to explain. Or, to put the criticism differently: If there is room for saying "You ought," that just means that we are not fatally driven along the line of least resistance—that **we can** really act upon principle, really pause, **really choose.**

It has often been argued by English Idealist critics of hedonism **that there is no such thing as a sum of**

pleasures. Each pleasure in its turn dies before the next is born. "You seize the flower—its bloom is fled." Hence, it was argued, the theory of living for the greatest pleasure was unmeaning. A recent Idealist writer, Dr. Hastings **Rashdall, rejects this criticism.** Indeed, it sounds a little too clever. Yet surely **it contains a truth,** if sharpened into a paradox. To live for pleasure is to live in and for the moment. Such a life never can satisfy a being made for permanence. It is the interests, not the pleasures, of life which redeem it. Pleasures are useful packing, or pretty fringes, or elegant kickshaws—but that is all. Ethics do not begin until we look beyond the pleasure of the moment.

Dr. Rashdall's protest means something further. He **holds that pleasure is one part of the moral ideal.** In a sense we may agree with him. Suppose two souls, one very good and very miserable, in the martyr pangs of an unending, physical hell; the other very bad, yet in the environment of a physical heaven. No real moralist could doubt that it would be incomparably better to share with the first than with the second. Yet who could pretend that such a lot was completely satisfactory? No—we must ask of God to make the good happy. And He will do so.

We may concede that the **pleasure philosophy,** in its rigidly logical form, **stands,** however unworthily, **for one** great **truth—ultimate happiness is part of the moral**

ideal. But such happiness is not mere pleasure, however frequently repeated. It gets its meaning and worth from its combination with higher elements of the ideal. It is like a bit of colour, pure and sweet in itself, but far lovelier when it enters into the scheme of a great picture. Unless thus modified and transformed, pleasure hardly deserves the noble name of happiness, and does not at all deserve to be called moral.

When it offers itself **as a Christian doctrine, egoistic hedonism** does so by affirming that **God** in His strong power **makes** the bad ultimately wretched and the good happy; that goodness therefore will pay. This is an unworthy motive for goodness, if it is the only or the chief motive urged. What if goodness did not pay?

We shall hardly find any so-called Christian hedonism which does not add to egoism **at least one further element**—a doctrine of **benevolence** or regard for the pleasure of others. The greatest theological hedonist in our own country's history, **Paley,** proposed the combination; Virtue was doing good to mankind (benevolence) in obedience to the will of God (theology) for the sake of eternal happiness (egoism). This did not save him from Coleridge's just condemnation: "Paley is not a moralist."

Perhaps the most carefully thought-out form of a Benevolence hedonism is found in **Sidgwick's** *Methods of Ethics.* He brings in a new element, borrowed from the

philosophy next to be discussed; we have **an intuition** telling us **we ought** to make **others happy**. Then we calculate out, as best we may, what actions will, in point of fact, yield greatest general happiness. These are the right actions! But, if moral intuitions exist at all, can Sidgwick silence them after they have made one contribution to his philosophy? Is that safe? Is it decent?

Without theological background or intuitionalist borrowings, **Bentham** the great law-reformer, and his still more distinguished disciple, John Stuart **Mill**, tried to work their way logically to the maxims of benevolence from a starting-point of egoistic or psychological hedonism. Every one does and must seek his own happiness (alone)—*i.e.* every one seeks every one's happiness; therefore every one ought to seek the happiness of every other! A line of argument more creditable to the hearts than the heads of those who put it forward.

Any type of benevolence-philosophy or **Universalist hedonism stands nearer a true morality** than egoism does. To do good to others, or even to make them happy, is part of the Christian scheme of duty. But—not to repeat again criticisms upon its logical basis—**we cannot get a complete ethic** out of this system. It requires benevolence in man; and its Theistic advocates rise to the thought of God's benevolence; but no higher. In the eighteenth century English Deists,

German Rationalists, and the great majority of the orthodox, all sang the same song. They painted the universe in rose-pink, and saw kindness everywhere. Their wearisome shallowness set the nineteenth century spinning along lines of reaction (*e.g.* pessimism), though **Comte's "altruism" is just benevolence once more** as the master maxim. It was only a half-truth, or a smaller fragment still. Yet we have recognised that **benevolence does hold its place among the ethical attributes of God** (p. 11).

Bentham and Mill called their philosophy **Utilitarianism.** They meant that **actions** which are good **must be good-for-something**—must have **a use** in them. Goodness was made good by its good consequences. We have already granted that ultimate happiness does form part of the Christian's moral ideal; but we cannot admit that the external consequences of an act are **all** that give it moral quality. And now we pass on to speak of the great **rival** of the pleasure philosophy; the philosophy which seeks for acts that are **good-in-themselves.**

The most familiar form of what Mr. F. H. **Bradley** (*Ethical Studies*, 1876) called **duty for duty's sake** is **Intuitionalism.** It is not easy to find professed philosophers (perhaps, Miss F. P. Cobbe?) who occupy exactly the intuitionalist attitude. Bishop **Butler** is very near it, with his emphasis upon "veracity and justice"—

those seemingly uncomfortable virtues, which are the backbone of all lasting happiness; those virtues of conscious or unconscious faith—speaking the truth, doing the right, and leaving the issue to God! If the Utilitarian pleasure-philosophy calculates consequences in order to ascertain what is right, the duty-philosophy bids us listen to the voice of **conscience** and obey it "in scorn of consequence." All men, it says, have consciences, which let them "see" their duty—which give them "intuition" and clear vision of right and wrong.

The duty-philosophy may take at least **two distinct developments.** The **laxer** form says: As long as you do not break the laws of the land or of conscience, you may please yourself as to the positive tendencies of your action. You are "**free**" within these limits. You have a **right** to shape your own career in your own way. (The moral law saying "Don't"—not very exactingly.) The severer form—**Rigorism**—tells man that he is to produce the very maximum crop of every virtue at every moment. He is to take no rest. There is always something beyond that he might reach after. (The moral law saying endlessly "Do.")

These divergent types agree in one respect. They are both of them **individualist** systems, with a very negative outlook on social duty. The laxer school exhorts men to fight hard for individual rights (**Herbert Spencer,**

e.g. He started from hedonism, but took in reinforcements from intuitionalism; perhaps he robbed such intuitionalist thoughts of their deeper meaning). The stricter school says: Save your own soul, miserable man! Its most noteworthy voice is that of **Kant**, who admitted neither fellowship with men in the moral struggle (morality aims at "my own" perfection, and my neighbour's "happiness") nor the grace and love of God.

With all its depth and truth, this philosophy too is **imperfect.** It exaggerates the amount of agreement in the ethical judgments of different men. There is a large agreement; there is a real and a growing convergence. The wonder of the inner vision remains, and of the immediate certainty of duty. Yet moral agreement is not ready-made at the start. It needs education and even revelation to make it fully wise. So too intuitionalism may have discovered the moral individual with his sacred rights and liberties. It is good advice to "keep hold of him, now he has been evolved" (James Hinton). But we must go further; to a philosophy recognising a moral fellowship of moral individuals, "edifying" one another, and a God who inspires as well as rewards goodness, and who redeems the sinner. Meantime, **justice** (in God and man) **is the characteristic virtue** of intuitionalism.

We have thus seen two great rival watchwords in

ethics—pleasure and duty. Each has various developments; each is imperfect to the end. On the lines of pure **philosophy**, we may call in **two higher standards** to arbitrate and if possible to harmonise the warring claims—**social welfare** and **reason**. (Or we may appeal to both, simultaneously.)

We have seen morality interpreted as **a debt to self** (egoism), or **to others**, considered as a mass of individuals beside us (altruism, &c.), or **to the inner law** (intuitionalism). It will now be interpreted as a debt **to the State, or**—rather less definitely—**to society**. **Plato** and **Aristotle** expounded it in the former sense. **Leslie Stephen**, working with the conceptions of biology and evolution, takes the other shade of meaning, and interprets duty on **what society demands** from the individual. There is a great deal of truth in all this. Morality is good citizenship. Even the virtues which seem least directly remunerative in a social sense are indispensable. One example is purity. A little personal impurity means a wide-spreading social cancer. But **how are we to combine social duty** with **individual** rights and duties? Is the private convenience of society —which means the convenience of a majority—to override individual claims to life, to happiness, to moral health? Stephen's analysis fails to allow for the inner coincidence of private good with public claim. Good to self, good to others, are harmonised in good citizen-

ship. (The "My Station and its Duties" of *Ethical Studies*.) When this solution breaks down in detail philosophical ethic may be at a loss; but not religious. We have God to appeal to. We have eternity to draw upon.

The philosophy of social claim might mean a hideous social tyranny, extinguishing, not completing, those beginnings of morality found in the individual conscience and in personal rights. The last word of pure philosophy is therefore **the appeal to reason.** We have this appeal in **Kant**, who thus, with all his intuitionalist affinities, is not truly an intuitionalist. (Not, many given first principles of duty; **one** principle: obey Reason!) Yet Kant is an individualist and a rigorist, though he points beyond to higher truths—*e.g.* it is our own reason we obey in conscience; therefore obedience in man is **free.** We have the appeal to reason again in **Hegel,** separated from all individualism, and associated with a high doctrine of the State as the universal reason in a concrete shape—the highest achievement of man and of the universe.

Christian ethics must recognise the truth contained in each several type of ethical philosophy, but **it makes its additions.** There is no intensity like that of Christ. "Except your righteousness shall exceed that of the rigorists" (Matt. v. 20)—if in some respects the Pharisees represent the laxer type of legalism (p. 24), yet they im-

posed heavy burdens. But the same Christ says: "My yoke is easy" (Matt. xi. 30). So much for individual ethics. **Socially**, Christian ethics will not merge the Kingdom of God in any imperfect earthly beginnings—even in higher beginnings than Hegel's favourite, the Prussian bureaucratic State. But assuredly we must set ourselves to follow after good citizenship as a spiritual duty. In personal rights and pleasures, in benevolence, in veracity and justice, in public spirit and zeal for reform, in all Christian comradeship, we are to serve God our King and Father, and serving Him to seek the good of our fellows. The God who calls us to the obedience of children is God in Christ. And Christ stands for the claim of Humanity no less than for that of the Most High.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE gospel of Christ stands in uniquely close connection with the Old Testament. Revelation in the New Testament completes what it had begun elsewhere.. This holds good of ethics as well as of doctrine. Even the classical civilisation of Greece and Rome has passed on much to Christendom; its philosophies have helped to interpret Bible teachings regarding truth and duty: but there is no such inward bond of union with them as that which links Christian ethics to the Old Testament. Our Lord Himself, St. Paul, and the whole Church have been scrupulously loyal to the imperfect yet sacred past of God's revelations.

We shall first speak of the **different literary types** of Old Testament ethic; secondly, we shall review that ethic **as a whole.**

I. (1) Foremost of all must be mentioned the **Ten Commandments** (Exod. xx.; Deut. v.). Whether these came literally through Moses, and so were given very

early, or whether they are late—a summary rather than a starting-point of ethical revelations bestowed on Israel—they hold the supreme position within the Old Testament by recognition of the New. And, until Christ came, no such summary of duty existed anywhere; though there are far-away parallels in several religions, *e.g.* in Buddhism. The Decalogue is purely, or **almost purely, moral.** Perhaps the fourth[1] commandment is an exception, although defenders of "the Sabbath" used vehemently to deny this. Still, even if Sabbath observance is something lower than a moral duty, the commandment requiring it marks but a small claim on behalf of external religion amid teachings so remarkably ethical. There may be **limitations in the quality of this ethic.** The Decalogue says, "**Thou shalt not.**" Even the fourth commandment says hardly more than "Thou shalt not—work on the Sabbath." (Only the fifth commandment rises to positive duty with the grand principle, "Honour thy father and thy mother.") The seventh commandment merely forbids acts of sin against a marriage vow; its letter does not forbid other impure acts, still less the movement of impure desire which Christ's condemnation scorches. (Only the tenth commandment goes further along this line; if indeed

[1] There are different ways of dividing and numbering the Ten Words. Roman Catholic and Lutheran books follow a different numbering from ours.

"Thou shalt not covet" was the original form of that command? It is at least the form which has schooled many ages.) The eighth commandment protects the rights of property: "Do not steal"; Christ teaches duties of property, duties of kindness: "Give—lend" (Matt. v. 42). But the Decalogue identifies religion with moral duty. That is its imperishable glory.

(2) Another contribution to the ethical training of Israel was made by the civil and criminal **laws administered in the land.** The "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xx.–xxiii.) is a good brief sample of such legislation. In many lands, law has helped to educate conscience and raise the moral ideal. Perhaps we are tempted to think of the advocate as a doubtful figure? The thought of the just Judge, a worthier emblem of jurisprudence, should reassure us as to law's helpful possibilities. Recently, attention has been drawn to the simiiarities between the "Book of the Covenant" and the much more ancient Babylonian code of King **Hammurabi.** In Babylon, even so early, we see traces of a more developed material civilisation; but the **Hebrew code reveals finer sympathies** and higher ideals. Still, **it is not perfect.** "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth" is a barbarous penalty, and one that may mislead the individual conscience (see Matt. v. 38, &c., and compare p. 55).

Other sections of the Pentateuch law have less actuality in them than these four chapters. Exodus xxxiv.

24 paints a religious ideal in promising safety for the yearly pilgrimages. The law of release had a very hard struggle for life (see Jer. xxxiv. 9, &c.). The various Fallow years were perhaps never actually observed. Still, such laws were not without their effect. We must not carry our modern business-like prosaicness into the ancient world. Indian codes—notably that of **Manu**—exerted (for good) a strong religious authority; yet no civil ruler enforced them, nor could they be fully obeyed. Why will we not recognise similar influences in Israel?

(3) The central Old Testament ethic—indeed, the central stream of Old Testament revelation—flows through the **prophets.** Their main witness is this—Righteousness is what God cares for; He asks for nothing else. As public teachers, they proclaim a social Gospel. Wrong done by man to man (*i.e.* mainly by Israelite to Israelite) is what they regard as calling down Heaven's vengeance. Government and people are summoned to instant amendment; or—sometimes it seems to be taught—amendment is too late; judgment must fall. While thus in one sense politicians, the prophets are not practical opportunist statesmen. They preach the ideal—as they know it—in all its loftiness. Trust your God and serve Him; all must be well! It dismays them to see not merely the political folly but the religious wickedness of a foreign policy which calls in this or that heathen power (Isa. vii.; Hos. vii. 11). The

foreign empire will soon crush even the party that calls it in! How much better to trust God!

(4) What theology calls the **Ceremonial Law** represents another element in the life of Israel. There are two main points here. (a) **Sacrifice.** The great prophets (Amos v. 25; Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 11–13; Jer. vii. 22) and some of the Psalms (xl. 6; l. 8; li. 16) almost if not quite repudiate sacrifice, aiming at a religion whose only worship should be conduct. It is a step down from that platform when the codified law undertakes to regulate sacrifices. Men would not cease from temple worship; let them be taught to do it without heathenish or superstitious elements! Christian theology speaks of the sacrifices of Israel as "typical"—types of Christ's spiritual salvation and of the Christian life. That is very just; but we have to remember that Old Testament worshippers were not conscious of this. If they had seen that material sacrifices pointed to something higher than themselves, would not these sacrifices "have ceased to be offered"? We who have the substance recognise the shadows to be but shadows (Heb. x. 1). They could not do this.

(b) In the study of ethics we are more concerned with commands and prohibitions in the region of **personal custom** — "meats and drinks and divers washings." Some of these had a sanitary value, but no one would know that at the time. Other regulations guarded

against customs with a heathen meaning, *e.g.* "seething a kid in its mother's milk" (probably; see Exod. xxxiv. 26 and elsewhere). Most of them merely controlled and fixed customary usage. Now good taste requires that custom should ordinarily be followed; but it was an incomplete type of religion and of morals that placed customs, even in regard to indifferent matters, in one code with righteousness itself, and that treated survivals of primitive "tabus" as God's direct will. The gain as compared with prophecy was in working efficiency. Some of the prophetic teaching was now made effective, but much was lost.

(5) Lastly, we name the **wisdom** teaching of **Proverbs.** (Other Wisdom writings—Job, Ecclesiastes, some of the Psalms—concern us less in ethics. The Book of **Ecclesiasticus** in the Apocrypha should, however, be studied.) This teaching is **addressed to individuals** much more than prophecy is, and, unlike law, it is **definitely moral** teaching. Without being particularly lofty, it is healthy and practical. It is a thing of cool common sense; pious, but not enthusiastic. It represents the shrewdness of popular proverbs, somewhat refined and elevated by the revealing Spirit, yet showing clear traces of its origin. Goodness pays; sin never pays—that is its central theme. Always, or almost always (Prov. xii. 28?), it speaks of reward and punishment on earth (see xi. 31). And yet, especially in chapters i.–ix., we meet with loftier

strains. And it is well we should have these utterances of the wholesome godly and prosperous Israelite spirit in the days of its happiness. "Must every one say, 'Possessing this, I have pleasure in nothing upon earth' (Ps. lxxiii. 25)? Would it be good to be always in this mood?"[1]

II. Looking back upon **Old Testament ethic as a whole from a New Testament standpoint**, we notice some **differences**. (1) God is the God of Israel, not of all men. (2) Israel, as a given natural unity, is the subject of religious experience. Probably the Ten Commandments say "Thou" shalt not to the people (the Fifth must be an exception). The "I" in the Psalter has often been interpreted as the religious community. Again, this made it impossible for a doctrine of personal immortality to spring up early in Israel.—The doctrine of the disembodied spirit's existence in the place of the dead is common to many races, and is not allowed to have any religious significance in Israel (Job iii. 17–19; Ps. cxv. 17); else perhaps the dead would have been worshipped.—Again, children are thought of as rewarded or punished with their parents (as in the Second Commandment), and citizens with their state. (3) So far as the individual is singled out, what is taught is that it shall be absolutely well with the righteous and utterly ill with the wicked. In other words, as

[1] Cheyne, *Job and Solomon* (1887), p. 176.

the moral element becomes more marked in the religion of Israel, emphasis is laid upon the ideal of justice, not consciously upon love, which includes and transcends justice.

Yet **the Old Testament itself does much in the way of correcting** whatever is imperfect here. (1) The "**stranger**," as indeed under other religions, becomes specially the **client of God**, looking to spiritual forces for his protection. Besides which history teaches the unity of mankind, and **prophecy** looks forward to a **world-wide blessing**, *e.g.* Ps. xxii. 27; xlviii. 2, 10; lxxxvi. 9; lxxxvii.; Isa. lxi. 11. At Isa. liv. 5 we even read, "God of the whole earth shall He be called." Everything is definitely stated except the equality of all men in God's love, or the possible examples set by good Samaritans!

(2) is almost entirely cleared away, in a process[1] which the present writer has ventured to call "the evolution of the individual." If on one side we read of Achan's children (Josh. vii. 24) and of the wholesale ban (*e.g.* Deut. xx. 16, 17), or of the sons of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, on the other hand we find a protest ascribed to Moses and Aaron in regard to Korah's neighbours (Num. xvi. 22; a passage assigned by criticism to the priestly writer P). It is strange to read narratives which seem to attribute a more delicate moral sense to Moses than to his God! So again in Num. xi. (referred by critics to J, E,

[1] *Essays towards a New Theology*, 1889; Essay II.

the more "prophetic" historians), Moses complains downright of divine unfairness. But *we* know well that all human goodness is only a shadow of God's—a response to His touch in revelation. Further, we have David's protest (2 Sam. xxiv. 17), and, above all, Abraham's (Gen. xviii. 23, &c.; J according to critics, but a "late" section or "J Supplement"). The historians preserve a tradition that, as a law of human procedure, the old practice of slaughtering a rebel's children was set aside (2 Kings xiv. 6) by King Amaziah "according to the law of Moses," *i.e.* Deut. (xxiv. 16). As a law of Divine procedure it is repudiated for the golden future time by Jer. (xxxi. 29, 30), and very vehemently, even for the immediate future, by Ezek. (chap. xviii.; also chap. xxxii.). Protests like these involve, even if they do not assert, repudiation of such procedure as a Divine method in the present or the past. The threatenings of the Second Commandment, in their exact wording, have become incredible to a more enlightened conscience. **In Ezekiel**, indeed, so great emphasis is laid upon justice that we are **threatened with moral individualism**, if not moral **atomism**. Each hour of a man's life seems to stand by itself, and the whole past to go for nothing. It remains for the **next age** to deal with a further moral problem—the **subordination** of the individual—now that he is clearly envisaged apart from family and tribe. He must learn willingly to merge himself in a larger life. Yet, incomplete as it was,

the **disentangling of the individual** was **a great moral revelation.** It made possible the slow but sure rise of a **true doctrine of** personal **immortality** (or resurrection).

