

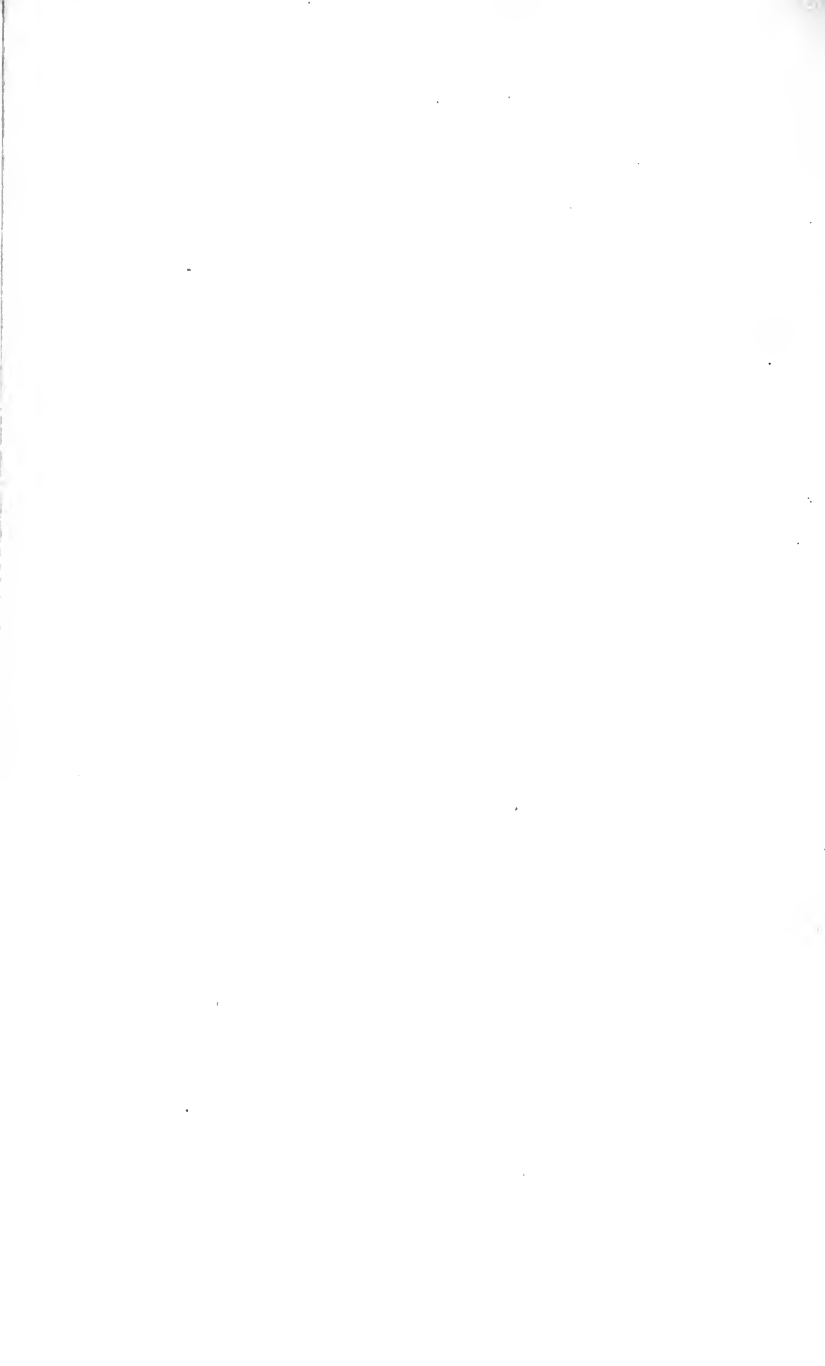
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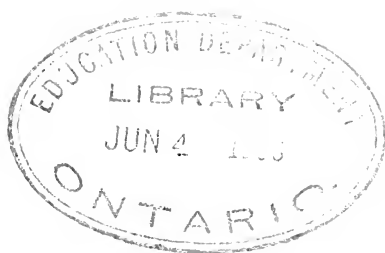
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# ETHICAL ADDRESSES.

SECOND SERIES.

BY THE  
LECTURERS OF ETHICAL SOCIETIES.



PHILADELPHIA :  
S. BURNS WESTON, 1305 Arch Street,  
1896.



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PRINTED BY INNES & SON, PHILADELPHIA.





## NOTE.

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All but three of the lectures appearing in this volume were delivered before the Ethical Societies during the past year (1895). "The Freedom of Ethical Fellowship," by Professor Adler, is reprinted from the first number of the *International Journal of Ethics*, October, 1890; and "The Next Step in Christianity" is reprinted, by permission, from *The New World*, of December, 1892. "The Four Types of Suffering," by Professor Adler, appeared in pamphlet form in 1884, and has long been out of print. The lectures in this volume were published separately in a monthly series issued during 1895.





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## WHAT WE MEAN BY DUTY.

BY W. L. SHELDON.

DUTY is the basis of my religion and that is why I am so interested in it.

But my interest in the subject will make it all the more difficult for me to express myself clearly. What comes first in a man's life may belong to the sphere where he is least able to explain himself. It is not only a *thought* to him ; it is rather his whole being. It is the clue by which he interprets his own life as well as the life of all that is outside of him.

It is to me the most sacred word in human language. It stands for me even before the name of the Supreme Being. When I speak the word " God," it stirs or moves me less than when I speak the word " Duty." It is something so excessively near to us. God, the state, human society and its laws, the Natural World, these seem more or less on the outside. But Duty is on the inside. We cannot get away from it by going somewhere else, for we cannot get away from ourselves.

It is not my intention to enter into the metaphysical aspects of the question ; although, as a matter of fact, we are quite aware that in dealing with those issues which pertain to what is ultimate in human life, we are always on the border-land of metaphysics. Neither do we care at this time to enter directly into the analysis of

the various ethical theories. That would call for another method. I should like to go straight to the human consciousness itself, or to those everyday experiences which indicate what consciousness does have to say. At the same time we know perfectly well that no man can do this, without being more or less under the influence of some special theory. And yet it is always worth the while to make the effort. We may not get the clue; but we shall at least draw a little nearer to what we are seeking for. It is of more value in the end to know what one's own consciousness asserts or does not assert, as to the meaning of duty, than to know what was or was not asserted on this matter by Plato or Socrates.

There is one fact which perplexes me extremely. It seems so contrary to what we would expect. I have asked myself, again and again, why it is that a man should value anything more than his own life. We know this to be true of an immense number of people. Some men would give up their life in one cause; others, in another. It is not life itself which we most seem to care for. If it came to a choice, we would rather die than be obliged to take a certain course of action. There is something in all of us that we would not surrender, even at the cost of life itself. As one striking illustration of this point in literature, we could mention that great drama, "Measure for Measure."\*

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\* *Claudio* : "O Isabel,"

*Isabella* : "What says my brother?"

*Claudio* : "Death is a fearful thing."

*Isabella* : "And shamed life a hateful."

We recall at once the beautiful illustration of this scene in the painting by Holman Hunt.

It is not that we want to escape life because it is burdensome. That is not the case we have in mind. No, it is just when we most cling to life, when we are specially eager to stay here on earth, that we discover that we value something else even more. It is often a surprise to one's self. The peculiar fact is that ordinarily it is not the physical evil which we look upon as worse than death. It is not the loss of pleasure, which we are thinking about, in saying that there is something we value more than life itself. People cling to their conscious existence in spite of the most excruciating bodily tortures. Yet these same persons would prefer to die at once, rather than be driven to acts which would make them utterly loathe and hate themselves.

We ask ourselves : How is it possible that a man can love this human life—care passionately for earthly existence, and yet prefer to do what may cost him his life? What value can the outcome be to him, if he is no longer here on earth to share in it? Others reap the good of his sacrifice. What motive has he to make such a surrender? There was something almost startling, as well as profound, in that farewell utterance of Socrates at the close of his trial when he said : “ The hour of departure has arrived and we go our ways—I to die and you to live. Which is better, is known only to God.” Why is it that we are thrilled by that saying? Is it not proverbial that self-preservation is the first law of nature? And yet we stand in awe before the calm majesty of that utterance. Was he not setting at defiance the “ first law of nature?” He could have escaped death by flight. Why did he not do it? He gave the only answer : It was contrary to Duty.

It seems perfectly clear that there is something more precious to us than securing or preserving one's life. I ask, what does it mean?

To my mind it has only one meaning. It implies that this consciousness of ours has of itself a certain *measure of values*. We do not come by it at the start from thought or abstract reflection. It seems to be already there. Occasionally we are ourselves startled in recognizing the fact. Perhaps we would not have believed it if we had been told of the circumstance. But we are put to the test and then we know it.

I call this a direct experience out of the human consciousness. Theory has nothing to do with it. Yet it is profoundly suggestive. We can see here the starting point of what is known as the Sense of Duty. If there is a certain instinctive measure of values in ourselves, then there may be an inner voice demanding of us that we be loyal and true to this standard. It gives us at least a clue as to the meaning of duty.

We know perfectly well that it is a prosaic word to a great many people. They do not care to think about it. There is something commonplace in the expression. It is one of the everyday phrases which we grow tired of. It is too close at hand. There is not enough poetry to it. It seems to be lacking in the element of mystery. We like to think about what is far away, what seems deep and grand. These everyday subjects are trite. Most persons will fancy that they know only too well what is meant by duty.

Why is it that men recognize the authority of duty at all? It seems so strange! Why should they not go on in the same old way and do as they please? How does



it happen that any person should care to obey this voice? There is mystery in the very fact that human nature should be disposed to recognize such an authority.

The acceptance of an inner measure of values does not seem to have anything to do with special theories of religion, or with any particular views as to the future life. It is not anything new in human life or in human history. We turn to the almost prehistoric literature of China. Nearly three thousand years ago in that remote country they were talking about *right* and *duty*.\* Then too, we think of Athens. Centuries before the time of Jesus, Socrates was speaking of the Voice of Duty, and Plato was brooding over it in the groves of the Academy.

Several hundred years later an emperor of Rome, ruling over the civilized world, was thinking about it,—yes, we might say, was making it the basis of his religion. The one man in the world who could have done as he pleased, because he held the most power of any man on the face of the earth, was recognizing the fact that he too had to obey the voice of duty.

We can see plainly enough therefore that it started with no special religion; it belongs to no one Bible; it pertains to no one particular epoch of human history.

Why did people ever assume that they must obey such a voice? Why should men at the present time, with all the enlightenment of the new thought, still be-

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\* "The mind of the superior man is conversant with righteousness; the mind of the ordinary man is conversant with gain."

"Let a man not do what his own sense of righteousness tells him not to do, and let him not desire what his sense of righteousness tells him not to desire; to act thus is all he has to do."—*Chinese Classics*, translated by Legge.

lieve in such an authority? Philosophy has not overthrown it. We might almost say that it has been re-established through the influence of philosophy. The new civilization has not done away with it.

Whether it is possible to throw any further light on it, I do not know. There is so much connected with it that one is at a loss what to say. Yet I would like to gather together some of those clusters of impressions associated in the popular mind with the idea of duty; then sift them down, and see whether there is any common ground of sympathy, in spite of the many different interpretations.

What we shall have to say on the subject will therefore be nothing new or striking. It will be an old, old story. We shall venture to analyze over again what is known already. We have no new theory to offer.

At first thought we associate with it what is irksome or against the inclinations. This is the naïve impression. It is the something which interferes with us when we "want to do as we please." That is why we are prone to dislike it and want to get away from it. It is pathetic that at first we should actually want to turn away in dislike from what is the most sacred word in human language. And yet it is not strange. I am describing actual human experience. At first we do not like the sense of duty.\* It seems to set us all ajar. We cannot have what we want, we cannot pursue the course we like, we cannot follow our inclinations. It is constantly checking us, or urging us off in another direction.

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\* "It is, in fact, very idle to talk about duties; the word in itself has in it something disagreeable and repulsive; and talk about it as we may, the word will not become a rule of conduct."—Bentham, quoted by Martineau.

There is something exasperating about it. We know the experience. It puts us at war with ourselves. It makes us act against nature in order to act according to nature.

It seems to stand in our way ; you shrink from it ; you want to avoid it. Yet it pursues you all the time. We almost fancy that we could be perfectly happy if it were not for this persistent, relentless Voice of Duty. Why can't it let us alone ? Why can't we have a little peace ? Why must we be always ajar in ourselves ?

We look at nature, we survey life everywhere,—the trees, the birds, the beautiful animal world. There is no such jar or conflict in them or in their consciousness. They can be happy, they can do as they please. But we who stand above them, we who look upon ourselves as the crowning point of evolution, we alone cannot have our own way, we cannot have peace and be happy. We alone of all creatures in the universe must be tortured and held down and checked, or urged along another line against our inclinations, through this relentless authority.

In the outside world there is peace. In ourselves there is endless strife. Something keeps saying to us "you must !" The consciousness within us seems to be split up into a number of selves, each struggling for the mastery. We do not get much pleasure out of the conflict and could often wish it were otherwise.

This is everyday experience. And yet it is what we most often associate with the idea of duty.

We could wish it were otherwise. But I am not talking about what we prefer or do not prefer. Just now we are simply raising the question what it is that we associate with the Sense of Duty. There is no doubt in the

matter ; from the very outset, since the dawn of human consciousness, from the first intimations we have as to the use of the word in literature, it has presented this aspect. There has been something stern and forbidding about it, and that is why it is so difficult to induce people to think about the subject at all.\*

Why this conflict should be there, we do not know. We cannot tell the reason for it. Nevertheless it is a fact. Human nature wants to go to the right or to the left, corner-wise, sidewise, angular-wise—every otherwise, only not straight ahead according to one measure of value. I am not describing a theory, but simply indicating what goes on in each man's consciousness. It is only on special occasions that the agitation within us becomes extreme. And yet almost every day in one's life we have some such experience. There is this endless conflict with inclination. It almost seems as if the great struggle of humanity in its whole past history, repeated itself in every individual consciousness.

But we turn this same cluster of impressions over on the other side, as it were ; and then it presents a different view. It still deals with this same conflict in each human consciousness. We regard this sense of duty as something irksome in ourselves. But strangely enough, we stand in the greatest awe before *other* men when they obey it. We seem to admire the principle even though we do not like it. Why is it that we reverence the persons who can walk through fire to a certain end? Why is it that we do not look upon them as

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\* "Duty has gathered around it the idea of antagonism to inclination, which, though not belonging to it of right, is inseparable from it in fact."—S. Alexander, *Moral Order and Progress*.

blind, or stupid, or mad? Read Wordsworth's Poem "Laodamia." You will see what we mean. We might not be equal to conduct of that kind ourselves; but we bow down before it in the life of others. It is this instinctive awe we pay to the conduct of other men, which indicates what is original in our consciousness. A man may be able to avoid bowing the head before a superior; but he cannot help bowing the heart.

This other aspect is always connected in our thoughts with the well-known lines of Tennyson:

"To live by law,  
Acting the law we live by without fear;  
And, because right is right, to follow right  
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

This may be very unsatisfactory to the dissecting knife of philosophy; but there is no doubt as to the average human feeling in reference to the matter. Most of us will read these lines with a glow of approval. That is the principle of conduct we admire so much when it is acted upon in the life of others. Instinctively we stand in awe of the man who can walk through fire in "scorn of consequence" toward a certain ideal end. Somehow we wish that we were able to do it ourselves.

It is along with this element that we associate the idea of duty with something *absolute*.\* There are no exceptional cases where we may refuse its authority. I am still merely analyzing popular impressions in regard to it and not seeking to give a personal explanation as to the meaning of duty. We associate it with the sense

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\* "Die imperativen Motive sind gleichfalls impulsiv, aber es kommt dazu noch eine weitere Eigenschaft; sie verbinden sich mit der Vorstellung, dass sie allen anderen bloss impulsiven Motiven vorgezogen werden müssen."  
—Wundt, *Ethik*.

of obligation.\* It would bind us down to something. It does not say you must obey this authority *if*—; there is no “if” about it.

Duty has this stern, severe quality, just because we think of it as so absolute. It always speaks in the imperative case. Its language is “shall” and “must.” These are the two words we are accustomed to associate with the idea of duty.

Almost everything else in life is qualified or conditioned by circumstances. But there is the impression in the use of the word duty, that it allows of no exceptions or qualifications. It is the educated class of persons who have introduced the utilitarian feature into the idea or principle we are analyzing. They are the persons who distort what is original in consciousness. The natural man may defy the sense of duty; but it is doubtful whether he will reason it out and try to show that what he did was right after all. It is the popular view itself which connects the word “absolute” with the word “duty.”

But this aspect does make the subject cold. We shrink from it almost with a sense of dread. It is not soft or pleasing to most of us; not gentle, sweet or tender. It does not plead, or beg, or persuade; it *exacts*. It is endlessly saying to us “you shall,” or “you must.”

We cannot think it strange under these circumstances that men should have tried to reason Duty out of existence. We are not surprised that one of the first steps

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\* “I at best do not know how to impart the notion of moral obligation to any one who is entirely devoid of it. But in many cases where the notion does not appear to be explicit, it will be found, I think, to be implied in some other conception in common use.”—Sidgwick, *Methods of Ethics*.

of the new thought should have been to dissolve this idea into an illusion. Many a man would be only too glad to be rid of it. He would have such a sense of relief if he did not see any reason for recognizing this authority. But he may think about it as much as he pleases. We do acknowledge a certain measure of values. We are constantly using this word "duty." It is a growth of language itself and language is a growth out of the consciousness of man. There must have been something in the human self which led the race of man to create such a phrase. It has been built out of human experience. It is the spirit out of which it has been built that I am seeking to analyze, and not a word or phrase itself.

It is this feature of unconditionality, the something absolute associated with the sense of duty, which explains why it is that we apply it not to mind nor to the heart, but to the *will*. It is not our judgment that surrenders; it is not the heart which gives in; it is the will-power which makes the choice and obeys the voice of duty. It is for this reason that in ethics we have less to say about the perfect heart or the perfect mind. They are subordinate. The ethical ideal is the Perfect Will.

This makes the first group of thoughts or experiences we connect with the word. It is irksome and yet we stand in awe of it. We look up in reverence to the man who is able to surrender his own caprices, or fears, or love of pleasure, in obedience to the stern, cold, forbidding, imperative, unconditional voice of duty.

We come now to a second cluster of impressions. Remember that we are still analyzing the popular mind. We are only asking how men use language. Duty con-

veys the sense to us that somehow *we do not belong to ourselves*. This, too, will seem like a paradox. The voice is in one's self. It speaks from ourselves to ourselves. And yet, somehow, we associate it with the other idea that a man's self is not his own property.\* Does this seem meaningless? Wait and judge. It is certainly *one* of the ideas that men have been accustomed to associate with the word duty. You belong to something, you fit in somewhere.

The sense of duty which begins in each separate human consciousness, is the very power which takes a man out of himself and demands that he belong to something larger than himself. It refuses him the privilege of thinking of himself as his own property.

It is just at this point where the element of mystery peculiarly enters into the sphere of ethics. The voice is heard in ourselves. But where does it come from? The measure of values is in one's self. But who or what is behind it? Consciousness itself gives no complete answer. The popular impression varies at this point. What we do have is a suggestion of something *beyond*, an order that is outside of us and yet includes us. There is a vague hint of an Infinite and an Eternal. We shall run a great risk if we venture too far on this issue. We are at the border-land where ethics and religion begin to blend together. This very thought of a system or order beyond ourselves, puts us in a very tremor of awe. We

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\* "That the sense of duty is the prompting of a self other than his own, is the very essence of it . . . Conscience springs out of the habit of judging things from the point of view of all and not of one. It is Ourselves, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness."—William Kingdon Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*.



would like to look through the veil. We almost fancy that we do see beyond it. And yet we can only say at this point: Take care.