The **natural unity of Israel** has now almost transformed itself into a **spiritual** thing; *cf.* Ps. lxxiii. 1, where "Israel" is explained as meaning "such as are of a clean heart." Christian revelation completes what had been so "well begun." A true Jew is the man who is a Jew "inwardly" (Rom. ii. 29), and mercy belongs to the world-wide spiritual "Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16).

(3) The morality of bare **justice** is also in great measure **transcended,** even within the Old Testament. There are most tender revelations of God's mercy to Israel in the "honied rhetoric," of which, Dr. Cheyne formerly said, "only Hosea and the writer of II. Isaiah possess the secret" (on Isa. lvii.; 1880). This is mercy to Israel merely; still, it is mercy. Concurrently, the sense of sin in Israel grows deeper and deeper. Isa. i. 26 passingly, Jer. ii. 2, 3 more explicitly, speak of halcyon days of goodness in Israel's remote past. The Pentateuch historians (and the Psalmists) rather leave the impression that Israel went wrong from the very first; and in Ezekiel there is a constant refrain, "They are a rebellious house." Indeed, Ezekiel thinks of Israel's sinfulness almost as Christian dogma has thought of original sin in the whole of mankind—one absolute blackness. If God blesses so guilty a race, it is for His own name's sake; to

let them end miserably would discredit Him. Or He blesses them for the sake of His covenant and promise, or else for their fathers' sake. No one thinks of saying, If all are so bad, will God's mercy not extend to all? That inference is left to be drawn by Paul the servant of Jesus Christ. How Christ Himself views a morality of mere justice, we may read in Matt. v.

Some may be surprised at our confessing the presence of so much imperfection in the Old Testament; and some may question how God could begin by tolerating what is morally imperfect. Enough for us, perhaps, to recognise that that has been God's way, and that it has given us a revelation which does not resemble an aerolite, but a living thing that grows. Truth springs "out of the earth," if righteousness "looks down from heaven." The **supernatural naturalised itself** upon earth, and when Christ came He came unto His own. Has God shown any indifference to righteousness? **Christ came.**

CHAPTER V

PHARISEE ETHICS

BETWEEN the Old Testament and the New there lies a gulf, possibly not so broad in span of years as we used to think, but unquestionably real and deep. The **dominant party** among the Jews of the Christian era was that of the **Pharisees.** They probably sprang into being in the time of Greek-Syrian persecution, from which deliverance came—not altogether to the satisfaction of Pharisees—through the splendid Maccabean revolt. Doctrinally they connect with the **law** and with that tendency to **individualism** which we noted above as associated with Old Testament ideals of justice. But Pharisees supplemented the written law by a man of **traditions,** afterwards codified in the Talmuds. And the individual appeal of all these separate precepts was intensified by the full establishment of a doctrine of **resurrection**—possibly, though not necessarily, under the inspiration of Persian beliefs. Dr. Forsyth has warned us against "selecting holiness as a career"; the Pharisees were

among the first of men who did this. They desired to do "good things" that they might "have eternal life" (Matt. xviii. 16) and secure maximum reward.

Christ declares (Matt. xxiii. 2) that Scribes and Pharisees "sit **on Moses' seat.**" There may be a tinge of irony, or the phrase may all but over-emphasise the merits of Pharisee teaching in order to throw a more lurid light upon Pharisees' lives. Yet at any rate, in that phrase **Christ accepts Pharisaism** as the form in which the religion of the Old Testament is found genuinely alive in His own day; Sadducees, who disclaimed the hope of life after death, could make no appeal to Him. And between Sadducees and Pharisees Jewish thought practically was divided. **St. Paul** too, even if we do not press the words in which, for a controversial purpose, he is reported to have called himself a Pharisee (Acts xxiii. 6), is visibly wedded to the **identification of the Old Testament**—in the legal if not in the Patriarchal age—with its **Pharisee interpretation.** (That is true, in spite of the seemingly contradictory fact that St. Paul quotes David (Rom. iv. 6) as a witness to genuine, non-legal, evangelical religion; David, who lived under the law!) In a sense, therefore, Pharisaism lies on the line of development towards Christian ethics, although the latter are a protest more than an outgrowth.

The connection between **Scribes** and Pharisees, hinted in Matt. xxiii. 2 and in many other Gospel passages,

was very close. Most of the scribes adhered to the Pharisee party. Sadducee scribes were a necessity of controversy; but Pharisee scribes interpreted the Pentateuch law, and built up new traditions, with an enthusiasm wholly their own.

Pharisee characteristics. (1) Immortality and **resurrection** are a matter of firm faith as nowhere in Old Testament ethics. (2) A man's relation to God depends on his **individual behaviour.** The law did not protect a religious fellowship bestowed by God's grace (as the Old Testament may sometimes teach). What God gave at birth to the Israelite was (for Pharisees) no small thing; but it was a legal privilege rather than a gift of grace; and the Pharisee must practically earn salvation by good conduct, as if starting from zero. (3) He might **acquire merit,** if he not only reached the standard set by law, but surpassed it through such exercises as fasting, almsgiving, works of kindness. (4) The **sacrifices** of the law, or its many ceremonial **restrictions,** had no function beyond that of enabling a pious man to **heap up** merits. The good God had shown His goodness by instituting innumerable competitions for experts in holiness. By showing his accuracy in test after test, the spiritual athlete could gain additional prizes. But in all this moral activity the Pharisee revealed the temper of a wage-labourer. He was not a son. His morality was of the second grade.

And when the temple—with its many opportunities of ritual holiness—disappeared, the Pharisee hardly missed it. Opportunities enough were left him. (5) Pharisaism was a **religion for rich** and learned men. Those who had to work hard for daily bread could not become dilettante experts in the details of conduct. Like Buddhist or like Catholic **laymen**, the masses could but admire the good men who specialised in holiness. (6) The scribes work hard at **an external casuistical code**, with results marked by Christ's own censure. (7) **Self-righteousness** was not a fault, but almost a central merit. (8) It is fair to admit that, in later days of national **sorrow**, these experts in holiness **regained love** for their people.

It may clear our thoughts if we note briefly, first, Christ's direct criticism; next, his positive contrasted teaching; finally, Paul's criticisms. **Christ's direct censures**[1] are (1) a defiance of Pharisee **traditions** as an **unwarranted gloss** upon God's word (Matt. xv. 1, &c.; *cf.* xii. 1, &c.); (2) a charge of **externalism** (xxiii. 5, 25, 26); (3) of **confusing** great with small duties (xxiii. 23, 24); (4) of immoral **sophistication** (xv. 3; xxiii. 16–22).[2]

The Pharisee-ridden generation heard with amaze-

[1] See further in the present writer's *Christ and the Jewish Law* (1886), chap. iii.

[2] Passages from Mark and Luke are often in parallelism.

ment **Christ's gospel.** (1) For the anonymous God—the "place," the "name," "heaven," or "power"; so a mistaken reverence almost always spoke—Christ substituted the **Father.** (2) **God's friendship,** therefore, is not to be earned, but received as **a gift.** And, in entering on right relations with Him, we enter on right relations with Christ, with fellow-Christians, with all men. (3) In the presence of the living God, the very thought of **merit falls away** (Luke xvii. 10). (4) For the mass of external duties, Christ substitutes one (Matt. vii. 12) or two (xxii. 35–40) grand **principles** drawn from the Old Testament. Or He offers a supreme test in saying "Follow Me," or in saying "Whosoever will do the will of God is My nearest kinsman" (xii. 50). (5) Instead of a religion for the rich and good, Christ preaches a **gospel** for the poor and **bad.** (6) Instead of a casuistry which blunts the edge of moral requirement, Christ announces a **lighter** burden (xi. 31; probably he is speaking in contrast with the scribes) and yet a **severer** standard (v. 20). He does not admit the possible existence of second-rate Christians. Salt that has ceased to be salt is good for nothing (v. 13).

St. Paul's handling of Pharisaism is less directly or less simply ethical than the Master's, and has more tendency to doctrine. We can trace in it the spirit and mind of Christ, yet with individual differences of statement. Intellectually, it shows considerable agreement

with the Pharisees at its point of departure, though there is thorough antagonism in the conclusions reached. (1) Paul construes religion, like the Pharisees, not merely in the light of eternity, but in that of **future judgment.** (2) He holds that **the law offers men the bargain** which Pharisees wished to accept—starting as if from zero, winning eternal life by obedience. (3) But he holds that the law **insists on flawless** obedience, and that all mankind are **enslaved to sin.** Therefore this seeming highway leads us into the quagmire, and leaves us there helpless. Not complacency but despair is the result of a truly earnest effort to obey the "spiritual" law. (3a) The effect of the law is to show us the **need of Atonement,** and so shut us up to the new righteousness bestowed in the gift of Christ. (4) The Christian is **not under the law,** but is led in **filial** freedom by the **Spirit** of God; and when law disappears from his life, **casuistry,** its Pharisee outgrowth, **disappears too.**

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST'S ETHICAL TEACHING

If in Old Testament study we have to keep in view the findings of criticism, have we to do the same when we turn to the Gospels? In at least one respect we must. Any historical account of Christ's teaching must be based not upon the Fourth Gospel, but upon **the three Synoptics**. Though precious items of fact may come to us through John alone, his picture as a whole is altered and recast. Within the Synoptics we may take it as proved that certain sections, common to Matthew and Luke, and without exact parallels in Mark, come from a primitive **collection of Christ's discourses**, sometimes called by critics "the Logia" (because the early father Papias speaks of "Matthew" as having made "a record of the Logia"), and sometimes **Q** (*Quelle*, source, or original document). The Q sections of the Gospels are obviously very valuable for our purpose. But in this little book it may be enough to base our statement almost entirely on one such

section—the **Sermon on the Mount.** We assume great part of that Sermon to have been delivered by our Lord as a connected discourse, and to have been included in Q's record, though Luke has severely cut it down—antiquarian matter, or what he considered as such, having made no appeal to that evangelist. (We should grant also that the First Gospel has enlarged the Sermon by incorporating other teachings of Christ's.)

The primary thing in all our Lord's messages is His name for God—**Father.** Along with this **deeper thought of God** the name implies **man's moral individuality** and immortal destiny. Not merely is Israel or Israel's king, or the greatest such king (*the* Messiah) son of God, but the poorest and humblest believer. By Godlike acts we are to become His sons (Matt. v. 45); and those who share God's nature are to copy God's great example. This is an entirely new ethical motive. Further, at least in Matthew, the ethical detail of the Sermon is summed up in the sublime and searching words (v. 48), "Ye shall therefore be perfect" (Luke vi. 36, "merciful") "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Luke, "merciful"). Though Christ recognises that His mission while on earth is one to Israel, not to Gentiles, the **fullest religious universalism is implicit** in the new name for God. What name could possibly be higher? or what moral ideal?

Along with this great revelation, we may take another

characteristic phrase of our Lord's, Matt. vii. 21: duty is "**doing the will**" **of God.** This "will" cannot mean casual or temporary precepts, but God's expression of His own character in the form of Commandments. As Father, whose nature is love and not mere justice, He summons us to let righteousness ripen in ourselves into perfect love.

The **relation** of Christ's ethics to **Old Testament teaching** is not easily formulated in a single phrase. He **reverences** the Old Testament as a Divine revelation already bestowed upon Israel. Hence He speaks of Himself as not come to "destroy" but to "fulfil" the law and the prophets (Matt. v. 17). His **golden rule** for men is recommended (according to Matthew's more definite local colour) as "the law and the prophets" in quintessence (vii. 12). In the region of **institutions**, when dealing with the **family**, Christ shows Himself almost anxious in His loyalty to the Old Testament, whether He is repelling the corrosive influence of **divorce** by an appeal from Deuteronomy to Genesis (Matt. xix. 4), or is rebuking the casuistry of the Pharisees regarding "**Corban**" by reasserting the Fifth Commandment ("God said"; xv. 4). We feel, and we feel correctly, that our Lord has more to convey to us than a reiteration even of the highest Old Testament teaching (*cf.* p. 56). The keynote of His words, God's Fatherhood, warrants and compels us to hold fast this conviction. Yet reverence leads

our Lord to think by preference of the highest elements in the Old Testament. To Him it is divine. When He must condemn, it is a relief to Him to find an earlier Scripture guaranteeing higher truth (xix. 4); a relief also to point out that the Old Testament does not command but merely tolerates lax customs of divorce (xix. 8). Christ's teaching undoubtedly lays down principles which are **pregnant with far-reaching inferences** in the Church, in the State, in society; but, as to the Old Testament institutions around Him, He declines to formulate these inferences. Even the heathen Roman State is approved by Christ, if less warmly (xxii. 21).

The position is altogether **different** when we look, once more, at Christ's attitude **towards the Pharisees.** Here there is sharply emphasised antagonism. The very first words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the **poor**"—Matthew gives the *sense* correctly when he adds "**in spirit**"—may be a challenge to the scribes. The poor "people of the land," whom the Pharisees (John vii. 49) despised, are chosen by God. Similarly Matt. v. 13: "Ye are the salt of the earth"—Christ's humble disciples hold that position, not the fine gentleman practitioners of legal piety. The same note is still more emphatically sounded, ver. 20: "Except your righteousness shall exceed," &c. Here "the righteousness of Pharisees" means the righteousness they teach. Some thoughtless minds might suppose that, in setting

aside Pharisee tradition (and Pharisee legalism), Christ was repealing all requirements of morality, even to the Old Testament law. He therefore makes it plain that **His standard is higher**, not lower, than that of the scribes. Vers. 21–26 enforce this in a sort of parody of the Pharisee casuistry. It was never literally true, nor could be, that anger was a police-court matter and contemptuous words a matter for the Jewish House of Lords—the Sanhedrim. Still less was it exactly true that the living God's condemnation, and the awful sentence of hell-fire, only came into the reckoning after contempt had passed into gross insult and invective. Between Jesus and the Pharisees there was entire divergence in the interpretation of the Old Testament. They saw above all things laws—definite, technical, narrow: He saw moral principle in all its depth and breadth. When they tried to supplement old laws, they did so by piling up other external requirements in the name of tradition; and traditions, though a grievous burden in general, sometimes evaded real demands of the law. He brought laws to a single principle, or turned plain maxims into startling paradoxes.

Historically, **both** ways of viewing the Old Testament might have some merit. One is the **lawyer's** way; only, these lawyers supposed law to be fully adequate to morality. Christ's way is that of a **prophet** and a saint, or of one who is something more than either! For over

against faulty Pharisee literalism, or still more faulty narrowing of the Old Testament's letter, Christ does not merely hold up the true meaning and inner spirit of the Old Testament. In dealing with principles (as contrasted with institutions) Christ uses His authority to the full: "I say unto you." The "hypocrites," whose religious ostentation is condemned in vi. 1–18, were no doubt to be found among the Pharisees (*cf.* Matt. xxiii.). Theirs was the general type; though not all Pharisees need have been thus guilty.

Perhaps the most important of all the watchwords which Christ employs in His ethical teaching is "the **kingdom of God**." In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew gives it four times over (v. 3, 10, 20; vii. 21; Luke characteristically has it only once—vi. 20). Evidently **the Sermon on the Mount, that great manifesto of Christ's, defines the requirements for admission to the future kingdom.**

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the expression kingdom of God is found everywhere in the Synoptics (**in John, only iii. 3, 5**; or approximately at **xviii. 36**), and that modern study of Christian ethics has made large use of Christ's "kingdom" teaching.

Kingdom of God, like so much besides, meets us for the first time in **Second Isaiah** (not quite verbally; lii. 7; *cf.* ver. 10). Next we have it in the interesting group of Psalms sometimes called the "**Accession**

Psalms" (xlvii., xciii., xcvi.–xcix.). "Thy God reigneth" or "the Lord reigneth" is, in a loftier region, an assertion similar to "Jehu reigneth" (II. Kings ix. 13, Hebrew). It does not refer to the permanent truth of God's supremacy, but to a very special redemptive manifestation, when, as it were, God thrusts aside all imperfect delegates, takes the reigns into His own hands, and "judges" (*i.e.* governs) justly. The great events, which prophets or psalmists had hailed as the beginning of the happy end, had all proved less than that—mere types of a final redemption which must still be waited for; but the hope itself smouldered on and flamed up anew. In contrast with brute-like heathen empires (vii. 3, &c.), the book of **Daniel** looks forward to a **humane "kingdom"** (ver. 13), when the "saints of the Most High" (ver. 18) are to be supreme.

It may be observed that **the prophecies** we have **quoted** say **nothing about a Messiah.** Their hope is that **God** will come Himself to redeem and to reign. Such a hope is one well-marked line of Old Testament expectation—but it was not difficult to modify the simple hope of God's reign by reviving the thought of Messiah (promised *e.g.* in Isa. ix.), as the Being through whom God's power should be exercised. The message now is—others have failed; the true Son of God will gloriously succeed. Daniel's **"Son of Man"** (vii. 13), though probably meant as a symbol of the "saints"

(vii. 18), could readily be **interpreted** as the description of a personal Messiah; and the latter hope was keen and strong in Christ's time. His forerunner the Baptist not merely preached the coming kingdom, but spoke of the "coming One" (Matt. iii. 11; xi. 3), mightier than himself, who was to save saints and judge sinners. At this point Christ the Messiah begins: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (iv. 17). ["Kingdom of heaven" is simply another phrase for "kingdom of God."]

It is easy to **make a Christian doctrine** out of this. In and with the true King, Jesus Christ, God's kingdom came to mankind. Or else, in proportion as the rule of God in Christ is willingly accepted by men's hearts, the kingdom comes. These are legitimate and helpful forms of Christian thought; but we must not too confidently assume that Christ's words were understood in that precise sense by those who first heard them. The Gospels of Mark (i. 11) and Luke (iii. 22) tell us that Christ was **conscious from His baptism onwards** of being the Messiah. At the Temptation—we may well infer—He readjusted His future to this amazing discovery. Henceforward He taught men and healed the sick; but properly royal functions He did not yet discharge. For He **waited**: on one side, **perhaps**, till **Israel should believe** in Him; but **mainly** till the Father should publicly **crown** Him. In the end, through Israel's disbelief, it proved to be the Father's will that He should

pass **by the cross** to His glory. **He then announces** kingship and judgeship as belonging to **an awful future** when—in some sense—He shall come "in the clouds" (Matt. xvi. 27; xxvi. 64). It makes a vast difference, no doubt, that **mankind has had the Messiah** personally present in human life. Not a few Synoptic records of our Lord's own words speak of the kingdom as already in being (*e.g.* xii. 28). But the formal proclamation stands. The kingdom is coming! It is near! And formally Christ's moral teaching expounds the conditions required for entrance into the kingdom—when it comes (see p. 51).