These are impressions that are in everyday speech. They do not come to us altogether from the outside. They could not have grown up by accident. There must have been something in this human consciousness of ours, which called these impressions into existence.

Duty takes us out of ourselves. It implies a sphere or order to which we belong. It suggests something more than what is in ourselves. This is its element of mystery. What that something more is, we shall not venture to say. That is not involved in the mere idea of duty.

This second cluster of impressions, suggesting to us that we do not belong to ourselves, but are connected with another system or order, could be illustrated in literature in a multitude of ways. It reminds us of "The still small voice" that was heard by Elijah. It recalls "The changeless, unwritten laws of God" that comes from the "Antigone" of Sophocles. It is conveyed to us in "The Power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness" from the writings of Matthew Arnold. It is hinted at in "The Social Tissue" of Leslie Stephen. It brings back the postulate about "The Infinite, Personal, Intelligent Will" by Immanuel Kant. It reminds us of the phrase "The Voice of our Father-Man," from William Kingdon Clifford. It is the "Stern Daughter of the Voice of God" in the poem by Wordsworth.

We ask: What is this universal system or order? who or what is behind it? These are so many different replies. They vary a great deal in import. But they all agree on

the one point. They indicate how philosophers, poets, thinkers, of all ages and climes, have asserted that we do belong to something outside of ourselves—in a word, that we are not each man his own property. There is a striking unanimity on that one issue.

The best phrase I can think of by which to indicate the significance of this second cluster of impressions, is expressed in our ideas about "The soldier at his post." There is one soldierly quality which is divine. The discipline of warfare trains in him the capacity of staying at his post, or *doing the work to which he has been appointed*.

It is the voice of Duty which holds him there. When death threatens him, he stands unflinchingly where he has been placed. "Why should he say there?" He may not clearly know. "What great purpose will it serve if he stays at his post?" He may not be able to answer. "Who put him there?" He may hesitate even on that point. But whether he knows or does not know, the impression is fixed indelibly on his mind that his business is to continue there "on duty." And he stays. Duty *exacts* it of him.\* You will recall a beautiful illustration of this point in that exquisite poem, "The Blind Spinner," by Helen Hunt Jackson.

I cannot help thinking that when we use the word duty, it is just such an impression we have in reference to our whole life-work. We do not know the entire order or scheme to which we belong. But there is fixed in our consciousness a feeling that we are to stay in a certain niche and do a certain work. It may

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\* "We need not shrink from asserting as the basis of morality an unconditional duty, which is yet not a duty to do anything unconditionally except to fulfil that unconditional duty."—Green, *Prolegomena to Ethics*.

be irksome. We may not like it. If it were wholly a choice for our own sakes, we should not stay there. But it is because of this something outside of ourselves to which we belong, that duty exacts it of us in spite of ourselves.

I believe this is the reason why we always look with a certain degree of blame upon the man who, *in the full possession of his intellectual powers*, attempts to take his own life. At first we would say that he has the right to do it ; he is his own property. Then an instinctive voice begins to speak and says " No, you are not your own property ; you have been placed at your post ; now stay there." We do not imply that it says this just in so many words. I am only analyzing the instinctive feeling we have about a man who takes his own life. Why do we blame him ? I answer " Because of what is in the natural human consciousness." Duty speaks and it leads us to blame the man who shirks the place to which he was assigned. You may ask " Who put him there ? what was the power which assigned him his place ?" That is quite another matter. This consciousness of ours gives no direct answer to that question. We may discover an answer through our study, or thinking, or philosophy. There may be a suggestion as to a reply. But what we associate with the word duty in our average impression, is simply the one thought that we have a niche to fill and that we do not belong each to one's self.

But it is this second element which takes away the sombre aspect of duty. At first thought it was irksome, because it seemed to stand in our way ; it was cold and stern ; it applied to the will-power. But in this second view it touches the heart. An element of gentleness

and sweetness begins to pervade it. There was something so absolute about it at first, that we drew back from it in dismay. Now on thinking of it again we see it in another light. It gives us a *companionship* with something outside of ourselves.

The absolute, unconditioned, obligatory quality of duty makes us feel alone. It throws us back on ourselves. It is as if we were lost in the open space of the universe.

But then comes this other thought. We are not acting all by ourselves. Something from the outside whispers to us, "I am greater than thou." It is that suggestion which stirs the heart. It moves us to think that we do belong somewhere. It puts us in touch with our fellowmen; yes, further, it puts us in touch with all living things, with inanimate nature, with the whole wide universe. Duty no longer strikes us as something altogether stern and sombre. We are glad to obey it; because it adds more to our life, because it puts us in accord with life everywhere.\* It is at this point that we begin to understand that striking saying which has often perplexed me, "Morality begins in the stomachs of plants and ends in the circles of the universe." We can at least have a suggestion as to what Emerson was *trying* to say in that utterance.

You will see what I mean, in recalling the experiences of one's early life. The child shrinks from obedience. It

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\* "His perfection is not one thing apart from the rest of the universe, and he gains it only by appropriating and by reducing to a special harmony the common substance of all."—Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*.

I shall never forget the shock it gave me on first meeting the assertion of Fichte: "Der Mensch ist nur ein Mittel zur Pflicht." But the thought gave me a profound pleasure after once seeing the purport of it.

is irksome and against his inclinations. He does not like to obey. But then his attitude changes ; he surrenders ; he does what is asked of him. And possibly to his own surprise he discovers that it brings him pleasure. "How ?" you ask. Why, it puts him in loving sympathy with his father and mother ; it seems to add their life to his own. Their love is worth more to him than the temporary satisfaction of having his own way through disobedience. When he surrenders his will he adapts himself to the order or life of the home and becomes a part of it. Greater happiness is given to him by belonging to the home than by belonging just to himself.

And so it is in the larger sense. When we are mature, it is the same experience, only far more profound. We obey the voice of duty and we adapt ourselves to a larger order. We are no longer quite alone. We join the World's Family. We enter, as it were, into the System or Order of Nature.

I cannot help thinking that this is the explanation of one very common experience. We have a battle with ourselves about some course of action. We want to go in one way ; duty urges us in another. We do not wish to obey that sacred voice because we fancy it will defeat our purpose and give us disappointment. We should be obliged to surrender our inclinations. We see in it a direct loss of pleasure. But then after a severe struggle we yield and submit ; we obey. And what happens ? Why, a peace and calm settles down upon us that we had not dreamed of or anticipated. There is a positive glow of satisfaction in that we had not taken the other course. And yet why was it ? The only answer which occurs to me is, that instinctively we feel that in obeying

the voice of duty we have put ourselves in accord with a larger order ; we have drawn nearer to the rest of the world ; we are more in fellowship with all other life everywhere ; we are less utterly alone than we would have been if we had acted on our first impulse. We are positively glad that there is something absolute in duty.

It is this second cluster of associations, I fancy, which has led many persons to assume that duty applied *wholly* to our relations to *others*. People have sometimes defined it as "what we owe to our fellowmen." They think of it mainly or only as the principle which should control us in our dealings with others.\* They might almost fancy that duty would have no meaning save for those human relationships existing between man and man. It is called by some a mere "product of history."†

But there is a third cluster of impressions in regard to the word "duty." On close examination this may change our attitude. Most of us associate this word with the idea of *law*. This alters the aspect. It collects together another set of experiences. We are inclined to think that there is something *impersonal* about duty.

What we are commanded to obey is not a person, but a law or a principle. It is implied in the very phrase "duty for duty's sake." This language, strictly construed, is utterly meaningless. Yet such phrases do not develop without implying *something*. They are a record

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\* "The moral law being, in brief, conformity to the conditions of social welfare, conscience is the name for the intrinsic motives to such conformity."—Leslie Stephen, *Science of Ethics*.

† "Die ganze sittliche Weltordnung ist ein Product der Geschichte."—Von Ihering, *Der Zweck im Recht*.

of certain impressions which, however, are not voiced in exact language. We could analyze the expression and reduce it to nonsense. But we could not do the same with the experience or idea which men really have when they use this phrase.

“Duty for duty’s sake” is a mere suggestion as to the popular feeling that the word has reference to a law and not simply to a relation between persons. We obey a principle, we surrender to a law and not to a man or a personal power, when we obey the voice of duty.

This restores the position of the whole subject back into ourselves. Duty is not a relationship between us and our fellowman, but *a relationship between us and a law*.

I fancy that is the reason why men so often think of the *stars* in connection with the idea of duty. This occurs again and again. We look up to the skies and we say to ourselves that those stars are akin to us ; they are doing what we are doing, although with us it is in the light of a self-consciousness. What we mean is that those stars are obeying a law, they are acting according to a system or order. It is not the will of a person to which they are surrendered ; but they work together according to one principle. And that is what we understand in the exquisite lines about Duty, by Wordsworth :

“Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong ;  
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.”

It seems so strange at first that Wordsworth should have thought of the stars, those cold inanimate objects, as being akin to us or as connected with the idea of duty. It was the poet rather than the philosopher who did it. And yet it is the poet who expresses our first or most elemental instincts or instinctive thoughts.

It is quite true that the sense of duty *awakens* first through our relationship to others. Unless we stood in such relationship to our fellows, it is probable that we should not have become clearly conscious of this inner voice. It would have been there all the time. The measure of values would have existed within us. But it is first called forth through this life with others. And so we might say that it is in that respect a product of evolution. Human experience has called it forth and confronted each man's consciousness with a sense of duty. But the supreme measure of values was there all the time.