Another of our Lord's watchwords, especially in the Sermon on the Mount, is "**righteousness.**" His root controversy with the Pharisees regarding ethics turns on the question—What is righteousness? Simple worshippers "had heard"—from scribes, in synagogues; when engaged in controversy with educated scribes Christ says "Have ye never read?" (xxi. 16, 42; xxii. 31) —one view of what was said "to them of old time." Scribes sat "on Moses' seat," and their teaching is viewed as inadequate rather than false (*cf.* p. 41). Christ demands **a right inner motive** (v. 22, 28). Of course, mere good intention divorced from conduct counts for nothing (vii. 17, 18); yet, on the other hand, no act is morally good unless the motive is right. Further, the righteousness Christ demands is **humane.**

He thinks more of man's debt to man than of ritual (v. 23). So, too, the **testing** Commandments are those of the Second Table (xix. 18). Or if **love to God** is the first and great Commandment, there is "a second like it"—love **to man** (xxii. 36–40). We have something which is more nearly a supersession of the Old Testament in regard to **oaths** (v. 33–37). The religious use of vows had given rise to oaths in ordinary speech. The Old Testament simply insisted that men should stand to their word. Christ condemns the whole system; partly because He can think of no object which is so undivine that it may fitly be used as a thing to swear by, partly because of His habitual reverence for truth. If God is everywhere—if truthfulness is everything—occasional special reasons for being truthful are out of place. Yet in the region of institutions Christ submits to be "adjured" by the high priest (xxvi. 63). "Only **an eye for an eye**"—a limit set to revenge—is swept away (v. 38–42), though an Old Testament saying. Christ **disallows** it, not merely as a savage punishment—He says nothing about that—but as a maxim of **private conduct.** In moving intense phrases He calls for the greatest possible goodwill even towards those who wrong us. "**Love your enemies**" (v. 43–48) visibly supersedes an imperfect Old Testament law. This is the highest possible demand. It leads up naturally to a "Ye shall be perfect" (ver. 48; see p. 47).

If the "righteousness" of outward worship is to be spoken of at all (vi. 1), the lesson runs: Be conscious of God and God alone (vers. 3, 6, 18). What is done as to God counts; nothing else counts. If any other calculation intrudes, the righteousness becomes unrighteous and the religion irreligious.

The last thing we have to notice in Christ's teaching is **His own place of authority.** Though he repudiates mere lip-homage to His lordship (vii. 21), and might be understood, however erroneously, as disclaiming Messiahship, He exacts absolute obedience (v. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44). "These words of mine" (vii. 24) rank as equivalent to "the will of God" (vii. 21). **Christ's sayings are the final revelation of God's will.** Thus, speaking in Israel and addressing personal disciples—who were loyal, yet had but dim ideas of the Master's true dignity—He **speaks to mankind.** The ethic of conformity to God's character and of loyalty to man is recognised by the enlightened and unspoiled conscience as the last word in regard to the principles of duty. As time went on, and Christ's destiny of suffering grew plainer, His demand for sacrifice as the part of all disciples became plainer too. While He lived on earth, "following Christ" may have meant chiefly joining the apostle pilgrims. Not every disciple was invited to do this, or could be. But, once Christ is glorified, "following Him" means following His example as our

forerunner through sufferings in that Godward, homeward, heavenward way which His grace (xx. 28; xxvi. 28) opens to us. His life illustrated to the last syllable the principles He taught. Greater love hath no one than was shown by this sinless burden-bearer.

Christ gives us principles. Or, when He speaks practically He gives us paradoxes, whose shell we must break in order to extract the kernel. He **was no law-giver.** Many moderns call the ethic of Jesus "enthusiastic" (*cf.* p. 60). Some at least mean by this term that the Master's teaching was impracticable—a morality for men who thought the end of the world imminent; not for men living and working in society. That is to treat Christ as a literalist and law-giver! Is not the truth rather that Christ's wisdom is timeless? He, who taught us to love and serve God in loving and serving men, did not forget the real world for the sake of any supernatural future. He sets before us the sober facts of our position, if glorified in the light of God's Fatherhood and Christ's Lordship—if made more than ever sacred by the solemnities of judgment and by the nearness of heaven.

CHAPTER VII

ETHICAL TEACHING IN THE EPISTLES

(1) THE first great feature to be noted here is the **central place held by our Lord** and His work. That is the advance made by the Epistles as compared even with the Gospels, *i.e.* with the Synoptics; it must be recognised that the peculiar splendour of the Fourth Gospel is due to the fashion in which, whether it deals with the Master's words or His deeds, it allows the glory of His exaltation to shine through the records of humiliation and suffering. Only **one** New Testament book—the Epistle of **James**—says **nothing** regarding the **atoning** significance of the sufferings of Christ. Everywhere else, notably in Revelation, the new motives for ethic which arise from the knowledge of Christ's dying love assert themselves as powerfully as the revelation of Fatherhood does in Christ's own discourses. What was with the Master a prophetic hint (p. 57) becomes an open gospel to His apostles.

(2) Next we must notice the precise sharply defined **audience** of apostolic teaching. The little **churches** are

addressed. Usually they are made up of converts from heathenism; there may have been a fight to save the Mother Church of Jewish believers from sinking back unintentionally into Judaism. The life of the churches, cut off as they are from national sympathies, either Jewish or Gentile, is narrow—if we like to call it so—but it is intense. There is no danger of excessive individualism here; they live in and for each other, "honouring" fellow-men outside, but "loving the brotherhood" (I. Pet. ii. 17). St. Paul's most systematic epistle, that to the Romans, introduces the moral duties of Christians (xii. 6) as a phase of their spiritual responsibility for one another. In the organism whose "head," or rather, here, whose unity, is Christ, each member has his part to play. And, besides the more showy gifts of inspired teaching or guidance, gifts of loving service are called for and are sacred. Thus **the little local church is transfigured by the thought that it represents, for the local believers, the whole glorious Church of the Lord Jesus.**

(3) The moral life thus regulated is thought of as having but a short space of time allotted to it in God's decree. Almost the whole New Testament is dominated by the thought of Christ's speedy **Return.** The churches looked back to Christ's earthly life and work; they looked up to His present though unseen help; but they also looked forward with strained eager faith to His

reappearance. I. Tim. vi. 15 seems to throw the Advent into the background, and some of the shorter epistles do not mention it; but the general tone is unmistakable. As a whole, the New Testament is alive with that solemn hope.

On this point, then, the books of the New Testament speak with lessened authority to us; for we have learned from events that it was not God's will to fulfil that expectation as the first Christians conceived it. Yet the **purity and solemnity** of New Testament ethic owe much to this sense of the Master's nearness. And for these qualities our debt is immense.

(4) During the short period of waiting, the **churches**, considered as being alive "**in Christ**," are **self-sufficient**. The members, with but scanty help from church office-bearers, are to edify one another; if need be, to discipline one another. This external formlessness—this reliance upon spiritual life within and upon the spiritual gifts of the members as a whole—is described by some as entering into the early Christian "**enthusiasm**" (p. 57). Doctrinally, the spiritual **gifts** are interpreted with growing clearness as due to the working of the one great **Spirit of God**. St. Paul especially (*cf.* p. 45) teaches this truth. In I. John, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit is thought of as giving religious certainty, but is not directly regarded as constituting the new moral life. Christ's command, Christ's example, Christ's

redemption, God's begetting, are sources of life; the Spirit imparts knowledge and assurance. But if in the near future extraordinary gifts were to drop away, it was of great value for Christianity to have the abiding thing of Christian service, as well as faith itself, marked as "spiritual" and as evincing God's presence. Where the Spirit of God is, there is guidance—without law; before the New Testament is collected; before any defined organisation is required in the churches.

(5) Yet a **beginning of more external authority** comes soon in the recognition of the supremacy, for all ethical questions, of **Christ's teaching**. It is possible that the early collection of Christ's discourses (Q—see p. 46), with its limitations (probably, *e.g.*, it contained no account of the Passion), was connected with the practical needs of the churches. Even St. **Paul**, who scarcely refers to the days of our Lord's flesh apart from the culminating sacrifice of the cross, **appeals to the Master's words** as a final moral authority. No epistle gives us such an inside view of early Christian churches as I. Corinthians; and I. Cor. vii. reveals **four** different kinds or degrees of authority—Christ's command (ver. 10), Paul's command (vers. 12–17), Paul's permission (ver. 6), Paul's advice (ver. 25). All these, even the last, claim very real authority. St. Paul has no hesitation about asserting his God-given rights. So long as he and the Twelve lived, there was another check upon error in the churches

besides the recollection of Christ's words. And yet the words of Christ are manifestly given the **supreme** all-commanding place.

(6) Was the **Old Testament** similarly authoritative? Religiously it was—and rightly so. It was a sacred book, *the* Bible of the earliest Christian church. But could Christians literally follow its detailed ethical (and ceremonial) injunctions? As long as the battle regarding the law was remembered—or, perhaps, as long as sacrifices were offered at Jerusalem—or, perhaps, as long as the churches were conscious of Jewish rivalry—there was little fear that the Old Testament law would unduly affect Christian life. It may be that even to St. Paul the Decalogue occupied a place apart; he quotes those commands which are summed up in love to man (Rom. xiii. 8–10; *cf.* Gal. v. 13, 14, and Christ's own words Matt. xix. 18 as well as xxii. 36, &c.). But on the whole St. Paul's **teaching** remains **clear**—that **law is dead** and done with, and that the Spirit reigns in its stead. When **I. John iii. 4** refers to sin as "lawlessness" (R.V.), the law "transgressed" (A.V.) is rather the abstraction "moral law" than either the Decalogue or the Pentateuch. And it is only indirectly hinted at (the meaning probably is that, in the strange new life of Christian faith, simple moral distinctions are to stand), and even so the reference is solitary. One New Testament book has a thoroughly legal outlook, the Epistle of **James**. Yet

even in it we have a "perfect law of liberty" (i. 15), vivified and made glorious by the Master's teaching, whose very words echo again and again in the Epistle. The proper use of the Old Testament, especially as to morals, was a problem of no small difficulty which the later church had to face for itself. St. Paul, even St. Paul, had once appealed to the law allegorically (I. Cor. ix. 9), and once (xiv. 34; but some have supposed the passage to be an early gloss and not St. Paul's own) literally. A few generations later, Old Testament precedents came in with a flood in support of the claims of an official Christian priesthood. Apostolic writings are not responsible for that. The most we can concede is that their silence gave opportunity to the error, when it arose.

(7) Within the **New Testament** itself we can trace the **beginnings**—varyingly in varying regions—of church office-bearers. As the early wandering preachers died, leaving fewer and fewer successors—as the spiritual enthusiasm, which kept alive a ministry of mutual edification, lessened—the importance of the local church office-bearers increased. It was a natural and not unhealthy change; but it brought with it great dangers—priesthood, hierarchy.

(8) What then is, in outline or in sample, the character of the ethic inculcated in the epistles? Sometimes we are surprised at the emphasis laid upon **elementary moral decency.** That is a reminder that the churches

were composed of converts from heathenism and lived in the midst of a heathen environment. Another characteristic is the emphasis upon **hospitality**. The tie of brotherhood had to be sacred (*e.g.* Heb. xiii. 2), especially while the ministry of the apostles and wandering preachers lasted. But as speculation grew bolder and heresies arose (*e.g.* II. John 10), the churches had to feel after more definite guarantees of Christian orthodoxy, and found them (*e.g.* III. John 9, Diotrephes?) in the "monarchical" Episcopate (the one-man Bishop). On the whole, we see Christ's teaching faithfully remembered. James is no less loyal than Paul (see p. 62) to the supremacy of the "royal law" (James ii. 8). It has been remarked that "love your enemies" (Matt. v. 44; see p. 55) tends to shrink into "Love one another" or "**love the brotherhood**" (I. Pet. ii. 17; see p. 59). The immediate task of the churches was to develop a warm and loving life indoors. If the Master might confine Himself (p. 57) to stating the ideal in its absoluteness, apostles had to study practical means of fulfilling it. Yet the moral advance is maintained; St. Paul (Rom. xii. 14) and St. Peter (I. Pet. ii. 23; iii. 15) both bid us "bless **and curse not**" even the persecutor. Again, both inculcate **loyalty** to the Roman empire (Rom. xiii. 1, &c., expanding Matt. xxii. 21; *cf.* p. 49 and I. Pet. ii. 17). St. Paul wrote in the golden early days of Nero's reign, and St. Peter—as Sir Wm. Ramsay has pointed

out—when persecution was imminent but not yet actual. The book of **Revelation** in the midst of persecution **disowns** the drunken harlot city (xvii. 5); there is great danger of losing, along with civil loyalty, the very spirit of Christian love itself. But the temptation was terrible.

In the **acceptance of slavery** (*cf.* Col. iii. 22; one of the family relationships is slave-and-master) we see the practicalness of Christian apostles. They dared not provoke a servile rising. Besides, the Lord was at hand. In their **martyr constancy** we see the idealism which they had learned of Christ (*cf.* I. John v. 5).

CHAPTER VIII

ETHICAL IDEAS OF CATHOLICISM

THIS is again a very large subject to handle in brief outline, covering, as it does, a period quite as long as that of the Old Testament. Yet, throughout the whole many-sided development, we can recognise **a single well-marked type which may conveniently be described as "Catholicism."** For, from about the time when emphasis begins to be laid upon "Catholic" or universal agreement in a "Catholic" or world-wide Church, certain theories of the Christian life begin to be strongly marked. The Catholic type of Christianity involves an equal emphasis upon three different things—**dogma, sacraments, law.** It is with the **last** that we are most concerned.

The first contrast with the apostolic churches is **the receding of the eschatological hope.** Christ's return is conceived as certain, but remote. Concurrently the ministry of spiritual gifts is suppressed in favour of **a ministry of sacramental office.** This great change did not happen all at once. In a sense it is still incom-

plete! Official order in the Catholic Church has had to fight against rival after rival—first the prophets; then the confessors in times of persecution; finally, the monks. Priests or "secular clergy," with their chiefs the bishops, are even now habitually jealous of the half-independent "regular" clergy—*i.e.* the ascetics under a special "rule" of life, answerable to their own chiefs or to Rome. But these are later developments. Catholicism came to the birth when Church order superseded the ministry of spiritual gifts, and treated Christianity definitely as a **new law.**

Along with law there came much talk of **merit.** Still more definitely than Phariseeism—not probably by borrowing from Pharisaic Judaism, as the Tubingen school supposed; rather by quite unconscious imitation, out-Phariseeing the Pharisees—the Church sharply distinguished what fell below the standard of law (sin); what just satisfied it (and so is lawful and permissible); and what "supererogatorily" went beyond, acquiring merit. Merit is chiefly seen in the **ascetics.** Their extra goodness is a treasure—accessory to the "merits" of Christ—which the Church can dispense in relieving sinners from some of the evil consequences of sin. But this secondary moral conception of merit is applied everywhere. If it is carried up to Christ, whose "merits" save the world, it is carried down to the humblest and vilest that obtain mercy; each must—

always in dependence first on Christ, then on the Church; yet each must in some sense—merit his own salvation. The teaching is practical and definite; but what a gulf separates it from the Gospels and Epistles!

One effect of the Catholic standpoint is as follows: In the teaching of **Christ** there is an extraordinary combination of **gentleness and sternness.** It is the Christian Church's hardest task to be loyal to these two voices—as they may seem. **Catholicism separates the two.** The first-rate Christian follows a way of his own, responding to the severity of Christ's appeal. The average Christian sinks into second-rateness, availing himself of the mercifulness of the Gospel. To the ascetic, then, the Divine voice addresses "**counsels of perfection**"—a conception arrived at by combining I. Cor. vii. 25 with Matt. xix. 21. (Some may hold it possible that the wording of Matt. xix. 21—there is nothing similar at Mark x. 21 or Luke xviii. 22—shows this distinction already at work. On the other hand, Matt. v. 48 requires "perfection" of all. I. Cor. vii. unquestionably prefers celibacy to marriage; but it is a daring thing to interpret St. Paul's personal advice as advice proceeding from God Himself.) In course of time, the virtues of the Christian ascetic were defined as **poverty, chastity** and **obedience.** Long before Christian monasticism, there had been similar phenomena in Eastern religions, especially Buddhism. But here again it is improbable

that the earlier phenomena had any direct influence on Catholicism. Twice over, independently, all civilised society is disparaged or condemned.

Poverty may appeal to the poor life of Christ; in later times (*e.g.* Francis of Assisi) it does so. But for centuries there is no great emphasis on direct imitation of the Master. When chastity or celibacy is praised, **imitation of the angels** (Matt. xxii. 30; but see Matt. vi. 10; Ps. ciii. 20!) is emphasised. **Celibacy**, of course, is oriental too. The third virtue, **Obedience**, is quite alien to primitive Buddhism. It is perhaps equally alien to the earliest form of Christian monasticism. The first Christian ascetics were solitaries, living in the rainless and healthy Egyptian climate. It was a triumph, partly for the social instincts of mankind, partly for wise Church rule, when the solitaries were followed into their deserts, grouped into fellowships, brought under control of the most iron kind. If on one view monasticism represents the anti-social principle, on another view it represents that principle tamed, mastered by the Christian society, and set to work. For if the **Eastern** Church generally is loyal to the original **contemplative** type of monasticism, **Western** Catholicism has more and more **used** the Regulars in the interests of social service and Church rule.

In both halves of the Catholic world this type of life —partially, but only partially, imitated in the celibacy of

the Western (secular) clergy—becomes the standard of earnest Christian living. Are you profoundly zealous for salvation? Become a monk. Does that not exhaust your hunger and thirst for righteousness? Then found a new Order or reform an old one. You may, indeed, serve the Church anywhere; but special zeal is directed along this carefully banked-in channel. Upon another side the Catholic Church guards this system by the proviso that no one shall become an ascetic unless the authorities—of the Church and of the Order—are satisfied that he has a (Divine) **vocation** to the monastic life. This is a wise modification, bringing the system nearer to Christian truth. **Protestants have two other criticisms** to offer. First: Catholics teach that the ascetic vocation is intrinsically higher than life in the world or in the family. There also Divine vocations exist, but inferior ones. We hold that there is no high or low when God's will appoints our work. To Faber's Catholic formula—

> "Man on earth no work can do
> More angel-like than this,"

—though the reference is not specially to the monastic life—we oppose Browning's description of the Angel in "Theocrite"—

> "He did God's will: to him all one,
> If on the earth or in the sun."

The most perfect fulfilment of God's will in the history of the universe was rendered by "man on earth" —the man Christ Jesus. And He, though a man of sorrows, was no solitary, but came even "eating and drinking," that He might get near His brethren to save them. **Our second criticism** is this: we find no evidence that deliberate lifelong poverty and celibacy and blind obedience to Church superiors constitute a Divine vocation at all.

The nobler spirits being thus accounted for, Catholicism seeks **to control the average man** and show him "Gospel" **leniency.** Catholicism never confines the Church to the respectable. In ways of its own it seeks to fulfil Christ's ideal and "despair of no man" (Luke vi. 35, R.V. margin). The fundamental principle was established in the long controversy regarding Christians who had **lapsed** into mortal sin. A series of rigorist "heresies"—Montanist, Novatian, Donatist—representatives with various modifications of grim early Christian austerity—denied the Church's right to receive such penitents back to communion. God might perhaps pardon such; the Church dared not extend to them the declaration of peace. But the great Church—headed on this matter by the Roman see—established the opposite principle. Roman Catholic practice keeps in touch with the vicious and even the criminal—perhaps they might yet be reclaimed! Yes, or perhaps they may

not! Leniency separated from severity may prove no more Christ-like than the austerity which suppresses Gospel mercy.

The system of **the Confessional** is a natural development of the Catholic machinery for securing a legal minimum of praiseworthy conduct, especially if there be associated with it **direction.** Confession rectifies the past; direction controls the future. The minimum, which is *de rigueur*, is small indeed; confession must be made before receiving the sacrament of the Mass, and this sacrament must be taken at least once a year (at Easter). Zealous Catholics, of course, women especially, are frequent at confession, and only too willing to accept direction. **Penances** imposed after confession, and as a condition of absolution, do not in theological theory deal with the proper guilt of sin, but only with some of its lesser bad consequences. In practice, the sacrament of penance keeps the adult Christian man always a child subject to the Church. And the Church's attempt to answer an impossible question—How much guilt in the sight of God attaches to another man's wrongdoing?—leads to a peculiarly grave temptation. Churchmen, anxious to conciliate important "penitents," pare away moral guilt. Hence arose the ugly **casuistry** which Pascal scourged. It has grown worse latterly, not better, through the triumph of St. Alfonso Liguori's doctrine of "probabilism." (Conduct, which any recognised

Church authority holds to be with a certain probability permissible, is to be acquitted in the Confessional and sanctioned in direction, even although the confessor or director who is consulted might personally think such conduct wicked.) The perplexities of life are really sent us by God, in order that, framing great decisions on our own responsibility as answerable to Him, we may grow wise. But Catholicism profanely frustrates this. A priest tells us authoritatively what we should or may do, and what we must abandon.