When duty has once been awakened, when we definitely see it there in our consciousness, then it is no longer restricted to those outside relationships. It is a law which is held before us for our obedience; it is a clue as to the kind of character we have to preserve and develop, rather than a certain code which we have to obey. And so it is that we can partially understand why we actually value something even more than our own lives.

What seemed at first to be all on the outside, now looks to be all on the inside. You realize that if you were the only conscious being in the Universe; if there were no other man or woman on the face of the earth; if even there were no Supreme Companion; yet, alone in space, with no other conscious fellowship anywhere, the Voice of Duty would still exist within you and call for obedience.\* I almost think even then there would be

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\* I am at loss to understand the denial of this assertion by Martineau when he says: "Suppose the case of one lone man in an atheistic world; could there really exist any authority of higher over lower within the enclosure of his detached personality? I cannot conceive it."—*Types of Ethical Theory*.



something you would care to preserve at the cost of life itself.

We are still analyzing popular impressions in regard to the word "duty." We are thinking of the experiences out of which these impressions have developed.

At first we see ourselves in other men's eyes; and suddenly there steals over us a flush of shame at some act we have been guilty of. But then later on, when we are alone, we look in upon ourselves where no other eye can see; and the shame comes back. What is true in this case in reference to each man's life, may be equally true in reference to the course of history of the human race. Men first had their attention called to the subject through social relationships. The separate individual consciousness appears later; and also the separate sense of duty. But when once it had awakened in that form in the human race, it could not subside; any more than it subsides in each man's life when he is alone by himself and no longer subject to the eyes of others. After it has once been called forth, it continues wherever you are, however alone you may be. It is a voice commanding your obedience to a law, no matter how limited your relationships may become. The stars are moving steadily in their spheres; they are doing their duty. Are you moving steadily in your sphere and doing your duty?

We sometimes call it the "Voice of God." Possibly that may be the true expression for it. And yet we can make a tremendous mistake by a careless misuse of that phrase. It is not the voice of God commanding us to

obey Him, but rather to obey the *law*.\* There is a tremendous significance in this qualification. If we hold to the first impression, it would make duty only like so many arbitrary decrees. There would be no "changeless unwritten law." It would destroy even the dignity of Godhead itself. The grandeur of the fact is in the thought that the voice does point us to something that is changeless and absolute. We obey the law and not simply the Power who established it.

These are only clusters of popular impressions. I have ventured to bring them together in this form so that you could sift them down for yourselves. If I were to give an answer or definition from these various impressions, it would be as follows: *Duty is the command of our Highest Nature or Highest Self, bidding us, in scorn of transient consequences, acting as if we belonged not to ourselves but to a universal system or order, to render unconditional obedience to the highest law or highest measure of values that we are conscious of.* Somehow I seem to recognize all these features in the ordinary usage of man in reference to the word "duty." We might explain it still further by a comparison. It could be said that duty with its law plays the same rôle in ourselves, that law outside ideally would play in the various relationships of human society. The law of the State is intended, I assume, to regulate the activities of men so that, while each person is an independent self, all their thoughts may nevertheless harmonize in one common ideal purpose or end. And so likewise duty with its law would so regulate all the

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\* "Action is right—not because God wills it; but God wills the law as the expression of absolute right."—Calderwood, *Hand-Book of Moral Philosophy*.

various impulses, passions, yearnings and ambitions in one's self, that they should act in harmony to one ideal result.

We come back then to our original question : What is there in this Sense of Duty and why are we dominated by it? We dip once more into the human consciousness and search there for an answer.

The old theory of conscience has gone by. We may regret it ; but we cannot help it. There may have been a certain beauty in that impression of a guide within ourselves illuminating our pathway and always suggesting to us precisely how to act.\* It was supposed to provide an immediate answer in all cases of uncertainty.

But a conscience exactly of that kind does not exist. There is nothing in ourselves which *always* instinctively points out to us the immediate and true course to be taken. I know that this statement must be a disappointment to a great many persons. They have laid so much stress on the value of conscience. But they need not give up any of that stress, although they have misinterpreted what was in themselves.

The pathway of life is never perfectly illuminated. It is not always a clear, direct course straight before our eyes. We are obliged to think, and brood and ponder, before we choose and decide. The voice of duty is there all the while. There is ever a luminous glow within. But

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\* "There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions. . . . This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is conscience."—Bishop Butler, *Sermon upon Human Nature*. But it is a little dangerous to teach that standpoint too explicitly, for it can be very misleading.

it does not always show us the pathway or explain to us the law.

When, for this reason, a man shirks his sense of duty ; when, as we say, he seeks to "dodge" his own conscience, what he is really disobeying is more often his plain common-sense.

In a great majority of cases we know perfectly well what is the true course to pursue. Duty may not explain it to us. But human experience is the guide. When we act in defiance and pursue our caprices, what we are really defying is common-sense or direct human experience. We *know* from that experience in most cases wherein we are astray.

You may tell me that this interpretation of duty is most unsatisfactory. You would prefer the old theory of a guide always illuminating the pathway. You may think that the sense of duty itself is not enough. I for one must answer : It *is* enough. The evil in the world does not come so much from a perplexity over the conflict of duties. There are just two classes of men in the world ; those who recognize the authority of duty and those who do not recognize such an authority. It is the calm defiance of all sense of duty, which is responsible for the great mass of iniquity everywhere. Once get a recognition of such an authority in human consciousness, and our civilization is safe and secure.\* All the rest will take care of itself. Common everyday experience will guide us in a great majority of cases and make the pathway plain enough. The main trouble is

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\* "Denn jenes allgemeine Ideal ist selbst kein gewordenes und ein für allemal gegebenes, sondern ein ewig werdendes, nie zu vollendendes."—Wundt, *Ethik*.

that so many persons refuse to bend the will or submit to any kind of authority at all. When civilization begins to weaken and decay, it indicates not a loss of religious faith, not a spread of rationalism, but simply a decline in the regard men pay to the authority of their own sense of duty. If men will only come to have the spirit of the soldier standing at his post, I feel that human society is safe and that the race of man will go on advancing. When a man will stay at his post under every kind of fire, through the conviction that duty has placed him there, he has the character which *makes* civilization.

Go straight to your own consciousness and see what is there. "A luminous guide?" No, but something else. Rather a certain uneasy yearning; a troubled desire or longing; a reaching out beyond ourselves or above ourselves; an unsatisfied, nameless unrest that we cannot defy. We want to be something, do something, get something, realize something. What, or how, or why,—all that at first is vague and uncertain. Only, there is this restless longing for something more, something grander, something deeper, something higher than we have yet realized. Now this I believe exists more or less dimly or intensely in every human being in early life. When we become older we may have forgotten it. You may be obliged to search your memories in order to revive it. But there has been a time when you have had some such experience. For an illustration of this point in literature we would mention the "Sartor Resartus" by Carlyle, or the "Journals" of Amiel.

This to my mind is the something which marks us off from all the rest of creation. It is the basis of morality; it is the starting point of the sense of duty. Every ani-

mate existence does not seem to be influenced by it. We, only as the crown of evolution, are pursued by this haunting vision of something we have not realized, of a higher self that we have neglected.\*

Now and then in later life we sometimes awaken to it anew. We go on for years pursuing certain ends. After awhile we get them. And then with a shock it comes over us that that was not exactly what we wanted after all. You have been seeking it for years, the something on the outside. And yet it was not your higher nature, not the nameless unrest which was in search of it. Then the old troubled spirit comes back again; you may be pursued with haunting regrets over the mistake. If you have had such an experience you will know what I have in mind as the basis in us of our sense of duty. Read again the poem on "The Buried Life" by Matthew Arnold.

Recognize this nameless unrest, act in true accordance with it,—and you will be pursuing the real pathway of your highest nature.

Duty is the voice which speaks for that "Nameless Unrest." It wants to keep you in accord with the Grand Order of Things.

You ask what evidence have we that it is there. I have suggested the answer. The mere fact that the word "duty" ever was conceived, is the evidence.

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\* "Wherever we have moral judgment approving a line of conduct as good, whether among the rudest band of savages or in those circles which in the most highly moralized countries in the world recognize the highest moral standard, it is seen to rest upon a more or less consciously recognized contrast between a permanent and a transient self."—J. H. Muirhead, *Elements of Ethics*.

The greatest event of all human history next to what occurred in Palestine, was the rise of the City of Athens. But the greatest contribution of that city was not its art, its literature or its political science, but rather its ethical philosophy.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were probably the three greatest minds who have ever lived. The mystery of all mysteries to me, is what first set them to thinking about Virtue and Duty. From that time on the human intellect has never been able to let the subject alone. It is not of so much importance *what* they actually thought. That is a side issue. The tremendous circumstance is that they came to consider that matter at all. Human society could have gone on in its old way and continued to exist, like the inanimate world. It could have obeyed natural law, it could have had a share of happiness as well as of unhappiness. Why did men ever begin to think about the true course of life? It is the mystery of all mysteries.

There is only one answer. There must have been something primordial in the human consciousness itself, which had lain dormant for untold ages, until the mind of man had become sufficiently developed to study itself.\*

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\* "Wollen wir unter dem Namen das zusammenfassen, was als beherrschendes Gesetz oder als forderndes Ideal den einzelnen endlichen Gestaltungen gegenüber steht, so mögen wir sagen dass die Fähigkeit, des Unendlichen inne zu werden, die auszeichnende Gabe des menschlichen Geistes ist, und wir glauben zugleich als ein Ergebniss unserer Betrachtungen aussprechen zu können, dass nicht die Erfahrung und ihr noch so mannigfaltiger Inhalt durch seine Einwickelung uns diese Fähigkeit anerzogen hat, sondern dass sie unmittelbar in der Natur unseres Wesens begründet, nur zu ihrer Entfaltung die begünstigenden Bedingungen der Erfahrung bedürfte."—Lotze, *Mikrokosmos*.

With that discovery began a new epoch in human history. A change took place, the influence of which must go on forever.

Have I made it plain what I mean by the Sense of Duty? I do not know. Each man must speak for himself. But duty is to me the supreme word in human language. It is to me what the word "God" has stood for; it represents to me what the phrase "For Christ's Sake" has implied; it means to me what I once attributed to the unconditional authority of the Bible. We do not say that it necessarily does away with those other beliefs or with that other authority. I only assert my personal conviction that it comes *first* in importance. It stands above them and rests underneath them. Without a sense of duty in human consciousness, men could never have appreciated a character like that of Jesus, or have come to believe in a Principle of Justice which men associate with the name of God. They might have thought of a Power in the Universe. They could have fancied it as personal. But how came they ever to think of a supreme moral power; how came they ever to attribute Ideal Justice to the character of the Divine Being? It must have been because of this original sense of duty in the human consciousness.

At the present day human beliefs are undergoing a change everywhere. What men used to think, they think no longer. The element of doubt seems to pervade almost everything. The outside world itself is a kind of illusion. Natural science has dissolved color and sound into mere rippling wave movements of air or ether. Philosophy has undermined historic traditions without number. But there is one factor which no



philosophy or science can do away with ; and that is this human consciousness of ours. What we see there, we actually touch ; it is the first reality. It is not something we have to believe in by inference. We do not have to prove it to ourselves. It is there before us. It is there inside of us.

Duty I recognize as one of those immediate facts of my consciousness. And so I cling to it ; or rather it stays with me without any effort on my part to hold fast to it. I never doubt it nor distrust it. Amid all this world of illusions and appearances it is to me the one sure reality. I believe in obeying it implicitly, unswervingly.

In my lecture on "What is Religion" \* I quoted at the close a few lines from Emerson, as expressing the highest thought on the subject in poetic form. And now, after speaking on the subject "What we Mean by Duty," I would like to quote a few other lines from the same man. They express concisely all that I have been endeavoring to say in this lecture. That great genius interpreted the grandest quality in ourselves when he said

"To visions profounder  
Man's spirit must dive,  
His aye-rolling orb  
At no goal will arrive.  
*The Lethe of Nature*  
*Can't trance him again*  
*Whose soul sees the Perfect*  
*Which his eyes seek in vain."*

That, in my thought, is the basis of the sense of duty. It is what we discover in going straight to the human

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\* *Ethical Addresses*, First Series, p. 68.

consciousness. We all have some vague or definite experience of this kind. Duty has spoken to us clearly and fully at one time or another.

With this one fact before me I rest content. On this principle I propose to move forward. Duty is the principle which shall sustain me. With the teaching of old, I shall say, while changing only a single word, "Though it slay me, yet will I trust in it."

## OUR BESETTING SINS.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

“The only amaranthine flow’r on earth  
Is Virtue ; the only lasting treasure, Truth.”—*Cowper*.

It is not my purpose to give a theological definition of sin, but to speak of the sins which “easily beset” us. One distinction, however, I must make before I proceed with my subject. Some sins are more expressive of character than others. There is a morality which is compulsory, and a morality which is voluntary. The law of the State, by means of courts and constables, compels people to abstain from committing theft and murder, but there is no external force compelling them to abstain from the sin of vanity, jealousy, pride, and anger. The fear of punishment may suffice to keep men from stealing or killing, but a motive more powerful than fear is needed to inspire in them the love of virtue. To be free from evil does not necessarily mean also to be good.

If possible, I want this lecture to correct the mistake that the sins of pride, evil speaking and anger, for instance, are little sins. I am afraid some people look upon them as they would upon the minor disorders of health. The great diseases of the body demand immediate attention, but we are inclined to pay little heed to the lesser ailments :

*First*, because they do not seem to interfere with the ordinary course of life; *second*, because they do not threaten us with any immediate danger; *third*, because we feel that these little physical troubles are not only hidden from the eyes of the public, but that they will pass away of themselves.

We reason in the same way about the maladies of the mind. We say: "murder will out;" "the thief will be caught." We do not seem to be afraid of pride and envy, as we are of falsehood and theft. I want to show that this is a grave error. The sins which we seem to least fear are our worst foes. If it is a shame to be seen drunk and staggering on the streets, it argues a deeper spiritual humiliation to allow anger or jealousy to become the prevailing mood of the mind. Moreover, it is the little sins which predispose us for the great crimes.

### I.

Let us begin with the sin of impertinent curiosity. There is a curiosity which is good,—the thirst for useful knowledge; and there is a curiosity which is bad,—prying into other people's affairs for purely selfish purposes. To begin with, it argues a want of moral refinement to push one's self forward and, either by force or cunning, to come into possession of other people's secrets. There is a moral etiquette which condemns curiosity as a violation of the most sacred right,—the right to keep one's own thought. To ask questions which we know cannot be answered without laying bare secrets which we have no right to know,—questions which submit our friends to the temptation of either prevaricating or imparting information which is to their dis-

advantage to give,—is even more than an impertinence, it is a vulgarity.

If we analyze the sin of curiosity, we find that the person addicted to it has, as a rule, an evil mind; for, invariably, that which he is seeking for is not good news but bad news. He flies from house to house and plies his interrogations and lays his snares and traps, in order to disclose the hidden things in the lives of other people which are calculated to prejudice society against them. It is not to reports which bring honor, but to those which are scandalous, that he lends his ear and tongue. This sort of curiosity is a persecution. In olden times, a man was compelled to appear before the inquisitors to confess his private opinions and beliefs. There are to-day precisely such inquisitors, who, with words that are like hooks, seek to tear out from the deep recesses of thought and memory things not intended for idle gossip.

## II.

Rudeness, manifested in people's behavior towards one another, resembles impertinent curiosity in more than one respect. How frequently we find ourselves without the moral strength to withhold the word which we know cannot be heard without causing pain. We are so sure what we say is true, that we forget that, though true, it will be better to leave it unsaid. Thoughtlessness, more often than malice, is the cause of much evil. To the desire to contribute a witticism, to say a "bon mot," men sometimes sacrifice even friendships of long standing. Rather than lose the opportunity to be considered a man of wit and humor, men trifle with the feelings of others. There is a certain measure of respect

which we owe to the humblest man or woman ; even the guilty have a claim upon our courtesy.

It is not only by our thoughtless and unkind words that we show rudeness in our relations with others, but also by our acts. Some people imagine that the manifestation of any warmth and interest in our intercourse with others would belittle us in their estimation, would rob us of our dignity. Men are supposed to think more highly of us if we are distant and cold and indifferent to their society. No one can be otherwise than his nature ; but when, for the sake of making an impression, men assume an air of indifference and distance, the act cannot be called by any other name than that of rudeness.

The illiterate workman, who knows how to return a polite answer, how to appreciate a favor, may have more ethical culture in him than the learned scholar, who imagines him unworthy of courteous consideration.

Rudeness hides the light that is in us. Without grace we cannot show our other virtues to advantage. Grace is the interpreter of the gifts we possess.

### III.

Ostentation, the love of show, is another violation of refined taste. I want to speak upon that phase of it which has a moral bearing upon character. The love of show is a kind of idolatry. It is a devotion to the unreal and the external, rather than the real and the substantial. It is asking the world to respect us, not for what we are, but for what we have. The love of show argues a want of faith in the worth of intellectual and moral possessions, and an exaggerated confidence in the value of fine apparel and equipage and house and table. But

every sin is a miscalculation ; it never gives what it promises. For instance, we imagine that because of our fineries and jewels, we are making a favorable impression upon others, that we are being admired and respected ; whereas, it is our fine things—our parlors, our robes and precious stones and our wealth—which command their respect, and not our character.

I like to see young men and women, yes, all, scrupulous about their personal appearance, showing excellent taste in the choice of their attire. It is both a privilege and a duty to make ourselves pleasing to the eye as well as to the mind. Besides, there is nothing too costly for man or woman ; no house, no gem,—nothing that can be produced by the combination of labor, talent and capital—the industrial trinity—can be too good for a human being. But the mind is more than the body, and the “body is more than raiment.” The beautiful body should be the temple of a more beautiful mind. The palace should be the shrine of a living soul. When the house is empty, of what use are the external decorations and adornments ? A doll is not a human being. A face painted red and glowing does not prove that it is a soul alive and inspired.

#### IV.

I proceed now to discuss in their order the sins of a more dangerous nature. Envy has been called the “hatred of another man’s happiness.” The excellence in others which we do not possess, is the source of envy. A man cannot fall lower in the scale of morality or become more corrupt, more like a demon, than when he rejoices over the faults and failures of others and grieves

over their successes and virtues. There is no deeper degradation than that. It is like having a greedy asp coiled at the fountain head of one's life, injecting its poisonous drops into the stream that flows therefrom. Envy has been called by Hannah More, "The ugliest fiend of hell, that turns the healthful hue of the fresh cheek to haggard sallowness." The Poet Spenser says that, jealousy "eats the heart"—observe the phrase—"eats the heart, and turns all love's delight to misery." You are familiar with the quotation from Shakespeare :

"Oh, beware of jealousy,  
It is the green-eyed monster."

As a rule, jealousy is the quality of mediocre minds. It is born of fear and selfishness ; *fear*, lest some one else should be preferred to us, lest some other should snatch from us the tokens of distinction, lest some greater light should eclipse our name ; and *selfishness*, because we would be the sole idol of the people. You see how irrational is jealousy. Must there be no room in the world for anybody else? Must the progress of the world stop with us? Is it not absurd to suppose that we represent the highest standard of excellence?

An analysis of the feeling of jealousy shows that there is in it, besides fear and selfishness, another ingredient,—hatred. Jealousy is a mixture of fear, selfishness and hatred. The jealous man hates his equals because they prove to him and to the world that he is not in any sense an exceptional or extraordinary man, that there are others as gifted and as good. This he considers a loss, and hates the cause of it. He hates his superiors because they show him a higher ideal and



thereby render him useless as a leader ; he is compelled to become a follower ; he must descend, and few people know how to descend gracefully. Another reason why he hates his superiors is because they make it more difficult for him to maintain his position and to command a respect as great as before. His hatred is intensified by the feeling that the affection and respect accorded to others are taken away from him ; that he has been robbed in order that another may be paid.