Catholic ethics have had a long history. They have passed through many stages; yet there is a marvellous continuity. Later additions are sometimes necessary, if the original plan is to be completed; they are always natural outgrowths. But **what is the starting-point? Not the New Testament, but the legal scheme of popular morals.** The evolution of the germ is normal, but the germ itself is not the plant which the heavenly Father planted.

In this short statement nothing has been said of the **grosser corruptions** which are possible under a Catholic system. If great masses of men and women—priests, monks, nuns—are concussed into unwilling celibacy by various forms of pressure, there will inevitably be scandals, and the Church must bear the chief blame for such sins. Also it is plain that hideous perversions of the Confessional are possible, if a man who is believed to be

armed with indefinite supernatural powers of washing away sin, and whose duty it is to pry deep into women's hearts and lives, becomes a corrupter, inviting his "penitent" to sin safely. It was **the moral abuses of the Middle Ages** which **invited the Reformation.** But, even had there been none of these grosser abuses, it would remain true that **the central beliefs of Catholicism distort and deface Christian ethics.** Law and merit usurp the place of grace in God and of faith in man. Christian society is weakened by having its most devout elements drawn away into the cloister, and those who live in the world have little heart left for high endeavour; are they not confessedly second-rate? Yet all this—if we may say it reverently—is the nearest thing to Christian truth which God has as yet been able to teach the greater part of Christendom.

CHAPTER IX

PROTESTANT ETHICS

If it was the moral abuses of the later Middle Ages which created a passionate desire for a sweeping moral reformation, it was **the discovery of the Pauline gospel** —notably Luther's study of Galatians—which **made the Reformation a religious one.** The Church had come to proclaim God in such terms that men shrank from Him. He might sometimes be lenient: He was never Fatherly. It was a marvellous discovery—God our Friend! The best minds had seen "the Judge severe, e'en in the crucifix"; Luther told them in melting accents, "Indeed, our Lord Christ is no hard taskmaster, but the merciful forgiver of the whole world." The Pauline gospel, mingled with other elements by St. Augustine, further toned down by Thomas Aquinas, hidden from view entirely in popular mediæval Catholicism, was nevertheless alive, and renewed study of the Greek Testament gave St. Paul fresh power. If a kind of Phariseeism had overspread the Christian Church, the Pharisee convert who

hated Pharisee error dealt it once more a deadly blow. The age had learned to be conscious of sin; it was ripe for recovering the consciousness of grace.

Naturally, not everything in St. Paul revived. The **eschatological** background could not be seen clearly till modern scholarship arose; although the age had its own dominating eschatological prejudices. Some primitive Christian earnestness was lost to the new Protestant Paulinism, with the loss of the original other-worldiness. Nor was **Paul's doctrine of law** fully revived; the co-operating forces of "law and gospel" were to save men. Yet this seeming simplification of Pauline teaching left its **difficulties** pretty much where they were. The Christian, moved by an inward love of goodness, was to live in the Spirit, and all was to go well with him. This is doctrine which Christianity cannot reject. Christians are lovers of God and goodness—that essentially; and there is no goodness but the Christian. So Luther taught in plain words: "Good pious works will never make a good pious man, but a good pious man will do good pious works." Yet what if the works do not follow? What if the features of the ideal cannot be recognised in actual Christians?

In regard to the **assumed higher** way of **life**, Protestantism declared war *à outrance*. Luther, a monk, married Catherine Bora, a nun; their former vows they had come to regard as un-Christian errors, which ought

no longer to trammel them. Roman Catholics, and even High Church Anglicans, will never forgive this decisive step. But it was no time for delicate deference to critical susceptibilities; it was a great historical crisis, and needed bold action. The world was ready to applaud. Give us decency, it said in effect to the corrupted Church, and we can do without your alleged sanctity. Thus Protestantism simply struck out the supposed life of higher holiness practised through so many centuries. A religion which discovered grace and liberty rather than duty—a Reformation which blotted out the traditional forms in which the highest Christian claims had been expressed—obviously, Protestantism had its own moral dangers. Frequently, especially in Lutheranism, men settled complacently upon the doctrine of justification by faith, and forgot the call to consecration.

The positive meaning of the action of Protestants in abolishing the monkish life could be nothing else than the familiar Broad Church thesis—the sacredness of secular things. But we have not received this by continuous inheritance from Luther. Mankind approaches nearer to the truth by vehement reactions and counter reactions. First, Protestantism hardened towards dogma and lost much of its life; then came (p. 100) reactions—pietism, rationalism, evangelicalism—laying all stress upon individual religion; finally came

the counter reaction of the Broad Church. We have not inherited straight from Luther. Lately the question has even been asked whether Luther believed the secular to be sacred at all; whether he was not a mediævalist, bidding men simply save their souls; correcting the Middle Ages perhaps so far as to consider outward things "adiaphora"—no hindrance, but certainly no helps!

There may be some fragments of truth here. Protestantism, especially Lutheran and Anglican, lived from hand to mouth without clear guiding theory. **Hooker's** *Ecclesiastical Polity* itself is the work of a man set to find a theoretic justification for a set of anomalous facts, and showing wonderful skill. The best religious writers of Lutheranism do teach (*e.g.* in hymns) the soul's rest in God independently of outward good or outward ill; as in Luther's own great battle-song—

> "These things shall perish all;
> The city of God remaineth."

And yet obviously, in the nature of the case, Protestantism was thrown very near the principle that the secular life is sacred. That must have been the unconscious, even if not the conscious, logic of its action. But Luther is even explicit: "The obedience of a child, of a wife, of a serving-man, is **more perfect** than the obedience of a monk"—than self-chosen submission to unreal

claims. It is possible that, in his opportunism, moving step by step, Luther did not always see his way clearly in advance. But on the whole we must protest against his being faced—or against any one being faced—with the dilemma, "Are you mediæval or are you modern?" There is a third possibility, which is best of all, and which Luther laid hold of. He was essentially Christian.

Conscious deliberate **theory** for Christian society arose in Protestantism as developed by **Calvin**. If Anglicanism tended to passive obedience, and Lutheranism inclined to content itself with the great truth that no outward evil can force us away from Christ, the "Reformed" thinkers began to grapple with the question, How will the principles of the Gospel remodel man and society? The Reformation had been an appeal to the democracy of the Christian Church. Without bishop or priest or sacrament, face to face with Christ alone, the private believer was to enter into all the fulness of God. It was a very different thing to call into life a **political** democracy, unpledged to Christianity. But liberty is an infectious thing, and—especially when the more stalwart forms of Protestantism were oppressed by hostile governments—liberty tended to be claimed not only in worship but in politics. So in **Holland**, so in English **Puritanism**, and so in **Scotland**, where the middle class, and the modern nation as a whole, are the creation of Protestantism.

This, after all, was the greatest difference between the Paulinism of St. Paul and that of the Protestant Reformers. **The apostle** lived and died as the citizen and subject of an **autocratic empire. Protestantism** stood by the fountains of modern history and helped to open the floodgates for the new forces. The **rights** of Christian consciences called attention to the rights of every human conscience, and then to all the varied "rights of **man.**" It was not manifest all at once, but the tendency was at work.

Protestantism **rehabilitated the family.** Catholicism no doubt had professed to hold the family sacred—was not **marriage a sacrament ?** And yet a stigma was cast on it by the celibacy not only of those following the "perfect" life, but of the parochial clergy as well. The married ministers of Protestant religion may seem unheroic; but how much of sober practical godliness, and of service to the community, and of "joint heirship of the grace of life," belongs to the homes of which these are the crowning type!

Protestantism rehabilitated the **nation.** It is true that the Reformers did not regard themselves as breaking with the universal Church; they were reforming it. But the international organisation, which gave power in many lands to a foreign prince, came to an end in Protestant countries; and the nation might henceforth mean more than it could do while dreams of a world-

wide Christian empire in civil things, stood alongside the half-realised vision of a world-wide hierarchical Church. **Hooker** treats Church and nation as one, absolutely. That is to defend—and also to exaggerate—the purely Protestant point of view.

Protestantism rehabilitated **wealth**. The well-doing sober citizen, who sought to serve God in his daily vocation, inevitably made money. Respectability, with its many excellences and also with its real limitations, became as characteristic of Protestant godliness as dirt and vermin had been of Catholic sanctity. The lands of the Reformed Churches especially sprang to the front, with their more conscious grasp of principle and their progressive spirit.

The relation of Protestantism to the democratic movement—already glanced at—is harder to sum up. **Democracy** gained **no direct support** in **Lutheranism**; nor yet in **Anglicanism**, unless for the Puritan movement—the older form of acutely Protestant Anglicanism, so unlike evangelicalism in politics, and in some other respects. **Calvin** formulated the demand that **nations** should **obey** the law of Christ as laid down in **the Bible**. The **Old Testament** was a great book with Puritans and other Calvinists. They found in it a **love of national liberty**, such as New Testament believers had no opportunity to feel or to formulate. They also found in it **persecution**, and, like their neighbours,

they persecuted. Yet their fault was the graver, because their principles were more plainly opposed to the atrocious policy. Spiritualising sects, and sects forming a small minority—**Quakers, Baptists,** &c.—were the first to make conscious assertion of toleration as a principle, if **Milton and Cromwell** gave it resonance. All intelligent Protestants ought to have joined in chorus. Compelled goodness can never be Christian goodness. If justice and fairness are not sufficient to teach us toleration, that principle should subdue our last doubts. Unhappily, it can be said with too much truth that **toleration only came into use when a deadlock** had been created. Necessity was its teacher, not Christ. Calvinist Christianity had conceived that it was to serve Christ by copying the Old Testament—by persecuting religious error, and by harrying vice as a crime. When such a policy became impossible, Protestantism gave up—only for a time, please God—the effort to reconstruct the world according to the will of Christ. The **rights** of man—to a free conscience and to a share of political power—were established in the **eighteenth century** as truths of the **enlightened reason.** All that can be claimed for Protestantism is that it had done something considerable to serve liberty, although half blindly.

We are to be grateful for the past of Protestantism. We are to be loyal to its principles, and yet not exactly

their slaves; it would be strange if that were our duty! It is clear to us that, at the Reformation, in morals as well as in doctrine, **God gave His people a fuller grasp of many** great Christian **truths** than all the previous centuries had known. But that does not mean that progress ceased to be possible after 15—. Modern life has large opportunities. We are free to disown or to enthrone Christ as hardly any previous age has been. Nor is Christian truth exhausted. It is much that the Reformers heard Christ's voice in that of St. Paul. We listen to the same message, and bow before its splendour; but may we not hear yet another voice? May we not learn—more directly still—at Jesus' feet?

CHAPTER X

STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS

WHAT authority or authorities should we appeal to in Christian ethics? If there are several such authorities, how are they related to each other?

(1) **Supreme** over all stands the authority of **God**. To do "the will of God" is Christ's own formulation of the ethical ideal (Matt. xii. 50; *cf.* I. John ii. 17). A false note is struck in a beautiful hymn when we sing, "To do the will of Jesus, that is rest." Jesus is the human name; and Jesus says, "I came down from heaven not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Another hymn gives a truer utterance—

> "Thou Thyself didst never please:
> God was all Thy happiness."

Of course, by the will of God we mean nothing arbitrary or casual (p. 47), although the mediæval schoolman **Duns Scotus** very nearly, if not quite, taught that

God's choice made right into right, and wrong into wrong. Hence, when the late Prof. **Bain** of Aberdeen spoke of the "**arbitrary**" will of God as one possible ethical standard, he had some justification for inserting this adjective. But instructed Christians, in placing God's will as supreme over all, mean His essential will—that eternal goodness, holiness, love which we call **the character of God.**

(2) Inseparable from the authority of God is that of **Christ.** In a sense, Christ is nowhere supreme—He came in His Father's name. In another sense, Christ is everywhere supreme, for God reigns through Him. We have in Him all our knowledge of God; or, if we reach a dim perception through nature and conscience, it has to be readjusted in the light of Christ. Hence (a) Christ's **teaching** must be obeyed; and historical study, careful and reverent, must ascertain what the Master said. There is no legitimate Christian doctrine which has not its roots in these words. There is no genuine Christian duty which cannot be founded upon our Lord's own declarations. (b) With Christ's words we must take His **example.** To make virtue lovely, which so often shows sour and repulsive, it needed that life of lives. **A. Ritschl** and others have paradoxically contended that Christ's example is nothing else than flawless faithfulness to a Divine vocation; that our calling is vastly lower than His; and that hence we learn but little from contem-

plating His pattern. This is a recoil from the Roman Catholic programme of imitating the externals of Christ's lot. That no doubt was an error, even in so beautiful a shape as Francis of Assisi's devotion to "holy poverty." The Christian life is not a thing of externals, but one of principles. And yet we must not in recoil from error sweep past the central truths towards opposite extremes. The New Testament speaks of Christ's example as shown in the initial self-sacrifice from which His earthly life sprang (II. Cor. viii. 9; Phil. ii. 6); in doing good (Acts x. 38); in choosing to serve rather than rule (Matt. xx. 28); and, lastly, in Christ's forgiving love (Eph. iv. 32; v. 1). The strange but significant result is that **the glorious Christ is** mainly **a pattern** to us **of humility**—the central religious virtue (p. 130). Christ exhibits this humble unselfishness specially in His redeeming death; and so the thought of His example passes into that of (c) His **Grace**, or what Dr. Forsyth calls "the authority of the Cross." The Christian motive is thankfulness for redeeming love. And personal love to our Lord incorporates love towards all the great principles for which He stands.

(3) **Scripture** must not be taken as a legal code of definite external requirements. That is a Catholic view of the Bible, or it belongs to the inferior Protestantism of the second generation. Still, the Bible is sacred. It is the channel by which we know God's revelation. It

is the chief classic of the Christian religion (and so also of Christian ethics); though secondary classics ought to have their lower place—hymns, creeds (if in the right spirit), Christian biographies and autobiographies, books of devotion. In this little book we shall illustrate or enforce our teaching mainly from the Bible, as all the text-books do. Intelligence is necessary, as well as reverence, in using Scripture. The writings it includes were largely occasional; we must make sure that we have warrant for transferring its precepts to our altered conditions. Again: **Not all Scripture is of equal rank**; notably, the Old Testament stands lower than the New. Many errors, mediæval and Puritan, arose from ignoring this. But for the Old Testament, persecution and witch-burning might never have stained the record of the Church. Even the New Testament's expectation of a near end to the world was falsified by the event. It did not please God to grant it a literal fulfilment. **Supreme** over Old Testament, and even over New, **Christ** must stand; in His words, His example, His Grace.

(4) **Parents** may seem to be less an authority than a fragment from a great institution—the family—named out of its due place (chap. xv.). But let it be observed that we are speaking here only of authority. Now the authority of God or Christ or the Bible comes to us usually, first of all, through fathers and mothers. And, even when they cease to be authorities, parents remain

a very precious and sacred influence. Dr. **E. A. Abbott** (*Philomythus*, pp. 68, 69) has strikingly pointed out how the child-soul ought to work its way to faith in the heavenly Father through its trust in the earthly parent.

Dr. **Robert Rainy** once feared that too much was being said in certain quarters about Church authority, and tried to turn it off with a smile by saying: "Yes, the Church and mothers are great powers." But we may accept this supplement in all seriousness. "Children obey your parents in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 1) may mean once in twenty times, Obey your parents so far as they represent the Lord. The other nineteen times it means, Obey them because they represent the Lord: please them in order to please Him. So long as God is called Father, parental authority must rank in Christian ethics among the sacred things. Ancestor worship is a Pagan distortion of this; but it is the distortion of a truth.

(5) **The State** chiefly relies upon (a) **force**; that is its most proper mode of action (p. 139). It is true, as Tolstoy urges, that force can never make us virtuous (*cf.* p. 140); yet we may hold that the State ought to exist, and that criminal law and administrative acts form outworks of morality—imperfect yet valuable. Merely to keep out of the hands of the police makes no man good; yet police action may and should hamper certain sins, may and should help society onwards on the road towards virtue. (b) The State has **further positive**

claims upon us. Oldest and simplest is the demand that the citizen should **risk his life in war** for his country. Evil as war is, we may be thankful that it addresses this great challenge to selfishness, and so far functions as an ethical force. But further, as the State is democratised **duties of good citizenship spread** from a ruling or official caste to the whole people. If the New Testament bade us "Be subject to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake" (I. Pet. ii. 13), the spirit of Christ now bids us serve Him in the opportunities of public life, national and municipal.

(6) **Society** is less of a formal authority than the State. It relies upon influence rather than upon force. And yet it remains a very real authority. (a) Society may be said to appoint us **our daily work**. Under State Socialism (p. 164), when society and State would be utterly identical, this would probably take place through the rigorous method of force. But even under our looser organisation it is society that gives or withholds opportunity. One must have had either an unusually happy or an unusually unhappy experience of life, if one has never been thankful to come back from holiday and take one's place again between the shafts. All business duty is a social service (as the non-Christian **Comte** impressively taught). We owe to society what we owe supremely to God—that our work should be done "heartily" and "with goodwill" (Col. iii. 23; Eph. vi. 6, 7), even if law should be

too clumsy-fingered to call us to a reckoning for scamped service. (b) **Custom** may be good or bad. Again, it may be excessive or defective. Custom shapes the bricks so that they fit together in a fabric of mutual "edification." Morality itself in one type grows out of custom and institution; let us think of the German word *Sittlichkeit*, or of the connection in Greek between *ĕthos* and *ēthos*. Of course, there is another type, more inward, more ideal, that has little to do with custom. And yet we "ought not to leave the other undone" (Matt. xxiii. 23). Before we can correct past inheritances, we must be loyal to what of good they contain. Good taste and good manners work through custom. We must never light-heartedly break it, although sometimes we must fight it to the death. It is a minor morality (comp. p. 134). (c) A shade lower still stands **public opinion**, for it may easily prove fussy and conventional. Yet, without a healthy public opinion, moral relapses will be frequent and moral advance impossible. It was the utter fanaticism of individualism which led J. S. Mill—personally a virtuous man—to maintain that public opinion had nothing to do with a man's attitude towards what is called, in the narrower sense, morality. Alas, only a half-moralised public opinion can be found among us.

(7) **The Church** may be regarded with **A. Ritschl** as being, first of all, (a) a fellowship in **worship**. But as we worship God we take anew our vows to live according

to His will; and duties that seemed hard or oppressive grow welcome again—communion with our Father reviving our insight. This is the greatest moral service rendered by the Christian Church, this almost informal moulding of the inner life of her members.

(b) We descend a great way when we turn to speak of **Church law.** There long raged a controversy, now almost obsolete, regarding the Church's power to impose rites and ceremonies not found in Scripture. The **Puritans** (who said the Church could do no such thing, and claimed "liberty of conscience" for the individual in that special narrow sense) read the Bible too much like a law code. And yet in principle they were right. The Church may neither require nor yet forbid anything except in accordance with the primitive Scriptural revelation. Naturally there is endless difficulty in applying this principle to details. Mission Churches, composed of converts from non-Christian religions, have roundly forbidden the use of **opium** or of **alcohol.** We should think similar prohibitions a very extreme assertion of Church authority; yet dare we say that our revered brethren have misconstrued their duty? Indirectly, such action may be necessary in their circumstances, if they are to be faithful to their supreme tasks. For us, if only because of denominational rivalries, such action is unthinkable. (Are we sure that we are morally adult enough to have the unity of Christendom bestowed on us?—p. 148.)

(c) **Church discipline** among Protestants deals with sins which are of a nature to become generally known, and so to constitute "offences" or "scandals"—stumbling-blocks tempting others. Such faults cannot be dealt with unless they are grave; yet it is by no means implied that some of the secret faults which discipline cannot touch are not graver still. Discipline is meant to reclaim (*cf.* p. 71). There is no more painful part of Church duty; yet much may be achieved by its wise and faithful performance. (d) **Church custom** and Church public opinion make their own contributions. It is or was a tradition of evangelicalism to attend Sunday service (twice?), to read Scriptures and pray morning and evening, to maintain family worship, and, if possible, to take some share in organised Church work. Is the tradition obsolete? Ought it to be?