Jealousy manifests itself not only by abusing, but also by refusing to recognize the merits of others. The jealousy that is silent is sometimes more vehement than the jealousy that is outspoken. The inability to see merit in others does not justify the refusal to recognize it. There is nothing so clear and self-evident as merit. If we cannot see it, it is because we have willfully closed our eyes. The desire not to see any merit is often the reason we do not see it.

Jealousy tempts its victims to commit very ridiculous mistakes. Stinted and miserly in their behaviour towards genius, they lavish extravagant praises upon mediocrity. They shun and avoid the great, and gather about them the little minds, that they may shine among them.

Let us bear in mind the distinction between jealousy and emulation. Jealousy is blind ; emulation is quick to detect and recognize merit wherever it is found. The jealous man cheats himself of the help and encouragement to a larger moral and spiritual life which would come to him if he could recognize excellence in others. Emulation finds in the virtues of others a spur and an inspiration.

Jealousy is the suicide of the mind.

## V.

Pride is a very serious spiritual disease. It has been justly remarked that a proud man is never a contented man. The applause is never loud enough for him, and the praise of friends is never warm enough, because he can always imagine a louder applause and a more unstinted praise. Pride is insatiable. The proud man is not like a fountain sending forth clear and fertilizing streams, but like a vortex crying out, "give me more!"

Shakespeare says: "Pride is his own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle." The feeling of inordinate self-esteem in which pride manifests itself, is the result, not of what other people think of our gifts, but of what we ourselves think of them. We constitute ourselves the judge of our own worth. This is the mistake which makes pride ridiculous. The two elements in pride are: *first*, an exaggerated sense of one's superiority; *second*, an exaggerated sense of the inferiority of others. It is the inability to appreciate what is above us, and want of charity for what is beneath us, that produces pride.

Pride, therefore, is an injustice to one's self and to others. Pride shows itself in different ways; it is not always accompanied by a lofty air, contempt of others, and conceit of one's own gifts; sometimes it assumes the garb of humility and modesty. The man who over-exalts himself, and the man who belittles himself, belong to the same moral category. Diogenes, sitting in his tub, unwashed and in rags, boasted of his poverty to his spectators when he said: "Thus I trample on the pride of Plato." "But," rejoined Plato, "with *greater pride*, O Diogenes."

There is a difference between pride and vanity. One is the feeling based on the possession of intrinsic or acquired superiority over others. Great talents, a foremost rank in society, fame, and often wealth which one has acquired by one's own thought and labor, are among the causes which encourage pride. Vanity, on the other hand, is the feeling of conceit based upon the possession of extraordinary natural gifts, such as beauty, voice, eloquence, and strength of muscle. It has been remarked that vanity is the sin of the weak, and pride the sin of the strong. A man may be too proud to seek the praise of the common people, but no one can be too vain to bow and fawn in order to catch fair words even from the rabble.

The conception of an ideal transcending the actual in our life is the infallible cure for pride; and the thought that beauty and a fine voice are transient, that they were not created by us but were given to us, would heal the mind of a weakness so mortifying as vanity. When General Washington returned from his triumphs the people flocked to see him in great numbers, to shout his name, to applaud him to the echo, to call him their savior, their hero, their father. But Washington felt that he had only done his duty, that it would have been a disgrace if, in the hour of the nation's peril, he had not done his duty. Hence, what cause was there for pride? Moreover, Washington possessed an ideal of loyalty and service far superior to his actual fidelity and courage,—he *looked up* in the hour of his victory, and that inspired in him a true modesty. It is the inward and downward look that breeds conceit.

There is a pride which is legitimate. The student must be too proud to go to his class unprepared, to fail

in his examination. The merchant must be too proud to fail in his business by his own carelessness, extravagance and indolence. A man must be proud of his good name. When a man falls and has lost his friends, how frequently this sense of honorable pride—another word for self-respect—is the only friend that will not desert him, that will come to his rescue, put him on his feet again, and send him into the world to recover and regain all that he has lost. A noble pride is often the only thread that holds a tottering man from falling into the abyss.

If we have talents, wealth, rank and position, let us remember that more service is required of us. "He that is chiefest among you, let him be the servant of all." Men are talented and gifted, not that they may be censorious, distant, haughty, domineering, contemptuous, impatient with their humblest fellow-creatures; but that they may be their teachers, helpers, friends, and ministers. All gifts are a trust. We are accountable to humanity for what we are and for what we have.

## VI.

Flattery is the sister of pride, which, like a tangled net, sometimes entraps even the strongest of men. Flattery distorts our judgment, and fills our pockets with counterfeit coins, which, when we come to spend, we find to be without value. The flatterer does not so much deprive us of our sight, as he perverts it. There is a light which is worse than blindness. The blind man is ignorant of the things he is surrounded with. The distorted eye imagines things which have no existence.

The desire for favor and gain are the principal motives which encourage flattery. The flatterer generally is a

beggar, because he hopes to receive without paying, except in a coin which is not current.

Flattery argues disrespect for human nature in that it hopes to influence the will, nay, even to overthrow it, or hold it in bondage, by appealing to selfishness and conceit. The flatterer is an infidel, because he thinks that there is no virtue that cannot be bribed; no integrity that has not its vulnerable spot; no conscience that has not its price.

The desire to be flattered makes the flatterer.

It is a duty to praise the praiseworthy. The noble act must receive the generous and spontaneous commendation of the people. It is a privilege, as well as a duty, to say of a good man or to him, "You have deserved our admiration, you have acquitted yourself like a man, you are true to the impulses of your heart. We are proud of you, we love you." Unlike flattery, honest praise shows a high faith in human nature, and in the ability of virtue to bear its laurels without bending or breaking under the weight. We are disinterested when we praise, and selfish when we flatter.

## VII.

Evil speaking is a kind of flattery and vanity. The evil speaker would have us believe that he is prompted by a love of truth and decency, and that it is at a personal loss and sacrifice that he has consented to assume the rôle. As a rule, the calumniator is a coward. He closes his remarks with, "Pray, do not let him know that I have been to see you, for, if I thought you would go and tell him that I have communicated with you, nothing could have induced me to do so." There is something

more than cowardly in all this—it is also unreasonable. You come and tell me that a certain person known to us both has been guilty of a misdemeanor in act or word, and you tell me that I must not go to the source to find out the truth of the charge. How, then, am I to know the precise facts? Would you have me think evil of him without giving him an opportunity to defend himself and to tell his side of the story? But it is your name you want me to withhold? Will you then have the accused suspect the innocent as his calumniators? Only in extremely exceptional cases would we have a right to say or write a thing without signing our name to it. The “anonymous” man is justly despised. Of course, there would be no calumny when we speak openly and without fear, and are willing ourselves to be convicted of error. All the hypocrisy and bitterness disappear when we are ready to search the facts and give the accused every possible opportunity to justify himself and to regain our esteem and friendship. Even as it is a duty to praise the brave, it is a duty to denounce the bad. We must never be so indifferent or so good-natured as to wink at dishonesty or excuse crime, either in the poor or in the rich, in friend or in stranger.

Those who tolerate evil speaking are as much to blame as those who do the evil speaking. The former sin with their tongue, the latter sin with their ears. To tolerate the abuse of an absent person in our presence, is to participate in the abuse. It is more, it is to reward the evil speaker, for that is all he craves for,—an audience, a willing ear, into which he may pour his unfriendly words. It is also a proof of vanity on the part of those who listen to the evil speaker. The fact that we have

been judged by him worthy of confidence, and have been selected for the deposition of secrets unknown to others ; the fact that we are considered superior to the person accused, and free from the faults denounced, such are the compliments with which the flatterer bribes our attention.

What makes the " speaking " evil is the crookedness, the ingenuity and artifice with which it is seasoned. The backbiter begins by assuming an air of unwillingness to impart the information which he possesses. That overcome, he next makes professions of friendship for the person of whom he is to speak. Then follows an exaggeration of the virtues of the prospective victim. Such are the tortuous paths which the evil speaker travels to reach his destination. He makes the sharpest words look the smoothest, and the most bitter words look the most sweet. His blows are seldom direct and straight. It is by suggestions and insinuations that he accomplishes his work.

All the vices are related. Calumny is the daughter of jealousy. There is a hatred that thinketh evil, as there is a "love that thinketh no evil."

### VIII.

Anger is the point of confluence of all the other vicious currents of the mind. In anger, they not only reach their goal, but lose their individuality. Analyze anger, and you will find it composed of all the sins I have mentioned. If I may use another figure of speech, anger is a flame which has for its fuel, pride, jealousy, rudeness, and calumny.

"In the Ducal Palace at Venice," remarks Mr.

Ruskin, "there is a figure of Anger represented by a woman tearing open her dress at her breast." Spenser represents Anger in the form of a man riding upon a lion, brandishing a firebrand in his hand, his garments stained with blood. Brutus, in Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," says to Cassius, who is wild with rage, "Fret till your proud heart break." That is the culminating point of anger—a bursting and breaking of the querulous heart. When anger reaches its height it dashes the reason into fragments.

The poet Pope must have had this thought in mind when he compared the effect of anger upon a man to the effect of the fall of a china vessel from a high place :

"Or when rich china vessels, fall'n from high,  
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie."

There is no spectacle more mortifying than that of a rational man passion-bound or passion-driven, with no control over his tongue, his hands, or his reason. On the other hand, how divine is the serenity of self-mastery! To stand so rooted in reason that no storm can sweep us off or prostrate us to the ground,—this is the very majesty of manhood.

Anger is the dethronement of reason.

The quality of mind which can make us anger-proof is patience. This is the bridle which checks the overheated steeds and brings them back to rhythm and reason.

Anger is immoral, because it appeals to passion—which is blind—to be the guide and the judge. Anger hides from us the real relations of things and tempts us to speak and to act out of season and out of reason. We mistake the innocent for the guilty and the guilty



for the innocent. We thwart the natural and rational course of events, and make ourselves the authors of acts which we would be ashamed to own in our calmer moments. Anger snatches from our lips words, the memory of which would haunt and torment us forever. Even as a stream of lava leaves in its track destruction and ashes, anger sweeps down the results of years of patient building, leaving behind ruin and waste. How many friendships have received their death blow, how many homes have been wrecked, how many lives have been embittered by anger!

The worst feature about anger is the rapidity with which it spreads. No other disease is so contagious. Anger provokes anger. Short and sharp words do not call forth smooth and sweet answers. Even your servant, your child, nay, even the dumb animal, is quick to meet anger with anger. This should not seem strange, for it is in the very nature of anger, as it is that of fire, to spread. It is difficult to be angry alone.

We must not confound indignation with anger. Anger is personal, while indignation is impersonal. In the one we assert ourselves; in the other we are the exponents of a cause higher than ourselves. Anger is provoked by the supposition that an injury has been done to us; indignation is inspired by the feeling that a worthy cause has been injured, the rights of man have been violated, and an injustice has been committed against humanity. The persecuted or the oppressed may in no way be related to us. They may live in a distant part of the world, but indignation makes their cause our cause. Are people being massacred in a distant country? Are women and children outraged? Is there oppression

of the poor by the greedy? Are the laws of the land openly violated and the public well-being sacrificed to the profit of private persons? We would lose our self-respect if such high-handed proceedings did not strike fire in our hearts and create in us a righteous indignation. He who has lost his power of indignation has lost his conscience. The country that has not a "righteous populace that will stand like a wall of fire" around its liberties, is a country without a future.

### IX.

I have in no way exhausted the list of the sins which "easily beset" us. But have I succeeded in suggesting a greater watchfulness against them? I want to say that few of us are free from attacks from these enemies of our moral progress. The strongest among us often loses his self-control, slackens his hand upon the rudder of life, when, behold, the winds and the waves of passion toss us about in every direction. The difference between the man whose life is governed by moral principles and the man whose life is governed by no moral principles is this: with the former the defection from virtue is temporary, with the other it is permanent. The bad man is one in whom the *prevailing* mood is evil.

Sometimes a fault helps us more than a virtue. Let not this appear paradoxical. The failure which yields a better knowledge of ourselves, a truer estimate of our powers, is more helpful than the sudden or continuous success which blinds us to the real measure of manhood. The fault which teaches us humility, sympathy with the erring, mercy in our judgment of others, has more uplifting power than the unbending perfection which fans

pride and conceit and separates us from our fellow-men. For this reason, it is possible for a man to have all the virtues and yet be unlovely.

Ignorance is the root of all evil, even as knowledge is the beginning of all wisdom and virtue. No one will seek a remedy for the diseases in his body of which he is ignorant. The principal cause of ignorance is the over-indulgence with which we review and criticize our own acts and words. Instead of acknowledging in a straightforward manner that we have done wrong, that we have been weak and sinful, we invent excuses and subterfuges to pacify our conscience. We try to persuade ourselves that the fault is not ours, but that it belongs to the circumstances, the fierceness of the temptation, the education we have received, the influence of heredity, and in a hundred other ways we try to think we are not so guilty as the facts appear.

Another source of self-deception is the fear of the truth. We all know of people who refuse to go to the physician because they fear that the diagnosis will reveal some alarming symptom, and that some severe and rigid discipline will be immediately imposed upon them. To avoid this, they argue themselves into the belief that the disease does not exist, and that the discipline would be unnecessary. Fear of the truth, and fear of the consequences of knowing the truth, keep men in ignorance.

Aside from self-knowledge, we must cultivate self-control. Plato compares the conduct of life to a charioteer who is driving two horses, holding the reins in his hands. One of the horses is of noble origin and noble himself; the other is of ignoble origin and ignoble himself, and, necessarily, the management of the pair becomes

a difficult matter and everything depends upon the charioteer. Amid the hurry and bustle of modern life, self-possession has become extremely difficult. We fly from point to point, from subject to subject, from land to land ; we rush from infancy to youth, from youth to old age,—from the cradle to the grave,—

“ And never once possess our souls  
Before we die.”

Self-knowledge and self-mastery are the foundation-stones of the spiritual structure we call “character,” but the power which keeps the walls intact and which pushes forward and upward the work of construction, I shall call *resolution*. The good will is the sovereign will. There is no morality where there is no will. We slip and trip and fall because we walk with hesitation and indecision. We are not determined, and hence we waver and lag behind and stumble into the enemy’s trap. If we only knew how near resolution were to realization, we would be inspired to action.

Have we been helped this morning to feel in us a deep yearning for the better, the freer life? Let this yearning grow into a sincere wish, the wish into a resolution, the resolution become a clear, definite aim, gathering strength with every day, deepening with each effort, permeating the whole life, and finally, like a mighty flood, may it bear us up and on towards the shining mark of our high calling as human beings, created in the image of the Good!

## “ETHICAL AGNOSTICISM,”

WITH REFERENCE TO ARCHBISHOP RYAN'S ADDRESS.

BY WILLIAM M. SALTER.

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SOMETIMES a Roman Catholic is a catholic indeed. By this I mean one who is inclusive in his sympathies and is disposed to hold out the fraternal hand to all who love truth and practice righteousness. Such an one (if I am not mistaken), is the Archbishop of Philadelphia, who recently delivered an address on “Agnosticism.” It was not my good fortune to hear the address, but I have read an extended report of it commended by the Archbishop himself.\* In it he says that there are honest skeptics as well as honest Catholics or Protestants, that all should meet in a fair and friendly spirit and try to understand each other better. He opposes the notion that the God of Christianity is an exclusive and unjust God, revealing himself to the Jews, excluding the Gentiles, or to the Catholics, excluding Jews, Gentiles and Protestants from salvation; he even says that if such an indictment could be sustained, it would be fatal to Christianity. This is really, however unconscious the Archbishop may be of it, allowing that there are standards of right and justice

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\* In *The Catholic Standard*, 15th December, 1894.

by which Christianity and the Supreme Power himself may be judged. In making such statements he appeals to the universal moral sense of men—something, then, more primitive, more fundamental, more authoritative than any doctrine of the Church could be.

The same breadth of view and respect for the deeper verities are shown in his claiming that those who do not belong to the body of the Church may belong to its soul and be saved, if otherwise good men and women; and, if he says on the other hand, that those are not in the way of salvation who, while knowing the Church to be true, are prevented by worldly motives from joining it, this is only what in principle we might say of those who fail to follow their conscience in connection with any other association that makes a call on their loyalty and devotion. Safety is always and ever in acting according to the light we have, in witnessing for it, in ranging ourselves on its side. Cowards are always among the refuse, the lost of humanity. And so when the Archbishop, asks in tones, the genuineness of which cannot be doubted, "Why should there not be Christian union?"—and even suggests the possibility of his own Church making concessions to this end—we also feel the warm-hearted, large-brained, spirit of the man. We should be false to our sentiment and profession as liberals did we not recognize with honor and appreciation tolerant, humane, utterances like these—and the more so, when they come from a source from which we do not ordinarily expect them.

But the special subject to which the Archbishop devoted himself was "Agnosticism." And, perhaps, if he had spoken of this alone, I should have felt no spe-

cial call to refer to his remarks. Agnosticism is not a view which an Ethical Society is concerned to defend any more than Theism is. Both belong to the field of religious speculation, in regard to which our movement takes no stand. It is moral agreement we are after, not religious agreement or anti-religious agreement. If one is ready to live the moral life, to pursue the path of moral progress, this is all we ask of him—and he may formulate his creed, his religious philosophy, as he likes. To be sure we judge of morality on a basis of reason and experience; we cannot accept anything as right simply because a church or book, supposed to be divine, asserts it; we must bring all moral commandments to the bar of our own conscience—we cannot throw ourselves into the arms of any one else and say, You settle our duty for us. But this is not a creed, but simply asserting our moral independence. It is not Agnosticism, but simply rational ethics—yes, such ethics as the church and the Bible itself presuppose as a natural possession of humanity. Jesus says, “Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?”\* which would be absurd if man can only learn the right from a revelation, Paul spoke of a law written in the hearts of men,† and Cardinal Newman referred to the voice of conscience as that “on which in truth the Church herself is built.”‡

I repeat, I have no interest at this time and place, we have no interest as a movement, in defending Agnosticism. But the Archbishop went on to say very early in his address that he wished to speak more particularly of

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\* *Luke*, xii, 57.

† *Epistle to the Romans*, ii, 15.

‡ *A Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, §5.

"Ethical Agnosticism"—and it was this that attracted my attention. In the simple, obvious sense of the phrase, we should be as much obliged to dissent from ethical agnosticism as any Catholic could be, for if ethics as well as theology is a matter about which we have no knowledge, then, indeed, the foundation of our own movement drops away, and we are as baseless as any one could charge the Church with being. But this is not the sense in which the Archbishop uses the phrase. He does not really consider Ethical Agnosticism, but theological agnosticism in its effects on ethics. He wishes to show the practical influence of theological agnosticism on the individual and on society—and he thinks the influence is very bad. Now, when Agnosticism, or any doctrine more or less prevalent, is viewed in this light, it surely comes within our province to consider it. For us, the one supreme aim is lifting human life to higher levels. We want to enthrone the good, the right, the just, in the human heart and in human society. We want all the light we can get, not for its own sake, but to turn it to account—not to withdraw us from the world, but to make us better soldiers of duty in the world. Hence, if any doctrine is going to have a bad effect on these aspirations, if it is going to unnerve us or to dim our vision, we are bound to look into it; the abstract thinker may examine it simply on its merits; but we have in addition a very practical motive. In the same way, I may add, we have a perfect right to consider the positive ideas of God and the future that are more or less prevalent—*i. e.*, so far as they affect our notions of duty and our heart to do it.