(8) **Conscience** is the last authority to be mentioned. (a) It has been said with great force and truth that "**Principles** do not apply themselves; they **must be put into operation.**" The morality of custom and public opinion will be merely dead or fossil morality if it is followed mechanically. There is little or nothing Christian in such service. But, when the Christian conscience acknowledges and obeys custom because it recognises therein God's will, and sees a promise of blessing to men, then morality lives. (b) Those who thus loyally obey good custom will be in a condition to

correct it or go **beyond** it. (c) If need be, they may **defy** it. The need will not arise so often as British Protestants, children of successful revolutions in Church and State, are apt to suppose. And yet the need is fully in the line of Christian duty. Christ may again call for His martyrs.

The general **ideal** is one of **loyalty contemporaneously to all** these authorities. **If they seem to conflict,** and we cannot find that the conflict is unreal, what is our duty? Our ultimate loyalty is to God revealed in Christ; the closest utterance of God is in the conscience of a Christian. **It never can be right to disobey conscience.** Our conscience may mislead us. We may be to blame for mishandling it in the past, so that it now keeps a false reckoning. No matter; we must obey it now, at our peril; disobedience brings greater perils. Of course, we must cross question our consciences, and make as sure as we can that the genuine inward authority speaks. Again, it is **only the adult** for whom such advice holds fully good; children must hang up all doubtful questions so long as they possibly can. Yet the bright terrible thing dwells among us and within us. Christ came to send a sword (Matt. x. 34). It is **a moral tragedy,** whoever's blame it may be, when lawful authorities are ranged on opposite sides. No good man will light-heartedly waste the world's moral

resources by hissing on the State against the Church, or the Church against the State (*e.g.* Marriage laws, p. 137). Yet the Christian in whose mind God Himself has awakened faith in Christ does not walk in darkness, but in the light of life. Even his imperfect dutifulness and his flawed conscientiousness serve God, help his brethren, and glorify the Master. Going modestly but resolutely forward, in strife itself he will be essentially at heart a peacemaker. And the blessing of peacemakers will be his.

CHAPTER XI

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Traditionally throughout the greater part of Christendom it has been taught that the life of discipleship has its origin in what is termed **sacramental** grace. Baptism implants it; confirmation matures it; thereafter the sacrament of the altar nourishes and maintains it. Not that any form of Christian theology ignores the existence of **moral** conditions required for salvation. Catholicism speaks in terms of law (p. 66) as well as in terms of sacramental grace. But when it is a question of the **initiation** of the new life, the Catholic mind speaks mainly of **sacraments.** That is how it tries to show itself loyal to the doctrine of grace in God. The new life is not merely law, merit, penances, &c.—man's work!—but God's work, viz. in sacramental mystery. How are the two factors co-ordinated? Catholic theology teaches that—a legal minimum of obedience being presupposed—sacraments bless and save unless

the recipient wilfully **interposes an obstacle** which frustrates their tendency. Apart from such crass counterworking by definite acts of sin, sacraments ensure the Divine blessing—we have only to let them be!

Is it correct to say that **the New Testament** regards sacraments as in some sense **channels of** saving **grace**? We believe that it does employ such language, **St. Paul especially**, and with a special reference to baptism (Rom. vi. 3; Gal. iii. 27). But this at once suggests a very important caution. Characteristically and centrally (as the older Protestantism taught), if not even exclusively (as many modern scholars hold), New Testament baptism is baptism of adults. Ordinarily the candidate is a convert from heathenism. In such a life, baptism has a marked moral meaning. It is the definite outward act by which a convert breaks with his heathen past and enters into solemn covenant with Christ. All sacrifices are involved in that decisive step. Now St. Paul's teaching is that, as the man comes to baptism, seeking Christ with penitence and faith, Christ comes in baptism to meet him with forgiveness and blessing.

Alongside of this sacramental teaching (and much more emphatic) we have **St. Paul's doctrine of faith**, and of grace apart from the law. Trust in God through Christ—never to be dissociated from repentance, yet with the emphasis laid upon trust in offered mercy—saves, and saves completely. If we do justice to this

part of the apostle's teaching, our doctrine about sacraments must be something very different from the assertion that they alone save, and that—provided the receiver interposes no special obstacles—they save automatically.

The Christian community very early became a hereditary fellowship. It drew its members more and more from the children of Christian homes, less and less from the heathen world by conversion. What was to be done with baptism? After a period of distinct hesitation—why, asks Tertullian, should "the age of innocence too hastily" use up the single opportunity of washing away sin?—**infant baptism became the rule.** No distinction was put upon its meaning when extended to children (or when specialised as a rite of childhood). This fact did much to materialise the conception of sacramental grace and to despiritualise Christianity.

Contemporaneously with the Reformation came the **Anabaptist** movement. Inspired with far-reaching social enthusiasms, if degenerating too often into wild excesses, the new Radicalism gave birth before long to the sober Calvinistic **Churches of the Baptist order.** A recoil from sacramentalism may be urged by evangelical, or, again, by rationalist motives, and both strains are visible among modern Baptists. Yet they agree on the decisive point—the children of Christians are to stand outside formal Church membership. Most Protestant

evangelicals have shrunk from that decision, supporting their policy by arguments good and bad. Let us see how the Christian life in children may be interpreted not upon sacramental but upon moral lines.

The beginnings of conscious Christianity may be referred to what **Bushnell** called "Christian nurture." Although the child inherits sin, breathing it in from the tainted atmosphere, human and social, into which he is born, he may and ought likewise to inherit at least the predisposition to faith; and reverence for his parents ought to lead him on (p. 83) by a scarcely conscious transition into godliness. When he arrives at manhood it must be expected that he will feel new speculative doubts or new temptations to wilfulness; but it is also to be expected that by God's mercy he will emerge from both into definite personal Christianity.

This ethical view of the awakening of the higher life (so important for Christian Ethics) is specially characteristic of what is often called the **Broad Church** school. Looking back in the light of such beliefs upon the sacraments, we conceive Christian nurture as the detailed fulfilment of what is pledged in symbol at **infant baptism.** Plainly, too, the resettling of conviction upon a personal basis at manhood or womanhood fulfils what is symbolised in **confirmation.** Churches practising infant baptism ought to regard that rite as a standing witness to the truth that the new life is to be

looked for and hoped for, even in childhood, among those who receive Christian nurture. And **confirmation,** if fully moralised, presents to each soul emerging from childhood the great choice which has now to be made for oneself. (But is it not traditional to confirm earlier —before the age of struggle and decision ?)

Protestant Churches, practising infant baptism, practising or not practising confirmation, started upon their career hopefully. The external rites were to express, safeguard, and develop the inward realities of repentance, faith and love in the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, it did not always prove so. Protestantism was in danger of becoming a new routine, colder perhaps than Catholicism. Against this in the providence of God a reaction showed itself. German **Pietism** was and is chiefly concerned to secure a warm inner life of devotion in those who profess and call themselves Christians ; British and American **revivalism** is chiefly concerned to secure that the beginning shall be a genuine beginning, not merely a form. The soul is to pass from death to life at conversion. Our Anglo-Saxon evangelicalism has been moulded throughout not only by the Reformation but by the Revival. With us the latter is more than a protest, more than even a successful protest. It is the dominant type of religious development.

We have passed under review **three** very different

conceptions of the origin of personal Christian life. **In practice,** however, they are **by no means so alien** to each other as theory would seem to make them. A sacramentalism which is morally in earnest cannot be indifferent either to nurture or to inner decision at confirmation; either to the conduct which does the will of God, or to "missions" repeating the warm appeal of the Gospel for those who outwardly or in heart have gone astray. A Broad Churchism which is loyally Christian will foster morals without disparaging either the sacraments or the doctrines of the Church. And revivalism may modify its early theology, which regarded conversion as always essentially catastrophic. Not even in conversion do we find the naked supernatural disentangled from everything that is natural. The modern statistical method—pushed even into this sacred region!—makes it plain that the organised revivals of the evangelical Churches are for the most part parallels to confirmation, *i.e.* they chiefly gather in young men and young women.

What, then, is conversion? It used to be interpreted, in the light of the darkest doctrine of sin (p. 13), as the bringing of the soul by the immediate, miraculous, and sovereign or arbitrary act of God out of condemnation into salvation. The smoothest Christian development was viewed as only a disguised catastrophe. This we cannot fully accept. As was said above (p. 16), Christian

ethic maintains that each soul of man has a true chance of turning to God at the sound of the Gospel. The doctrine of spiritual "**biogenesis**" (see Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*) is the reasoned denial of our position. Our assertion of the position involves a reasoned denial of the old revivalist view, that regeneration and passive conversion are absolutely identical things. **Not every regeneration takes the form of a conversion, nor is every** apparent **conversion** a true **regeneration.**

It is plain that very **different things may be described** by the same word, **Conversion.** As long as the severer doctrine of sin and the fear of hell dominate men's minds, Christian life will almost inevitably begin in spasms of terror (the "law work"), followed by a paroxysm of joy. But it is possible for conversion to mean less—even to mean little! To-day it chiefly means self-devotion for the future, not escape from the past. The same Henry **Drummond,** whose early manifesto was so uncompromising a reassertion of Calvinism, became latterly the agent in producing many conversions of the other type. His was a sweet and pure influence, but, as transmitted to other lives, it often lacked depth. In many quarters we have similar teaching; and we are threatened with a very thin type of Christianity. The form of a supernatural crisis is maintained, and yet the whole content of the supernatural

may be lost. There are plenty "converts" to-day who do not know what the word redemption means.

Looking from the outside—not as God looks, who knows the heart—we may describe conversion as a **quickening of the religious affections**. Hence it does not necessarily imply much readjustment of the life; nor, as we have said, need it imply remorse for the past. (There may be a sudden moral conversion or total reform, such as the Stoics believed in, without much stirring of the emotions. That is not an evangelical conversion.) When it is what it seems, and what it ought to be, conversion will, however, raise the life—and permanently. "By their fruits ye shall know them." And it must **grow** into all that is according to the mind of God, of sorrow for past sin, and of thankfulness for the great salvation.

The practical issues of this chapter are matters not so much for the individual as for the Christian community. Christian ethics presuppose personal Christianity. But it is a question of vast importance: what is our duty (and privilege) in the way of helping, by the grace of God, to awaken Christian life in others?

(1) Christian **nurture**, in the highest and fullest sense, during childhood and youth, ought to bring children into the kingdom of God and keep them there.

(2) Special **opportunity** must be presented at the age when youth passes into **maturity**. Churches which use

a rite of confirmation must be on their guard against letting the rite prove a mere form; evangelical Churches must be on their guard against letting the young souls be over-pressured by revival methods; for these have their dangers. And yet the Spirit of God, working among us, consents to use these methods. (A catechumens' or young communicants' class is a promising supplement.)

(3) If Christian nurture is imperfect, and conversion as we know it does not always imply depth of experience, **we must make the more of the subsequent stages** of Christian life. Let our Christian teaching be genuine, we shall grow up into our Head.

(4) In saying that it is possible to yield to the Gospel, we do not deny that it gets harder and harder as life advances; nor do we assert that it is ever easy. Yet **opportunity must be renewed**—again and again and again.

(5) By whatever history the Christian life arises, what is essential is that it should be in existence within us—**the real supernatural life of God** in the soul of man, coming from Christ through the Holy Spirit, and bringing its unique gifts of power and peace and joy.

What follows is perhaps an expression of individual opinion.

(6) **Sacraments are** to be viewed as **real helps** in the

divine life, always on the presupposition that they are not viewed as the exclusive channels of God's operation. **Faith saves**; sacraments help.

(7) Infant baptism, however seemly in itself, ought **not** to be called a **sacrament**.

CHAPTER XII

OUR RELATION TO GOD IN THE NEW LIFE

It is possible to speak about the beginning of the new life, as we have done in last chapter, without ever asking what the nature of the new life is. If now we try to offer a preliminary definition, we might say that the peculiarity of **Christian obedience consists in doing with pleasure** what has to be done. This follows from the very conception of religious goodness. Even Paganism thought it a bad omen if an animal victim went reluctantly to be sacrificed; and we, who have been taught that morality is religion and religion morality, cannot offer our living sacrifices in God's eternal temple unless we obey with goodwill from the heart (Eph. vi. 6, 7). "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me," said our Lord (John iv. 34); that remained true even when He had Himself to pray, "Not My will but Thine be done;" His deepest desire was unshaken, that God might be glorified. In the knowledge of God as our Father—in

the first kindling (p. 102) of our affections towards Him and towards the Lord Christ—there lies the promise and potency of the new life which overcomes the world because it is begotten of God (I. John v. 4).

Our relation to God in this new life can be interpreted from different points of view. First, we may name **Probation**. This may seem an unexpected corollary to the revelation of Fatherhood; yet it lies in our path, not to be evaded. "We call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work" (I. Pet. i. 17, R.V.). Christ's own teaching plainly lays stress on this, especially the teaching given in view of His departure from earth and of His promised return to judge and save (p. 54). If there is no probation, neither is there any responsibility; without responsibility we can have neither freedom nor morality. It is possible to hold with dogmatic universalism that our responsibility exists but is limited. Souls may be earlier or later in arriving, but in the end all must reach salvation; we may get more or less of the children's bread, but in the end all shall sit down to some portion of it in the kingdom of God. In this reduced sense, and no further, dogmatic universalism asserts human probation.

We are not concerned in this little book with disputed doctrines, apart from the one concern—to make sure that doctrine is, in the full Christian sense, ethical.

But that consideration settles the matter. It seems **impossible** that we should **acquiesce** in **dogmatic universalism.** Whatever God's hidden purpose of mercy may conceivably be, His revealed purpose is clear—He will judge men according to their works. The New Testament states no limitations to the doctrine of our probation. It remains a glorious if an awful truth. The infinite gulf between right and wrong would be hidden by treacherous mists if we ceased to think of the infinite contrast between heaven and the outer darkness. This solemn truth of our responsibility is the special moral message of Bishop **Butler's** *Analogy.*

A higher conception of God's relation to His children is offered in the thought of life as a Divine **education.** This view of life was impressively taught by Thomas **Erskine** of Linlathen, though, as a convinced universalist, he offered the new thought not as a supplement to the last but as a substitute for it, in conscious dissent from Butler ("Education, not Probation" in *The Spiritual Order*). **Butler** in his own way had made room for the thought of education too. His chapter "Of a State of Probation as implying Trials, Difficulties and Dangers" is followed by one "Of a State of Probation as implying Moral Discipline and Improvement," *i.e.* education. There are two errors into which Butler seems to fall. First, he compares this life and the Hereafter to education in youth on the one hand, and the work of

manhood on the other hand. But there is no such discontinuity in true moral education. We are learners as long as we live. And therefore, also, moral education stretches on from this life into the next. We have not simply two things "analogous" to each other, as Butler's argument assumes; we have one expanding glory. Secondly, Butler's conception of education is too narrowly self-education. That God or Christ or the Holy Spirit teaches us, helps our infirmities, saves us, he hardly ever calls to mind. "No more is required" of us, he says in one amazing sentence, "than what we are well able to do" (*Analogy*, Pt. I., chap. iv.). The truth gains immensely when we remember that, while we are called to self-education—no education can take place until the pupil's heart is enlisted—we have the best of teachers, inwardly as well as outwardly. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. . . . Abide in Me." Even what we speak of as circumstance is divinely appointed for us. God plans it for framing us into that precise type of goodness (and happiness) which He allots to each of us. The law of duty, applied to our special position and experience, as God determines these, comes to constitute a **personal vocation** (*cf.* p. 114, &c.). For this and through this God trains us.

While the conceptions of **probation and education** are in some respects sharply divergent, in other respects they coincide. Thus both of them **look to the future**

—probation almost exclusively to a supernatural future discontinuous with the present life; education, more equally to the near and to the remote or supernatural future; yet both looking forward. Again, probation and education are **alike** in being **intensely personal.** One concentrates upon my own salvation; the other upon my own acquirement of a trained and noble character.

Over against both we place the conception of life as service, *i.e.* as "**doing the will of God**" (*cf.* pp. 44, 48, 84). We are probably safe in calling this the master-thought in Christ's own ethical teaching. It focuses attention not upon any future but on the present, its golden opportunities that are passing and may never return again. It makes continuity absolute. "As in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. vi. 10, R.V.) is the desire addressed to God in the Lord's Prayer. And as on earth so in heaven God's "servants shall do Him service" (Rev. xxii. 3, R.V.). Moreover, the thought of personal salvation or of supreme personal excellence gives place to the thought of God's will. True, the service spoken of is service done to God. It is not yet defined as service to the community or to our fellows. But we know that Christ's teaching makes that identification absolute (*cf.* pp. 54–55). This, therefore, is the highest and deepest view of the Christian life.

Although **the three views** of life now enumerated differ, they are not opposed to each other, but

rather **complementary**. Even if one of them may justly seem higher than the rest, it does not claim a monopoly; we are to find room in our thoughts and feelings for them all. We know how Christ spoke of judgment, of reward, of our probation in view of judgment and its issues. None of us is safe in forgetting during a single day that we must give in our account at the judgment-seat of God. St. Paul, supremely the apostle of grace, strikes the note of responsibility again and again (*e.g.* I. Cor. iv. 4; II. Cor. v. 10). And we could scarcely live, especially through days of trouble, but for the assurance that sorrow itself is a tool in God's hand moulding us for a better and happier future. But least of all must we omit to learn from our Lord how we are to love the will of God because of what it is—God's will (Ps. xl. 8; Matt. xi. 25, 26).

Even a brief ethical primer cannot leave the question of our relation to God in the new life without speaking of that duty and privilege of Divine communion which has its centre in **prayer**. Worship, sacraments, Christian teaching, obedient dutifulness, the discipline of trial—all converge on this point. Christ's own teaching (Matt. vi.) throws personal prayer into a secret place. That seems forgotten by sentimental travellers, who praise what we may well call the "knee drill" of Mohammedans and disparage the reticence and reserve which Christ has taught His disciples. Nothing is harder

than really to pray; nor is anything more strengthening to one whose heart is yielded up to the service of God and men.

Fasting has a very long history in religion; but, as a means of drawing near to the God who is revealed as our Father, it cannot be unreservedly approved. As a means of self-discipline, it is best translated from occasional self-mortification to habitual self-control. If it is to be practised for the sake of raising funds ("self-denial weeks"), it is an emergency method and must not be overdone.

CHAPTER XIII

CHRISTIAN DUTIES

EVEN the highest definitions of our moral relation to God in the new life have left us so far with a somewhat indefinite view of its contents. We are to do God's will; but what precisely—as precisely as this great question can be answered—is God's will for us? We ought to reach a further answer by analysing **duty**. In other words, we shall find that the contents of God's will for us are interpreted in the light of our relations to our fellows and our responsibility for self (p. 119).

Duty and Love. We must concede that duty is hardly in strictness one of the Bible words for describing Christ's service. (Yet see Luke xvii. 10, E.V.) It is borrowed from philosophy, in which it arose or became prominent under Stoicism. Still, if our Lord's own teaching inculcates responsibility and probation, there is hardly more than a change from one synonym to another when we speak of "duty." Though God is our Father, He is the Father who judges (I. Pet. i. 17).

Though we are sons of God, we are pledged to serve His holy will.

It may seem as if a revelation of love raised us above the realm of duty. The writer can remember with what contempt D. L. Moody, the great evangelist, spoke of "duty" as a poor and mean description of a Christian's calling. Now Moody was a man of the highest Christian worth, yet in this he spoke unwisely. The love of God is to keep His Commandments (I. John v. 3). Truly they are not grievous, yet at times they must seem so. Perfect purity may lament to God with strong crying and tears, and yet the cup not pass. Wordsworth's *Ode to Duty*—if less than evangelical in its view of the motives which make us flee for refuge to lay hold upon a Divine hope—is soundly Christian in its conception of the solemn though glad service which duty exacts.

Duty and Virtue. In the next chapter we shall discuss the Christian calling under the heading of "Virtue." Duties are acts; virtues are habits, states of character, graces. Again, duty affirms what we must do, or else it forbids the things we dare not do. Thus it tells us what is evil. Virtue, on the other hand, says: This or that is positively good. According to the vulgar apprehension, stereotyped in Roman Catholicism, duty tells us what is the irreducible minimum required by law, while virtue tells us of supererogatory goodness

outrunning duty and constituting merit. Protestantism and the Gospel itself (Luke xvii. 10) protest against this. All goodness is of a piece; and there is no merit anywhere if we see clear and look deep. What is true in these suggestions is just this, that duty, with what Kant called its "categorical imperative," stands for the aspect of goodness which is absolute. Or—to repeat the same statement in other words—duty stands for the universal aspect of moral requirement. If any other person stood in precisely my present place, what is my duty would be precisely his. Hence, duty is very frequently said to be what is demanded by the **moral law**. The right is unconditionally binding; it enforces itself "without respect of persons." Still many grave errors may arise from speaking about moral law (pp. 44, 45). Our Lord does not speak of "law"; St. Paul repudiates it.

Duty and Vocation. While duty stands for a universal element, there is a personal element in moral requirement which may be called vocation. This word suggests several things. Dr. H. **Rashdall** has lately criticised moralists for neglecting so grave a matter as the **choice of a profession** or life-work. Different principles might be appealed to for guidance. What attracts the person who has to make the choice? Few men can do their best work if they are "square pegs in round holes." And assuredly the parent who settles his

child's career tyrannically, according to the parent's principles—or, worse still, according to the parent's taste or mere predilection—acts an un-Christian part. Secondly, Where can I do the most good to others? The writer remembers how his own father used to declare that, had he not been a Christian minister, he must have become a physician, as the next best way of doing good. Thirdly, Where shall I be safest from moral dangers, for myself and for those who may come to belong to my circle? "Lot beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered. So Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan. But the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly." Fourthly, What can I get? In more religious language, What options does God permit me? No possible casuistry can tell us how these various considerations are to be harmonised, or subordinated one to another, upon a universal plan. Personal choice is a personal duty, to be discharged in God's sight. Outward helps and hindrances are part of our Father's will, and the meaning of that will is uniformly good. In what otherwise seems a most awkward misfit, we can serve God and follow Christ. Yet, within the range of possible choice, we must select wisely. The best must be made of ourselves, not the least.

Similar decisions have to be repeated over and over again **on a smaller scale.** What is in point of duty my

vocation? First among all personal duties we must do faithfully, as for God, our professional life-work. Next, the opportunities which open up from this life-work have a special claim on us. It is better to be a considerate employer, in home or workshop, at the cost of giving less cash to good causes, or even, it may be, of giving less time to philanthropy, than to shine in the esteem of those far off, but neglect the work that lies nearest us. And yet, further still, it is good to do some free-will service, independently of professional tasks. The rule is, "As we have opportunity." God asks no impossibilities; but He does ask the seeing eye, with the loving heart behind it, to discern opportunity and embrace it. If I cannot swim, it is no duty of mine to rescue one drowning in deep water. Yet if there is some chance of success, though small, and if no one else is near? It is not my duty, if morally immature, to volunteer for heroic moral tasks (*e.g.* counselling and reclaiming a neighbour who is falling into the grip of vice). Yet, if there is no one else?

Duty and the sphere of the permissible. Is there any part of life—we speak, of course, specially as Christians—that is morally colourless? It is not fair to pretend that we are always at the cross-roads, making the choice of Hercules; though sometimes we are. The old bad legal traditions hint (p. 24) that, so long as we respect the limits authoritatively laid down, we

are "**permitted**" within these to act as we please. Christianity will have no complicity with such a creed. But can duty regulate every minute detail in life? Even the austere **Kant** spoke of "duties of imperfect obligation," though surely he might as well have said, duties which are not quite duty at all! Still, is there any moral significance in taking one street rather than the next parallel street when I am walking to my work? Mr. F. H. **Bradley** once suggested that **it might be a duty not to press the conception of duty unduly.** If we remember that the duty of serving God is permanent, we ought to cultivate a habit of prompt decision on small points, where no ground of moral preference can be detected. We are not to be children or slaves. On the other hand, it is doubtful whether this can fairly be called a region of permissible action.

In **graver things** the conception of the morally permissible calls forth **graver hesitation.** Suppose I have under consideration some heavy sacrifice or some arduous effort. No human adviser can tell me with authority that I am pledged and bound to the more painful alternative. Is it, then, morally "permissible" to take the lower path, if I so decide? Surely not. The contemplated sacrifice or effort either is God's will for me—in which case I ought to perceive that, and act upon the knowledge—or else it is not God's will for me, and, therefore, is not duty at all. Immense diffi-

culties meet us in applying this principle; but the principle itself is plain, and difficulties rightly encountered educate the mind. To have needlessly in self-indulgence chosen the lower path leaves a bad blot upon memory and conscience.

An innocent meaning for the "permissible" is found by Dr. **Herrmann**, who identifies it with **amusement**. We are too weak to do without recreation; and Dr. Herrmann seems to view it as nothing better than a concession to our weakness. Perhaps this judgment is a shade stern. There may be a real duty of taking (some reasonable) recreation—not, of course, a duty of throwing ourselves into this or that particular pleasure. Can we ask God's blessing upon recreation? Can we not be amused to the glory of God and to the recuperation of moral strength? If we can, there is no room for describing relaxation as a thing merely permissible. It is among God's holy gifts to us, though among the smaller. Other recreation is unsafe and unlawful.

On the whole we conclude that the idea of a realm of the permissible in contrast to duty, properly so called, is a delusion, and one not free from danger.

Division of Duties. The Church of England catechism, following the letter of Christ's teaching (as to the Old Testament "law"), divides in **two**—duty to God, duty to my neighbour. Text-books have often divided into **three**—duty to self, to my neighbour, to God. It

is very doubtful whether these divisions help us. **All duty is duty to God**; and it might be possible to add that all duty is duty to self (I. Tim. iv. 16), and—if perhaps in some cases less directly, yet—is duty to our neighbours too! Duty is nothing else than a harmony in the recognition of God's will—a harmony of our own true good with the true good of others. Still it might be possible to concede this, and yet plead for a classification of duties according as one or other element was more prominent in each case. Dr. Newman **Smyth's** language may point in this direction; he distinguishes duties to self **as a moral end**—and so on (the threefold division). A **twofold** division seems best, if we frame it **differently**—duties with special regard to self and to others. We hold that both alike are "duties to God," and that "religious duties" of prayer, &c., are not uniquely sacred—if uniquely prominent, they are so as special privileges rather than as special duties (above, p. 110).

In regard to self. I am myself **part of the moral whole** and an element in the kingdom of God. It must be peculiarly my responsibility to keep this part of the Lord's garden fruitful and clear of weeds. To preserve **life** and shun suicide; to preserve and secure **health** (unless it be God's will that I should imperil health from an adequate motive), these are duties specially noted here by Dr. Newman Smyth. (Surely it is not because I am a moral end that my life and health are significant!

Life and health are needed for the service of God and man.)

A difficult point to handle in connection with personal duty is the claim of what we describe in a more special sense as **purity**. In regard to this, a few words of Dr. Herrmann's may be quoted in free translation. "The family, which furnishes the conditions for the very best exercise of mutual love, is rooted in the strongest of all natural impulses, that of sex—an impulse in which the species makes the individual serve its ends. But in a true marriage moral individuality is not submerged but glorified; there is no such inward moral fellowship as that of a husband and wife who are worthy of their calling. Hence every one fights in defence of the family who secures spiritual mastery over the natural impulse of sex. And every one who deserves—perhaps in married life itself—to be called unchaste or immodest is doing his utmost to rob mankind of the blessings of the home, to make the flesh master of the spirit, and thus to destroy the family." Under stress of temptation "we may sometimes wish that sex could be abolished altogether." Too much "sham holiness" has prevailed in the Christian Church under the influence of such thoughts. "When thus disguised, evil is worst of all. The plain fact is that God has willed human nature to be what it is—with all the joy of which sex may become the vehicle and occasion, and with all the burdens that it imposes."

From self-maintenance (and self-**control**, which for us means control by the indwelling Spirit of our Lord) we pass on to speak of **self-development**—physical, mental, æsthetic. Our physical being is part of that natural order which God's providence presupposes and upon which His grace works. Clearer still is the duty of self-culture in mental and æsthetic regions.[1] It is no pleasure to our God that His servants should have dull and ill-stored minds. Amusement (p. 118) rises in rank and worth when it becomes refining as well as recreative. Almost all of us err by neglecting good music and good poetry; we know their value, but poorer things thrust them aside. On the other hand, great art loses in recreative quality. It tasks and exhausts.

Yet here again circumstances, divinely appointed for us, speak their No as well as their Yes. And the **pruning-knife** does as much for development as the forcing-house. We cannot specialise in everything at once. How many rosebuds must be pinched off to make the perfect rose! What rule is possible? We must **start from the best custom** of our time and circle, making modifications for our own needs (or in accordance with clear principles of our own belief). We must seek wisdom, and we must not lose simplicity. Things good *per se* are bad for us if they

[1] See Dr. Kilpatrick's *Christian Character*.

overburden our powers. Spiritually how weak we are! The highest self-culture is **spiritual.**

In regard to others. We are not speaking now of duties in the particular social spheres (chap. xv.). Apart from these, as well as within them, we recognise duties towards others of justice, considerateness, and kindness or love.

Justice is first a limit. Positively, I am to pay my plighted dues. Negatively, I must not exact what goes beyond my rights. "Not more than an eye for an eye," said the Old Testament. Not more than his rights may a Christian claim! Shall he claim less? Crazy altruism tells us to claim nothing at all. Yet in many cases it is good for my neighbour that my claim be gently but firmly pressed. Is it right to let a pupil scamp his work, unchecked? If not—then is it right to let a tradesman do so? Our error is not in asserting rights, but in stopping short with that assertion. Rights are real things: but duty stands above all our mutual claims, and the full interpretation of duty is God. The just act and the kind act may sometimes seem to differ; but the spirit of justice is the spirit of love. Loveless justice is not merely unloving—it is unjust. Hence, justice must be associated with **considerateness** if it is not to be Shylock-like; and **love** has no limit except that of working "as we have opportunity." In the nature of things we cannot define in advance how much

considerateness is due from us to others. Does that make it less a duty? We are to be free men; we are not to be children; or—shall we say?—we are to be God's children. His law must be written on our hearts; its meaning must be felt out wisely and patiently in action. Nothing else than love on our part can fulfil God's requirement. To fail in love is rebellion against Him. And we must love our fellows' souls.

CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTIAN VIRTUES

Traditionally, the Christian or Catholic Church has reckoned up **seven** "principal" virtues—**four** borrowed from Greek philosophy, the "cardinal" virtues of **courage, self-control, wisdom** or prudence, and **justice**; **three** added from **St. Paul**, notably from the great outburst in I. Cor. xiii. 13, **Faith, Hope, Love**—the "Christian graces." The first four are supposed to be **natural**, the last three **supernatural**. (Over against the seven virtues Catholic teaching came to place seven Deadly Sins—deadly in contrast with "venial" wrong-doing.) This is an unsatisfactory fashion of clamping together different things. Nor is it certain that ethically faith, hope, and love form a good summary of Christian excellences. Only one of these—love—is properly an ethical virtue. Still, we might bring these seven virtues into relation with the traditional threefold division of Christian duties (p. 118). Courage, temperance, prudence refer chiefly to self; justice to human society; faith, hope, and love

to God. But we should have to add that justice involves love (p. 122), and we should have to take love as love to man no less than as love to God. Faith or trust is central in the religious relation; love is central in conduct.

Let us begin with **courage**. It is known to us primarily as the soldier's virtue. We might be tempted to place it lowest among all virtues; but certain it is that no one can make even a tolerable passage across the stage of life without it. We need its lower forms—physical courage, readiness, nerve—and we must add to these moral courage. It might seem as if this virtue of courage were inconsistent with another primary virtue of the Christian life—moral **sensitiveness**, or what Thomas Arnold of Rugby termed "moral thoughtfulness." The man who thinks little of pain may underestimate his failures and so "despise God's chastenings." Timid minds will learn more readily; and Christ announces hope for the weak. Again, courage may blunt the sympathies. Why do these weaklings writhe in pain? I, the strong, brave man, don't! But there is no real antagonism between the several Christian virtues. We must rise into a higher region, where courage is inspired by faith. In God we boast, but not in ourselves. Supernatural resources amid conscious weakness must make us strong. Sensitiveness to the Divine education is no excuse for cowardice in Christians.

Temperance or self-control is akin to courage. It disregards clamorous pleasure, as courage disregards clamorous pain. In another respect this virtue calls for notice; it is one for whose exercise no precise limits can be laid down in advance or prescribed from outside. It is somewhat to be regretted that we employ the word temperance so much for the habit of abstaining from all use of strong drink. Wise and Christian as we may deem that policy (p. 151), we shall err gravely if we let the thought of Temperance—in its true meaning as self-control—disappear from our minds. It is true that, as moral evolution advances, the requirements of self-control rise. A Greek might be called "temperate" for no better reason (it has been pointed out) than moderation in sensuality. Christ's law of purity is immensely more stringent, and Christian motives, too, are profoundly more powerful. Yet in the end a sharp policy of abstinence will fail us—somewhere. Right and wise **balance** between less and more, in many different regions of life, must evince the presence of living Christian goodness, and rebut the charge of dead mechanical legalism. This is notably true in regard to **pleasures** (pp. 118, 121).

Wisdom again might rank as the lowest of virtues if we took it in the sense of **mere prudence** and sagacious self-regard. Prudence is a **half-virtue** (p. 134). Yet it is an advance upon living at random, or upon wasting

health or means. Persons too readily speak with contempt to-day of "selfish prudence." They ought to recognise that imprudence is more deeply selfish. Its effects are known and certain; yet your "generous" nature will insist upon running on the rocks, and becoming salvage for the busy hands of better men. And in this virtue too there are higher aspects as well as lower. Wisdom or efficiency, adjusting means to the end in view, makes the best of one's personal life. It is not to be construed—as **Plato** in characteristically Greek fashion took it—as if it were the monopoly of the small class of speculative thinkers. Every life may be wisely effective. And we must advance further still in analysing this virtue. Is a life to be called "wise" indeed, unless we study, besides personal efficiency, adjustment to others?

The brave self-controlled wise man (or woman) has first made the best of himself; secondly, he has become by his virtues infinitely more efficient as a servant to society. Still, **social** claims, as such, clearly announce themselves for the first time by the name of **Justice**, for justice has no meaning at all apart from society. In his relations to others, the good man must be at the least just (p. 122). This virtue demands equality of distribution in some sense; "just and equal" (Col. iv. 1). Dr. **Rashdall** has maintained that "**equal consideration**" is what justice really demands, "equality of conditions"

being impracticable and not truly desirable. The lowest view of justice would teach that I am to be brave, virtuous and wise for myself, so long as I do not interfere with the "rights" of others (p. 24). Herbert **Spencer** divided social virtue into justice, negative beneficence, and positive beneficence, with strong emphasis upon mere justice in the narrow sense now explained. Even **Kant**, with his duties of "perfect" and of "imperfect obligation," strikes a similar note. (It is justice that imposes perfect obligation.) Morally, we dare not disregard just claims; we must be "just before we are generous," as the saying goes. Here justice contrasts with temperance (p. 126). The former is my plain duty or debt, certain and calculable, if passing on (p. 113) from regulating actions to organise a virtue or type of character. But, as we claimed above (p. 117), it is an error to suppose that duties, which cannot be defined in advance or formulated for others, cease to be duties definitely required by God. If we substitute for the word justice the higher synonym **righteousness**, we shall feel that this virtue demands from us more than a negative goodness. Under the higher name, justice reveals itself as the central moral virtue incorporating wisdom and fulfilled in **love**, which exhibits righteous motive victoriously at work. Love and justice or righteousness are not two separate things. Love fulfils the law—that is the relation between them!

Yet we cannot omit separate consideration of the claims of righteousness. Love that followed whims, even kindly whims, would not deserve its glorious name. Christian love is under law to the needs of the brethren and to the commands of a righteous Lord.

It has been said in *Ecce Homo* that emphasis upon **active virtue** was Christ's special contribution to human ethics. On the other hand, it is equally true that ancient philosophy, before the ruin of the free cities and the rise of Alexander's empire, almost merged duty in the service of the community. In these two distinct forms the claims of our fellows descend to us as venerable and authoritative—Christian and classical; the claim of individuals and the claim of the commonwealth. We admit both; but we cannot agree that altruistic enthusiasm was Christ's only moral innovation. His **deepening of the inner personal life** is no less conspicuous and no less revolutionary. It is not by accident that the very claim on behalf of others, which Christ puts forth, views our fellows as our brethren and sisters, children of the same God, and not merely as an external society. And yet public spirit is a duty too. If the New Testament is necessarily all but silent regarding it, Dr. G. A. **Smith** has pointed out how much we may learn regarding patriotism not only from the classics but from the Old Testament.

We now make **a further transition** from social to

definitely religious virtues. But it must be understood that we are not bidding farewell either to personal or to social goodness. We carry them on with us, that they may be deepened when they are seen in God's true light.

The fundamental tone of virtue before God is **humility**. The lack of this, in the very wisest teacher of antiquity, **Aristotle**, has often been commented upon. Dr. Rashdall in particular has a strong impression that the pridefully "magnanimous" man depicted by Aristotle is utterly odious. Even apart from conscious faith in God, some few rare spirits may be touched with humility as they catch sight of the lofty moral ideal and divine the inadequacy of their own best service. But, when we know the ideal as personal in God, and still more when we know it as living and human in Christ our brother, humility becomes at once warmer and more profound. In us it must assume the added colour of **repentance**. Without unreality and without distortion of the moral judgment, we must confess before God sins recognised in our past behaviour or in the very structure of our character, and sins darkly suspected—though conscience has not yet been able definitely to make war upon them. We claim no self-respect in our ruined selves, but we regain it by God's grace.

A great German theologian, Albert **Ritschl**, has insisted upon the special place due to **patience** in the Christian life. We are to submit to God's unwelcome appoint-

ments in no stoical insensibility. Felt and recognised and accepted, pain is to be overcome through faith in God our Father.

The final religious virtue *towards God* is not so much love (*cf.* p. 125) as **thankfulness**. This was well taught by the Protestant Reformers. Yet they tended too much to speak of gratitude for mere pardon; as if, being released from penalties for the past, we tried in gratitude to do better. The Christian motive is wider than that. Knowing in faith that we are redeemed from all evil, we cannot but praise God in our lives. We are to "give thanks always for all things"—how can we? "To God, even our Father"—that is the first answer; "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"—that is the final answer, and that suffices.

Such thankfulness includes in itself **Joy**. The world tells us it is a "duty" to be "cheerful"; and the saying is very true, so far as it goes. But the Christian interpretation carries us up to greater heights and down to profounder depths. It is our **privilege** as well as our duty to rejoice in God. This is an important counterpoise to the drab view of Christian goodness which too much insistence upon humility and patience might yield. Joy springs naturally out of thankfulness; as naturally as ingratitude towards God or men sours the heart. And Christian joy looks beyond those precious lower gifts, which the providence of God strews with a boun-

tiful but intermittent hand, to the one sure and central blessing.

Another great writer, Bishop **Butler,** dwells with emphasis upon "**veracity and justice.**" It is well to realise that these also have the quality of religious virtues. Butler's reverence made him dislike the easy empiricist ethic of the pleasure philosophy, with its favourite virtues of "prudence," or, as Butler writes, "rational self-love," and of "benevolence," or—as our age says, after Comte—altruism. In Butler's days "rational self-love" was the fashion, and with a fine scorn he accepted the situation. Even in commending love towards others "there shall be," he writes,[1] "all possible concessions made to the favourite passion which hath so much allowed to it, and whose cause is so universally pleaded; it shall be treated with the utmost tenderness and concern for its interests." In our age, on the other hand, altruism is fashionable. To judge by men's talk, every one's life to-day is a perpetual heroic self-denial. And withal the appeal to pleasure holds its ground. This goodness is worth the while! we give pleasure to our neighbours! Butler recalls us to virtues which utter more imperious commands to the conscience.

Truth may seem **unkind**; yet in all essential matters we poor human creatures owe a debt of truth to one another. (In non-essentials, kind .silence may be best.)

[1] Sermon XI., near beginning.

The well-meant lie builds up a sham world, whose ruins may bury the fool that planned it as well as the weakling for whom it was planned. No habit can be socially more harmful in the long run than untruthfulness. And yet for the moment, probably, we cannot feel this! Religious principle must keep us truthful. First, we are bound—we are under law. Secondly, we trust results to a higher power. The only concession that can be made to the favourers of unveracious kindness is the admission that **kindness too is a duty.** We are to "speak the truth—in love." The person who can administer the largest dose of truth without infringing the law of love is, in this region, the best Christian. Sir Walter Scott's **Jeanie Deans**—drawn from the character and history of the real Helen Walker—could not lie, even to rescue a sister's life from cruel and unjust laws. But she could and did walk long miles to London; she could and did extort a pardon for her sister. Mere veracity might hardly have been admirable; but how utterly poor mere unveracity shows in comparison with that triumph of heroic principle! Perhaps we find ourselves lacking in cleverness? We cannot be both kind and truthful! What if that was the very discovery we needed to make? It humbles us; but "with the lowly is wisdom." If we work at the virtues in which we are weakest, we may grow wiser.

Butler also emphasises **Justice**; it, too, I venture to

say, is a **religious** virtue. There is a constitution of things and of duties fixed for us by God, and we believe in God's love. Let the right be done, though the skies should (seem about to) fall! This must be our mood; not self-righteously, but humbly; not passionlessly, as in a Marcus Brutus, but passionately as in Jesus Christ—filled with the passion of holy love. These ideal virtues become wholesome and beneficent when we not merely do the right for the abstract right's sake, but do it out of love to men and out of loving trust in God.

Our view of virtues, together constituting a Christian character, may be repeated as follows:—

Personal virtues: Courage, Self-control, Prudence or Wisdom.

Social virtue: Justice, interpreted as Righteousness, fulfilled by Love.

Religious virtues: Humility (Repentance, Faith), Patience, Thankfulness, Joy, Fidelity (Veracity, Justice).

The reader must be left to dwell for himself upon the **half-virtues—Prudence, Respectability, Courtesy, Sense of Honour** (possibly others). If these are all we have by way of virtues, they are nothing; but the handsomest virtues, apart from such solid substructures, will prove to be equally empty and equally vain. Half-virtues must be waived when virtue itself bids us do so. We dare not break with them merely to indulge ourselves.

CHAPTER XV

CHRISTIAN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

It might be held that, in our present imperfect state, there are no truly Christian institutions; or again, it might be held there is but one—the Church. But either view would be a misunderstanding of Christianity. What is imperfectly Christian is not therefore un-Christian. Institutions which existed before historical Christianity appeared may be taken up into God's redeeming purpose. So we shall speak briefly of the **Family** and the **State,** as well as of the **Church.** And we shall further include, among Christian institutions, **Political Party** and voluntary **Societies** for doing good.

The **Family** had passed through a long historical evolution before the days of Christ's earthly life. Under the Old Testament **polygamy** was tolerated, and was consecrated by great examples (Abraham's secondary wife; Jacob's marriage to two sisters simultaneously—the Mosaic law, however, forbids this; Levit. xviii. 18—Elkanah, I. Sam. i. and ii.). Economic conditions

always restrict polygamy; only the rich and great can practise it freely (*e.g.* David and all Old Testament kings). By the Christian era it had nearly disappeared from Israel. But moral advances are liable to be forfeited. The marriage bond in Israel was threatened by lax **divorces**; duty to a parent by the **Corban** (p. 48). Hence Christ's own words champion the family.

(1) He **protects** it (p. 48); the "word of God" is not to be evaded by the human "tradition" of the scribes. The New Testament confirms the promise of happiness for a dutiful child, and the threat of sorrow for the undutiful (Eph. vi. 2). (2) Christ **purifies** the family by **forbidding divorce.** We may perhaps conclude that His words named no exception whatever to the permanence of the marriage bond (Mark x. 11). It was His habit in teaching to lay down broad principles. And yet the modified version of His saying (Matt. v. 32; perhaps elsewhere—MSS. vary) may be no incorrect interpretation. When we develop outward laws, loyal as we desire to be to moral principles, we have to take account of actions which destroy marriage. If actual tragic unfaithfulness has occurred, the injured party may have a right to divorce; and conceivably other wrongs might involve the same liberty (grave crime, drunkenness). No doubt, even after the gravest wrong, if there are signs of real repentance, the most Christian course for the injured husband or injured

wife may be to grant forgiveness, and seek to reconsecrate the outraged home. The Church may recommend this behaviour, but neither Church nor State can enforce it. Some persons, morally too weak for the policy, might make bad worse by trying to realise it. Where separation without right of re-marriage is feasible, it may be the nobler choice; but it will scarcely fit the ugly case now under consideration. Law, then, may and probably ought to relieve the injured; but any law which meant in practice divorce by mutual consent would destroy marriage.

The New Testament is not a legal code. Earnest minds may honestly differ in applying great principles to painful problems. One result may be a **divergence between Church law and State** law. Bigotry, or worldliness, or both, may treat such divergence lightly: the instructed Christian will do his utmost—little though that may be—to stave off such tragic trials (p. 94). **Churches**—established or non-established—**may err**; they may **also** have to **suffer persecution** for loyalty to Christ's teaching.

(3) Christ's further claim, to be loved better than "father or mother," is the final consecration of family life.

> "I could not love thee, dear, so well
> Loved I not honour more!"

One who knows this quotation as used by F. W. Robertson will not be surprised to meet the light

cavalier poet in the sacred region, which we are now treading. Lovelace spoke deeper truth than he deemed. Like obeying "in the Lord" (p. 88), loving "in the Lord" means, first and chiefly, loving as a Christian should; but it also means, secondly, loving Christ best of all and putting Christ's claims foremost. No other love is worth the having; no other is trustworthy. The "Corban" did not err in putting God first; it erred by creating an imaginary sanctity for the collecting-box and by ignoring God's known will.

(4) Passing beyond Christ's direct teaching, we have an important principle recognised in passing by St. Paul: "**The children ought not to lay up** for the parents, **but the parents** for the children" (II. Cor. xii. 14). It is characteristically modern, but no less ethical and Christian, to emphasise parental as well as filial duty.

(5) Foreign writers on Christian ethics are found asserting a general—perhaps universal—duty of marriage. This seems to be an extreme reaction from Roman Catholic belittling of the married state (pp. 80, 86). The English-speaking world rather inclines to hold that—health and reasonably adequate means being presupposed—the romantic attachment of true **love alone justifies marriage**; but also, that such mutual attachment makes marriage a duty. There is less difference than one might think between the modern marriage of choice and the antique or continental marriage of

convenience. Fickle passion, in foolish young persons, or in more foolish older ones, sometimes masquerades as love. And under the other system true love insinuates itself unexpectedly into the better minds. Romantic passion is only the raw material of wedded love. **Still**—unworthy as we too often are of our franchises—it would be **a relapse in** Christian **civilisation** if we abandoned the ideal of marriage for love alone. Love sanctifies the strange union, based on our bodily constitution, which works such noble or such terrible effects in making or marring our souls. Love turns the house into a home, and gives the child its welcome and its atmosphere.

The State is the realm of **organised force** (p. 88), working for social and—up to a certain point (pp. 82, 161)—for moral ends. Hence it is **challenged** by the "philosophical **anarchists.**" These amiable pedants resemble the bomb-throwers in teaching that, if the State were out of the way, men would be perfectly virtuous and perfectly happy. They differ in declining to use force against force. They are more logical, and will have no homœopathic cures. We must grant that every known State has faults in plenty; still, we hold that the State is **divinely willed**, and not only—as theology too often has taught—permitted by God in view of sin. Christ came in a land where the head of the State had long been recognised as "The Lord's Anointed." He

Himself claimed that primarily political title. As the Christ, He was King, "Messiah," Lord. Jesus' loyalty to the Old Testament puts Tolstoy's anarchistic interpretation of Gospel teaching out of court. Christ was no lawgiver. He did not wish to expound a code of casuistry like that of the scribes, whose method He borrows—and travesties—in the Sermon on the Mount (p. 50). In saying "**Resist not evil,**" He is stating **the extreme demand** for inward moral goodness. To bridle revenge —"not more than an eye for an eye" (p. 55)—is too little. The prose of our Lord's requirement is found in St. Paul: "Why not rather take wrong" (I. Cor. vi. 7). How can we do the greatest moral good in the situation appointed for us?—that is the question we are to ask.

During our Lord's earthly life the supreme State power belonged to the **Roman Empire.** Christ **sanctions** the empire when He bids men pay tribute (Matt. xxii. 21). The fanatical yet plausible fear that such tribute was disloyalty to the God of Israel does not exist for Christ. **St. Paul glosses the Master's teaching** in Rom. xiii., expanding Christ's hints widely, yet quite fairly. "The powers that be are ordained of God. Render therefore to all their due—tribute to whom tribute." In other words: State force is a Divine institution, working upon the whole for moral ends. This teaching is the charter of Christianity as a power making for peace and order—a power in the deepest sense friendly to the State.

Those who realise how thin is the veneer of civilisation, and how near to the surface the anarchical instincts lie, will deplore any policy that encourages men to make little of the State's claim to our reverence as a **God-given authority.**

If the State is (p. 139) in a limited degree a **moral institution,** we may say something here of the **limitations,** leaving until later (p. 166) the justification of the assertion that the State is really in essence moral. No State can legislate against vice beyond what the sympathies of its people will support; else it will do more harm than good. And yet the frontiers of State action may advance. Nameless vices that the ancient world smiled at are now crimes incurring penal servitude. Such growing strictness may be expected in the future too. Criminal law makes no saints, but it is an outwork of morality; it may awaken, and in some small measure may train, the conscience. Perhaps few men are so perfectly virtuous as not to be better for the cold shock one receives on realising that some doubtful course which one had been half-contemplating might bring one into the grasp of the police.

The Christian can be a loyal citizen **in any State,** unless one that was resolutely persecuting or resolutely vicious. As **democracy** grows stronger, the State bestows greater privileges on its citizens, and allows them more opportunity for service and influence. But the **need**

of loyal **submissiveness** remains. A hostile majority, making a not wholly unreasonable use of its power, represents for the time being the majesty of the whole State. And the hereditary king or elective chief magistrate is, by God's will in Providence, the embodiment of the whole nation's dignity.

The society which has no restrictions on its capacities for moral service is not the State but the **Church.** There were religious communities, both national and voluntary, before the Christian era; yet the Church, even as an institution, is the new creation of Jesus Christ; it is in ideal an international society, corresponding to our world-wide heavenly citizenship. Two actions of our Lord's founded the Church; first, the selection of the Twelve (the germ of a new Israel); secondly, His observance of the Last Supper with His disciples. Out of these scanty germs everything else grew—at first, and within the New Testament, under the belief in Christ's immediate visible return; later, with a bolder growth of institutions, on the lines of Catholic sacramentalism and hierarchy (*cf.* pp. 63, 66).

Yet **moral** service can**not** be regarded as the Church's **only function**; it is **hardly** even the **chief** function. The Church exists (1) for the **worship** of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit; (2) for mutual **edification** by the Word of God; (3) for the **evangelisation** of the world; (4) for **all moral services compatible** with these primary

purposes. The Church may properly be utilised for many social helps, *e.g.* we may have Church football clubs. Yet surely, in the ideal Christianised society, every football club in the land will have Christian men taking the lead in it and setting the tone. However essential to-day the multitude of our Churches' social institutions, they testify to a defective, rather than to an advanced Christianity. The inward moral moulding of its members is the Church's deepest moral service (p. 91), and one that will always last. (For Church **discipline**, *cf.* p. 92.)

The growth of the modern State has resulted in one very singular formation—**political party.** Party government may look like the *reductio ad absurdum* of the competitive system. Two sets of persons are to be in readiness to undertake administration and the guidance of legislation, and each set is to spend much of its strength in discrediting the other! Looking more closely, we see the situation differently. Freedom means government by discussion; government by discussion means government by criticism. Practical necessity does not allow more options than two. If many groups take the place of two well-marked parties, administration becomes unstable and the machine locks. (If the factions that turned out one administration hold together in support of its successor, you have the two-party system reinstated!) There is no escape

if freedom is to continue. Through the (doubtless imperfect) process of debate, the wishes of individual supporters are beaten out into something like a coherent policy, capable of being defended in argument. The **duty of a Christian** is (1) to play his part in politics, not shirking; hence **he must choose his party.** (2) **He must not place party loyalty above patriotism,** still less must he sacrifice to it the highest loyalty of all. He will recognise that good men are to be found on both sides. Yet one party may have been distinctly the more Christian. (3) Still, there is no entail of party virtue. The situation may change. Those formerly more Christian may be the less Christian now. One must not lightly **leave one's party**; but the man who has a higher loyalty will make the change bravely when conscience bids him.

It is for the welfare of the country that many Christian voters should be known to exist, who, recognising the necessity of party and therefore of compromise, recognise that there are also higher claims, and that on some points compromise is sin.

Societies voluntarily organised for doing good have their prototypes far back in history. In our own age or our fathers', under Christian influence, they have had a wide extension; and, we trust, they wield a purer power. It is perhaps strange that hospitals and lifeboats should still in our land be foundlings of

charity. But, however many things states or municipalities or Churches (p. 143) may organise, active good-will must continue to dig channels of its own in voluntary association with others as well as by individual effort. Support of such works in cash is so far good: personal service is better. The latter is the true "Christian charity." (See *Ecce Homo*, near end of chap. xviii., and *cf.* p. 116.)

CHAPTER XVI

SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

We now turn from the more certain parts of Christian ethics to its **problems.** There are not only **open** questions, properly so-called, where opinions inevitably differ as to what is the right policy; there are also **unsolved** questions—things admittedly desirable which the Christian Church has not yet been able to achieve. Before dealing in our closing chapter with the social problem, we are to speak here of some lesser points—lesser, and yet weighty. The reader will notice how the very achievements of Christianity in the past recur in the shape of problems, imperiously demanding further advance in the future.

The Higher Christian Life. It is somewhat remarkable how little our innovating age has to say about new aspects of personal Christian duty. Rightly or wrongly, all proposals for advance seem to lie in the region of social service. There is a single exception, in what we know as the **Keswick Movement.** In so far as it seeks

to deepen personal Christianity, the movement is most truly Christian in aim; in so far as it relies upon worship and Christian fellowship, its methods are no less genuinely Christian. These are things which God must bless. The peculiar **teachings** of the movement cannot be praised so confidently. There is to be a great extension of the conception of faith. We are not only to be justified but sanctified—in the theological sense; "made righteous"—instantaneously, by simple belief of God's word. Effort is not half the truth (p. 10); it is a moral lapse. Sorrow and suffering are unbelief.

A writer upon Christian ethics is not entitled to pass by this teaching in silence. It seems to be distinctly false. We should have to rewrite the New Testament, if we were to make it square with the Keswick ideal. There is grave danger from make-believe in the religious life; there may be moral collapse when imaginary supports are withdrawn. And one thing more. It is assumed that this "second blessing," while greatly to be desired, is something beyond the faith which saves. Here we have, transposed into another key, Roman Catholic "**counsels of perfection**" (p. 68) over again. Protestant ethics must lodge a protest. God's gift is also God's requirement; what He demands of any, the same thing in principle, or its equivalent, He demands of all. We may well be ashamed of the average Christian life; but no scheme of supererogatory goodness will mend it.

If the **ethical revival**, of which some have dreamed, should come to us from God, must it not come primarily as a sterner view of the requirements of cross-bearing—that universal demand?

The reunion of Christendom is rather a misnomer. There never was a complete formal incorporation of all believers in one organisation; there never has been, at the root, separation between any two souls both of whom were truly "in Christ Jesus." Still, our divisions are deplorable, and sometimes monstrous. They come to us by a historic process. Often we, Christians of the present, would not in the like circumstances make the separation which our fathers made. But sometimes, as *e.g.* in the case of the Protestant Reformation, we are loyal to their policy in every fibre of our being; and in all cases we inherit what God's providence has allotted to us. If evil is mixed with it, good greatly predominates. We must be wise guardians of this good inheritance.

Our duty is (1) to endeavour to keep the **unity of the Spirit** in the bond of peace (Eph. iv. 3). Where there is brotherly sympathy between Christians of different denominations, there is essential unity. Where there is jealousy (*e.g.* between two neighbouring congregations incorporated in the same Church fellowship), there is essential schism. (2) Such **organised co-operation** as that of the English Free Church Councils carries

us a long way forward. Still, there may be guilty and wilful overlapping even to this hour. (3) **Fresh** "overlapping," at home and yet more in the mission field, should be branded as a **crime** against Christ. (4) Mere **comprehension** in one organisation of persons who believe each other to be fatally in the wrong **is bad**, not good. (5) In other words, **central truth and faith limit** the possibilities of a truly Christian visible union. Evangelical Protestants admit to-day for the most part that questions of Church order ought not to separate. Church order is not of immediate Bible authority; if it were, still, the Bible is not a law-book. That system which has most promise of doing good is the most Christian of Church orders. On the other hand, fellowship with those who claim exclusive power to save for, *e.g.*, episcopacy, is for us disloyalty to Christ. He saves—He alone; He fully. (6) Apart from theological divisions, the glamour of **union in a national Church** has done most to pulverise Christendom. This is specially true of Scotland.

Home Missions are needful because of the changes due to the industrial revolution (p. 159), and because opinion would not tolerate any great extension of an endowed State system. The latter system broke down. Its friends may say it had no chance given it under exacting modern conditions; at any rate, established Churches themselves have had to rely of late chiefly upon voluntary gifts.

Wasteful overlapping has made the task of all the Churches needlessly hard. On the Continent the new conditions have hardly even been faced. There the working classes have lost almost all touch with organised Christianity. In our own land the estrangement is less, yet very grave.

It is sometimes said that Home and Foreign Missions "are one." This is true in the sense that both are a service to Christ and to mankind, but the letter of the expression is hardly true. Foreign Missions call upon men of strange races to **cast away** their inherited spiritual ties and substitute a better one. True, the sacrifice is worth making. To ask for it is to offer any soul God's best gift. True, the Christian convert is disloyal only in seeming. Inwardly, he is more loyal than ever to what was good in his past. But Home Missions recall men to **their own** faith, to their fathers' God. The civilisation round them, however imperfect, is deeply suffused with Christianity.

Foreign Missions had had great epochs, both primitive and mediæval; but in Protestantism they long hung fire. In God's providence, just before the steam-engine contracted the world, the Christian Church, led especially by **William Carey**, embarked on a world-wide missionary campaign. If neither reverence for Christ's will nor pity for our fellows made us willing to evangelise distant races, we should have to do it now lest they taint us;

we are all next-door neighbours to-day. Well, indeed, that the nobler motives had started the work before the selfish motive became loud and imperious! Much ground has already been gained. But we are not the only workers. Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Agnosticism are vigorous and aggressive; each of them has gains to boast of, too. Meantime, our very success is embarrassing us. Can we go forward where prospects are brightening? It will be our eternal disgrace if we fail to do so. Denominational rivalries, we may trust, are ceasing to make much mischief in Foreign Missions. Tendencies to unity there will no doubt help Christianity in its older homes. And we await contributions to Christian theology, as well as to Christian life, from the new races who shall press into God's kingdom and declare in their own tongues His marvellous works. Among many good missionary methods, ever-increasing use of **native agents** seems to be the most hopeful of all.

The Drink Problem. As Foreign Missions began their great modern development just before the world shrank together, so the method of total **abstinence** came into vogue just before science began to expose the pretensions of alcohol. We know now that alcohol is not a standard food, still less a cure-all, as age-long superstitions taught. It yields no nourishment, and is an uncertain as well as dangerous drug. The teetotal

movement is **not ascetic**, either in intention or in tendency. It is through and through **altruistic**. Hardly one person in ten thousand will consent to abstain from alcohol for his own safety (though abstainers may well thank God for having led them by other motives to this personal precaution and safeguard). Very many will consent when they see Abstinence in its true light as brotherly succour in face of an awful danger. When we add to this the medical view, what policy can we deem wise except the abstainer's? Yet we must prepare ourselves for fellowship with brethren who judge differently. Some object to the pledge. And it must be admitted that a pledge often broken, often renewed, often broken again, is no small scandal. Yet we must urge on our critical friends that a pledge is unescapable. What chance is there for the victim of drink except in a determination—*i.e.* a pledge or vow—to abstain? But friendly critics and we may do much good in alliance. We may work together to lessen temptations by reforming the arrangements of law.

The final remedy for the drink evil must indeed be a **Christian enthusiasm** (Eph. v. 18; often quoted in this sense). On a lower plane, it is true that men need pleasure, and that philanthropy must seek to organise **pure pleasures** as well as to cut off impure supplies. Else we shall be guilty of applying purely mechanical treatment to an organic craving.

Gambling is another form of the mad love for excitement. In view of the inevitable social effects of this vice, there seems no reasonable plea for any other method than refusal to bet or to play games for even the minutest stakes. Remedies for the public organisation of gambling, by heartless social parasites, cannot here be discussed.

Population. Two opposite dangers have been feared in regard to this. The early Political Economists taught that fewer births in working-class homes would secure prosperity there as nothing else could do. But more recently the contrary danger has been feared. In all civilised lands the birth-rate is rapidly falling. France is first in this race, but only first—not isolated. French publicists lament the loss of military power; but that is the least of the dangers connected with a wilful self-indulgence which shuns the pains and costs of child-bearing and child-rearing.

Although these two alarms look in opposite directions, **it does not follow that either fear is groundless.** Marriages prudently entered into, births which have the promise of health, will strike the mean between too few and too many, and in still more vital ways will have the promise of God's blessing. Civilisation might indeed perish by recklessness. It is perhaps even more likely to perish by a purely selfish prudence.

Race. The nineteenth century revived the sense of

nationality, but lost something of the eighteenth century's cosmopolitan humanitarianism. Italy, Germany, Hungary, the Transvaal, Ireland—all the world over, racial and nationalist claims have grown loud. There is a seamy side to this change in racial frictions and jealousies. Where **a colour line** exists, as in the American negro problem, the so-called "Yellow Peril," the Indian difficulty in South Africa, &c., tension becomes extreme. Our generation still talks humanitarianism, but it lives mainly for race and class (p. 163) jealousies. It does not seem possible to affirm that Christianity demands immediate mingling of races and universal inter-marriage. But **Christianity does demand absolute mutual respect and essential equality.** Within that widest human claim we are to do Christian service chiefly by loyalty to our own race, preserving what it has gained and pushing onward to further moral developments. Ultimately, when by God's goodness each race has advanced to higher things, it seems certain that the dividing barriers must fall. "There is neither Greek nor Jew . . . Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. iii. 11).

Vegetarianism can hardly claim directly Christian motives. In the early centuries the Church had to be on its guard against religious asceticism (Col. ii. 21) due to the belief that matter was at least in part the work of an evil power. The Christian Church rightly

condemned this heresy (Mark vii. 19, R.V.; Acts x. 15). Enforced vegetarianism would always be an un-Christian thing. Yet surely civilisation would be sweeter and more Christlike if it could eliminate the shambles. The aim stands neither first nor second among practicable reforms; but it is well to contemplate remoter workings of the Christian spirit. In the past the advantages of flesh food have been exaggerated. Moderation in its use is a great gain.

War arises naturally out of the constitution of the State as resting upon **force** (p. 139), so long at least as there is no tribunal to arbitrate between independent nations. Internal government is ruled, almost perfectly, by the forces of law and order; riots, though discreditable, occupy little space in history; civil war, the worst war of all, is happily rare. But external relations have no ordered force to control them—only the dreadful arbitrament of battle. This is the point to which Christian civilisation has advanced; and here it pauses. The nation-state (mainly a modern creation) makes for good order and general happiness; but between nations there occur not infrequently outbursts of anarchy, hardly tempered by the **customs** of war.

Christian duties are (1) to **oppose** wars of **aggression.** Of course, it is often hard to say which side is aggressive and which defensive. The real maker of mischief may wear sheep's clothing (Bismarck's telegram from Ems

in 1870). But something is gained when the principle is accepted. Whatever wars we enter on, there must be no aggression on our part. (2) Ought wars of **Christian knight-errantry** to be undertaken, on behalf of weak and oppressed races? Probably there are cases in which an armed Christian nation stands disgraced if it leaves injured allies or fellow-Christians, or even fellow-men, to suffer unchampioned. But the dangers are tremendous. To carry a naked light into a powder magazine would be safer than to initiate a war in modern Europe. At the best there would be **mixed motives** in the knight-errant nation; and what evil passions even such a war as that must unlock in all the lands! (3) We must cultivate **the spirit that makes for peace**. This need not involve steady blame of our own country, with unmingled praise of our rivals. It demands a still nearer approach to impartial justice. Else, even in advocating peace, we may arouse the war spirit; for its origin is in angry desires (Jas. iv. 1). To plead God's cause in a sneering temper is not to be a peacemaker. (4) If a **martyr nation** arose which with practical unanimity refused to assert or maintain its rights by bloodshed, no one can say what moral energies might be developed (*cf.* Tolstoy's *Ivan the Fool*). The monk Telemachus, who leapt into the gladiatorial arena, about 404 A.D., paid the penalty of his daring with his life; but there were no more gladiatorial shows in "Christian"

Rome. Enviable man, to win such an advance by one final sacrifice! (But how could he tell he would win the day? He died faithfully: he could do no more. Who need do less?)

The Woman Question. Women have conspicuously been debtors to Christ and Christianity; there is much still to be done for them. In the recent *Frauenfrage* of many lands, we read a desire for the complete economic independence of women and their complete social equivalence with men. The older view held that men, upon whose physical strength the State ultimately reposes (p. 139), are specially responsible to God, as for other things, so also for the protection of woman's weakness.

If the new views conquer, one result must be that the Christian ministry shall be shared by both sexes. Possible, but a great revolution.

Christian ethics affirm the following certainties. (1) In Christ Jesus there is absolute essential equality between the sexes. (2) The sexes are differentiated by nature. (3) Marriage must continue to be the honourable lot of most women. (4) In our complex civilisation many women must be bread-winners; the position is often anomalous (hardly so in the case of **teachers**, or **nurses**), but it cannot be wished away. (5) More public service can and ought to be rendered by women than in the past. (6) Idleness or dilettantism cannot suffice for the adult single woman—unengrossed in the

duties of marriage—any more than for the adult man. Each life has the duty and privilege of definitely serving Christ and the community. Leisure is for the interstices of work. A whole life's framework carved out of leisure is a hollow thing.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

HERE again (p. 146) **the very achievements of the past transform themselves into an imperious problem** for the future. It is not when things are worst that evil is most keenly resented: despair is then too near. Let things begin to mend, and hope will become even too impatient. So in part it has been with our Christian civilisation. Slavery has been killed, but men complain to-day of "wage slavery."

Yet this is not the whole truth. **The modern social problem** is not due merely to a quickened sense of evils that always were present. Our grandfathers brewed it for us in the days of what we call **the industrial revolution.** The thing is well so named. It was a revolution indeed. Few like it can be found in all history. From the patriarchs' camel-trains to stage-coaches meant less change than from coaches to modern machinery. And society has been no less revolutionised. It cleaned its slate. **Custom broke down.** Now custom is far from

perfect; it does not originate in philanthropy, and it may easily paralyse progress; yet of necessity, up to a certain point, it protects the weak. It represents a tacit understanding as to what may and what cannot be exacted. When the steam-engine began its career, civilised society (in England first of all) sprang forward in wealth, in population, in technical efficiency; but the old customs, which had embodied much of the moral capital of society, proved inapplicable. The strain was too great. They disappeared; and for a time nothing took their place except the theory of **laissez-faire** individualism, which affirmed individual effort to be not merely one wholesome social agency, but the only agency which acts safely.

Laissez-faire theory is useful in **pointing out the causes of individual failure.** Among the masses of men competing against each other, some are intellectually inferior, some mentally, some morally; by their weakness or their fault these fall behind, and their children too often inherit the fathers' bad conditions. An age of extreme **individualism drives strong men** to their utmost, and mercilessly **exacts penalty** from the weak. When the pace is quickened by a wild rush for wealth, the social problem emerges. What is to be its cure? Individualism (properly so-called) sees nothing except blessings and benefits in competition. Men do their best, for themselves and for society, in view of the rewards which success brings and the penalties failure incurs.

Every effort to staunch the bleeding sores of society is held by the **laissez-faire** theory to do more harm indirectly than it can compass of good by conscious effort. Most of the school allow individual generosity[1] to do what it pleases; but civic or national philanthropy, it is held, will lessen the struggle for success and will sacrifice efficiency. This view may be held honestly by generous hearts; but it is in itself almost a message of despair. Pushed to the furthest, it may have to condemn even private pity. Does not pitifulness always interfere between acts and consequences? Does it not lessen the penalties of inefficiency?

We may grant to the individualists that the "**letting alone**" policy **would result in equilibrium of a kind.** Famine, if Government does not "interfere," will reduce over-population; and a single spasm of acute suffering may conceivably be better than long-continued semi-starvation. An epidemic too will weed out weaklings. But it is far from evident that "natural" equilibrium will be the best possible. It may not even be tolerable. That we are one another's rivals **is part of the truth,** but not the whole. The other half of the truth teaches that we are **members one of another.** Infection may seize on the fittest; epidemics may slay or maim the healthy. It is our duty and our personal need to seek for a humanly and Christianly tolerable equilibrium.

[1] *Chalmers on Charity*, by Mr. Masterman of the C.O.S., puts at its very best the case for freewill *versus* state charity.

More particularly the individualist theory **errs** in treating man as an **abstract competitive unit** apart from consideration of his inherited civilisation. Even when custom broke down under the strain of unexampled industrial progress, this did not mean that all custom ceased. Unemployed labourers, even in the grip of competition, do not turn vegetarians, and contract for work at a few pence a day. They demand—rightly—work and wage in some proportion to their **inherited social standard.** When, under slow pressure, the standard of comfort in any class sinks, civilisation itself suffers a relapse. Again, individual efficiency might guarantee complete social salvation, **if you could begin with well-equipped individuals.** What sort of material has the haphazard industrial process given us hitherto? It overworked women; it worked little children; it has not entirely ceased to do so. How ruinous are the physiological and moral results!

At the present hour we hear less of the abstract individualism which embodied the wishes of masters in a former generation. We hear much more of the one-sided Socialism which is demanded by labour to-day. **Modern Socialism is economic,** in contrast to the communism of Plato's *Republic* and of other literary Utopias. Still there is a moral strain in it. Admittedly or unadmittedly, Socialist attacks on existing society treat it as inevitably unjust. The theoretic basis of

this Socialistic criticism is **Marx's** doctrine of "extra value": in plain English, the assertion that every employer gains his wealth by under-paying his hands. Marx is generally repudiated by Socialists to-day, but they still use the word "**exploit**"; and that word is calumny in a nutshell. Again, so moderate a Socialist as Professor Werner **Sombart** takes for granted the class struggle and the necessity and rightfulness of class bitterness. Not patriotism but class—worker *versus* employer—is to inspire the social democracy. Naturally, if existing distribution is inevitably unjust; unnaturally and very wrongly, if Marxism cannot be proved.

Even Marx admitted that fixed capital (buildings, machines, &c.) and stock (materials and manufactured goods ready for sale or use) must be maintained undiminished out of the proceeds of industry. But anything beyond that he treated as **unjust**, especially (1) **interest**, or payment for the use of capital. This is a very old and respectable prejudice, perhaps found even in the Old Testament (Hebrews might lend on interest to Gentiles, but not to fellow-Hebrews), and repeated by **Ruskin**. Economically it is a blunder, and the cool judgment of John **Calvin** exposed it. When **Aristotle** spoke of "money" as "barren" (and therefore not justly earning interest), he forgot that the things bought by money-capital are far from barren. From this point of view **capital is a magnified tool** increasing

productiveness. And, so long as we do not embark on the tremendous attempt to raise capital by taxation, it is **just** that society should pay the capitalist for the use of his savings. The burden may seem heavy; but there is a steady tendency (on a large view) for the rate of interest to fall, *i.e.* the burden proportionally lessens.

(2) It is assumed that **brain-work earns nothing**, hand-work everything. This again is plain economic fallacy. Good brain-work is serviceable to the community and deserves in justice its "wages of superintendence." (It is important, however, to be on our guard against conditions which give undue power to the unscrupulous business-man—not *qua* capitalist, but *qua* "captain of industry," or still more *qua* financier.)

If it ceases to charge existing society with radical injustice, Socialism may still contend that **our methods are inexpedient** and its own "a more excellent way." Certainly under competition there is economic waste and there is moral loss. The **difficulties** of a change to Socialism would be **(1) loss of individual freedom.** The State—*i.e.* the bureaucracy—must regulate all men's tasks, if waste and unemployment are to vanish.

(2) **Progress must be forfeited.** We are suffering from the evils of unregulated progress; but are we content to banish improvements from industrial life? What Government department is free from red tape

and circumlocution? What official person welcomes a better but novel system? It is a significant admission of the moderate Socialist **Bernstein** that those branches of industry which have most of "routine" in them are fittest to be "socialised." Are we to aim at universal Socialism—and universal routine?

(3) **The number of children** in a family must be **limited by law.** No State can guarantee work and food to the whole increase of population which is physiologically possible. Hitherto—at whatever grave cost—indirect and moral checks have done the work. One of the ablest men and keenest social enthusiasts whom the writer ever knew spoke of the population difficulty as "the final objection to Socialism."

Ought not these difficulties to give pause, even to the thoughtless?

Hitherto, at least, **it has been God's will** to discipline mankind in part by the processes of economic competition. If we are to co-operate with Him, we must learn to win without arrogance and to lose without bitterness; bearing every man his own burden, yet looking every man also to the things of others; having the same mind that was in Christ.

We do not deny that **individualists** have been Christians or that **Socialists** have been Christians; but we believe Christianity requires **the union** of both attitudes, each being true in its assertions, false in

its denials. Individualism, ethically interpreted, stands for personal **responsibility**, or, if we prefer other words, for personal **freedom**. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." Socialism, ethically interpreted, stands for **mutual help**. "Bear ye one another's burdens." It may, of course, be contended (by the Socialist) that personal responsibility ought not to extend to economic matters, or (by the individualist) that the State is to be warned off the territory of mutual help. But these are at best artificial refinements. We naturally interpret Christianity as finding in society **a moral whole composed of moral parts**. We naturally recognise rights in the community, but rights which—while they subordinate and limit—do not extinguish the rights of its members. If there are no rights, there is no liberty and no duty. High authority has told us that, if schools are to be saved from the bureaucratic tyranny of the State, **each school must be free within limits to work out its own plans**. Still more evidently must **the family** have its **freedom**. Real evils must be tolerated there for the sake of a greater good. Even the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has usually been able to revive and not suppress the home. That is how we should seek to act. Had there been no free-will, there could have been no sin. If there were no political liberty, there could be no democratic errors or excesses. Socialism might seem to eradicate

social evils; but what if the price was the extinction of moral good? Christianity could never endure that.

Remedies. (1) Foremost of all stands **personal religion.** This must always be the master contribution of the Christian Church. True religion will do more than any other factor alike for the virtue and for the happiness of society.

(2) The hard individual excellences of **prudence and forethought** must be developed in every class of the community. According to the constitution of the universe, easy-goingness is a ruinously defective moral outfit. God, judged by "blind unbelief," is a hard master (Matt. xxv. 24). But His children know the tenderness of His love. In the endurance of hardness, as good soldiers of Christ, we gain moral fibre; we become fit for service; we win our souls.

(3) The old Liberal programme of "**career open to talent,**" formulated in these words by Napoleon Bonaparte (of all men!), is still not nearly carried out. It is expedient for society that the poor man's clever boy (or girl) should rise to the higher and more delicate tasks for which nature has fitted him; it is a demand of justice on his own behalf that he should have opportunity to do so. In order to this, the educational ladder must have no gaps in it; and our public **education must be such as really prepares** for a happy and useful life. **Apprenticeship,** too, must be studied in earnest.

(4) There will always be **need of charity** for those who fail—some by fault, more perhaps by misfortune. All should have further opportunity. To speak with contempt of "sending out an ambulance" ignores the conditions of the problem. Are we omnipotent? Has not the real omnipotence of God, who is love, ordained a **fight**? We may be "more than conquerors" amid and because of pain; banish risk, and the world would be a well-drilled penitentiary. To curse "charity" and claim "justice" is to excommunicate ourselves from the human and (assuredly) from the Christian fellowship. **Voluntary effort** has a life-giving influence which eludes officialdom. We do not say with the individualists that State help is necessarily unjust, but that State help without the element of voluntary service lacks **one of the best remedies** for social ill-fare. On the other hand, effort must be organised, and must be guided by wisdom, as in the noble and promising **Elberfeld system** (said to go back to Thomas Chalmers' inspiration; p. 161, note).

(5) The main improvement during the nineteenth century was the **reformation of industrial custom** to meet the new conditions. This was done by **Trade Unions**, their (generally) wholesome work being achieved amid a storm of protests from the older individualist economics. It was not work of perfect unselfishness or perfect wisdom ("ca' canny"), but it

was needed. When custom hardens into **State law** (Eight Hours Bills), there is no room for protests on behalf of personal freedom. **Usages deleterious to society are no man's right.** But there is grave **danger** lest law should move too heavily and too slowly when conditions change.

(6) One special evil is known as **sweating.** It is the lot of those who are supremely unfit economically, and who therefore find themselves stripped of almost every rag of protective custom. It is hard to see what remedy will avail except some form of legislation. It is **no one's right** to labour for his own convenience (perhaps for pocket-money) at rates which mean starvation to those dependent on their earnings. Such behaviour is anti-social and anti-Christian.

(7) The **Christian employer** must be appealed to; even non-Christians may rise to a nobler ambition than money-making. It is false to say that men "are not in business **for their health.**" They are, indeed; for the saving or for the loss of their eternal souls. They have immense opportunities. To make large fortunes and draw large cheques for "charity" is no substitute for the graver duty of seeing that the **conditions** in their employment are such as please God and help men. If they fail in business while aiming at this, and if the failure is not due to personal slackness or folly—why, they fail nobly! (But they will not fail.)

It is calumny to say that all fortunes are made by under-paying employees (p. 163); but **some fortunes owe a good deal** to such shabbiness. Here law can do nothing. Conscience must do the more. It is a disgrace to the Christian name when Church members (or leaders!) belong to the pinching and grasping type of employer. And really it is foolish! Bad conditions are unprofitable. Willing workers serve better than driven slaves.

If we are told that individual effort is hopeless in the abyss, and that external changes will work a cure, the reply is—On the contrary, **no society will ever please Christ** or keep His laws **without diffused individual virtue and goodwill.**

(8) The **purchaser** cannot throw all responsibility on the employer; yet the purchaser's opportunities are more limited. Blacklisting of obnoxious firms is odious and perhaps dangerous. More is to be hoped from **white lists.** Two questions may be subjoined. Is our **law of libel** fair to the disinterested critic of dangerous conditions? And might not a far larger **publicity** save us from many industrial evils? (If it broke some weak firms at an early stage in their career, would that be a real social loss?)

(9) For the grave mischief of **unemployment,** such obvious remedies as genuine *bureaus* for registration and systems of insurance ought first to be tried.

(10) All detailed reforms should be encouraged which are **consistent with a regard to personal character** and family life. It was no sufficient reason for ceasing to collect **school pence** that the costs of collection consumed a large proportion of the amount; school fees were a witness to a parent's duty. Similarly, if school children are **fed** by public authority, all recoverable costs should be enforced even if the financial gain is not great; they will stave off a great drop in character. Once more: **contributory old age pensions** have a moral claim which non-contributory pensions cannot advance. But, to make this claim absolute, Government ought to offer several scales—giving marked additional benefit to the man with small means who saves upon the higher scale.

Slowly and bit by bit ground will be won—very slowly. But those whose hearts are right with God and with Christ will know that "labour is not in vain in the Lord."

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