Now, the Archbishop's statement of Agnosticism is



not altogether an unfair, and yet it is not exactly a sympathetic, one. He once in the course of a devout and beautiful tribute to Jesus says that “the agnostics of our day who ever knew him in the past, do at times irresistibly proclaim his praise.” “Who ever knew him in the past”—that is the vital matter. Now it is a very poor parallel to speak of a religious or philosophical doctrine and yet it is equally true that it is pretty hard to speak intelligently and worthily of a doctrine that has not in some measure been a part of our mental experience. And this is the limitation one feels in the Archbishop’s treatment of Agnosticism. He has not known it by experience. He looks at it from afar. He views it from inside the walls of the theological edifice in which he lives. He has not sallied out and, for a moment at least, made it his own. It is to him the latest form of unbelief—a part of the enemy which he needs must fight. But what is agnosticism? It is simply the view that there are things about which we do not know. We all recognize the difference between guessing, imagining or thinking about a thing and knowing it. Knowing it means that we have it before our eyes — or that we have such indubitable evidence of it that it is the same as if we had it before our eyes. The distinction, of course, belongs to a more or less reflecting, critical, age ; in the childhood of the race, just as in the childhood of an individual, the line is not clearly drawn between surmises, conjectures, hopes or fears, and, on the other hand, actual knowledge. Yet the apostle Paul recognizes the distinction when he says, “hope that is seen is not hope ; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?”\* In a similar way

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\* *Epistle to the Romans*, viii, 24.

he contrasts faith with sight.\* And a great modern poet uses language in the same way :

"We have but faith : we cannot know ;  
For knowledge is of things we see."†

In other words, the things we know are the things of which we have experimental evidence (aside, perhaps, from certain abstract principles of thought, which at the best, however, teach us nothing definite and concrete). But if so, the things of which we have no experimental evidence belong to the unknown. Of any assertion about them, we simply say, It may be true and it may not be, but so long as we have no experimental evidence, we cannot positively tell. And if they are things of which we cannot reasonably hope to have experimental evidence, we say that to all practical intents and purposes, they belong to the realm not only of the unknown, but of the unknowable.

Now this is what a certain school of thinkers say of the field of theology. As to what lies behind and beyond this visible world, as to what becomes of man after his death, they say speculations are speculations merely, they are not knowledge ; and they may add that, until new faculties are acquired by men, they cannot be knowledge ; that under present conditions they belong to the realm of the unknown and unknowable. If we could look behind nature and *see* the causes that are at work there, all would be different ; or if we could penetrate beyond the veil that hides the future from our vision, all would be different ; but as it is (unless we give credence

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\* 2 *Epistle to the Corinthians*, v, 7.

† Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.

to the spiritualists), all our thoughts (in these directions) are guesses, surmises, unverified and unverifiable—over them all, we have to write, "Not proven." Such, I say, is the position of the agnostic (in the customary theological or philosophical reference of the term). Archbishop Ryan states it correctly when he says it means, "I don't know and can't know," and distinguishes it from those other forms of unbelief, Atheism, Deism and Scepticism. But if he really entered into this point of view (whether he agreed with it or no, is another matter—I mean simply, if he appreciated it), he could hardly have cast about for causes for it as he did, when the real cause was so simple and so near at hand. He ascribes agnosticism to the same causes that have led to infidelity in all ages—the rebellion of passion against the restraints of religion, the rebellion of pride of intellect against the revelation made to man by the Almighty, and this as ostensibly justified by the disagreements among believers themselves.

But who, one is led to ask, are the leaders of modern agnosticism? Are they men ruled by passion and in rebellion against the restraints of religion? Does Prof. Huxley answer to this description? does Mr. Herbert Spencer? did the late Matthew Arnold? did George Eliot? Are (or were) they not, rather sober, serious men and women—indeed, exceptionally so? How like a child a great and good Bishop can be in face of this modern world of thought, which is perhaps still so new and strange to him! Persons of this type, proud of intellect and unwilling to submit themselves to facts (whether of a revelation or any other kind)? Why, what they want is facts, and I venture to say that making due

allowance for such stubbornness and prejudice as are our common frailty (and in respect to which Catholics are not so unlike other people), no class of persons would be more ready to yield to actual evidence of a revelation than those who honestly have that temper of mind which we call agnostic.

The Archbishop throws out the idea that "Agnosticism has endeavored to render itself respectable by an alliance with science." I pass over the slur involved in such a mode of speech—but the fact is, that agnosticism, as conceived by those who hold it, is simply the other side of science, and is itself begotten by scientific habits of thought. Science is the sum of what we know; but it inevitably carries with it the idea of an outlying realm of things about which we can only have conjecture and belief. Not till strictly scientific methods of procedure developed themselves could a distinct view like that of agnosticism arise. The Archbishop himself knows how to make use of scientific canons and tests, on occasion. He says with regard to the Darwinian theory, "What we object to is the forcing of unproved theories on us, as if they were scientific truths." Now, this is just what the Agnostic says of the theory of a personal Deity and a personal immortality: "What we object to is the forcing of these theories on us, as if they were scientific truths." The Archbishop says, "We will freely admit them as mere theories until proven or disproved." In a precisely similar way the Agnostic will admit the theory of a personal God and Immortality. The Agnostic does not repudiate, he simply acts in the same way the Bishop would have us act in relation to unsettled problems of natural history; and I may add that just as one who feels

as the Bishop does may none the less have his surmise or opinion as to the merits of the Darwinian theory, so may the Agnostic have his conjecture or his hope with regard to the deeper theological questions. Because one does not know, it does not follow necessarily that one shall not think ; some scientific men may not choose to, but that is a matter of temperament—most persons are impelled to speculate about the whence and whither of things, and we find an Agnostic like Matthew Arnold saying that it is quite natural that the spirit of man should entertain hopes and anticipations beyond what it actually knows and can verify.\* The only difference between thoughts of this kind and those that have sometimes ruled in the church is, that one is not dogmatic about them, does not say that one who does not believe them shall without doubt perish everlastingly, as the Athanasian Creed says of those who doubt its famous propositions, and does not proceed to proscribe or torture or burn anybody in this world, either, on their account.

But suppose the Agnostic position were true (I do not say that it is), that we do not *know* of another world and can have only pious opinion with regard to it, does it follow that we do not know anything of this world? Do we know nothing of humanity, of its history, of the conditions of its welfare? Has man learned nothing by experience of the things that help him and hurt him, of the things that make or mar the individual, or that build up or destroy communities and States? What are the moral traditions of the race embodied in the laws, institutions and literature that have come down to us but the result

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\* *Literature and Dogma*, p. 86. This was said with reference to the idea of immortality.

of the experience of mankind as to what courses of conduct it is safe and what dangerous to pursue? The things that make for the welfare, the general welfare, of man, it has been agreed to call good; the things that injure and weaken man, to call bad. We call it right to act in the one way, wrong to act in the other. Is there the slightest uncertainty about these things, because we do not know definitely about God and Immortality? Does it make any difference what our ideas about those questions are, as to certain things happening? Do not drunkenness and debauchery tend to cut short a man's life, whether we believe in a hereafter or not? Will not dishonesty, faithlessness to one's word, not to say robbing and killing, dissolve the bonds of a community, whether we believe in a God or not? Are facts in one realm affected by opinions in another? Why, then, can we not base an ethics on the facts of human life—and why might it not be the same for observing, thinking, right-minded, men, whatever their theological beliefs? Physics or chemistry or biology do not vary for the Theist and the Agnostic,—why need fundamental ethics—ethics, that is, so far as it aims to improve and perfect human life on the earth? The fact is, the great ethical laws are over us all, and are *really approved of* by all, however we may differ in religious belief.

Archbishop Ryan, as I understand him, does not contest this—he rather, as all the great theological writers do, admits man's knowledge of right and wrong, independently of a revelation. But his point is, how shall men be induced to do the right? What are the motives that must be brought into play? And he says the powerful motives are fear and hope and love, and that agnos-

ticism takes them away—and hence is so dangerous a thing. He uses "fear" in a technical sense, meaning fear of a God, who will punish a man if he does wrong; and it is upon this he dwells; hope and love he only mentions. But I sometimes ask myself, if there is real ground for fear, does that ground change simply because we no longer make confident assertions about a God who punishes? May not the grounds for fear be in what we know as well as in what we do not know? And when I think of morality as the law of *life*, when I realize to myself that disregard of the great moral commandments—whether to a large or a small extent—means corresponding harm to life, making it at least troubled, perhaps miserable, and sometimes cutting it short, then I think that more or less fear and trembling properly accompanies any wrong-doing, yes, may well be with us all at the thought of the possibility of our being betrayed into wrong-doing.

Is it not natural and inevitable that we should fear the results of sinning against the laws of health? Does it make any difference as to the warrant for our alarm, whether we think it is God who punishes us or not? If we are punished, is not that enough? And is not what we may call the social body sensitive, as well as the physical body? Do not causes produce their effects there, as here? Do we think taking an advantage of our neighbors does not count? Do we think crowding the weaker to the wall does not count? Do we think that selfishness and indifference to public duty does not count? Do we think our wealth and power will save us, regardless of how we got them? But a great historian, who has lately died, tells us that history itself is a voice sound-

ing across the centuries the laws of right and wrong ; that justice and truth alone endure and live ; that however long-lived injustice and falsehood may be, doomsday comes at last to them in French revolutions and other terrible ways.\* Long ago a Greek poet had declared there was

"No bulwark strong in wealth against destruction's doom,  
For one who in the pride of wantoness  
Spurns the great altar of the Right and Just."†

It is forever true that "he who soweth iniquity shall reap calamity," or, at least that some one will. Causes may take time to work out their effects, but they work them, and every infinitesimal cause tending in a certain direction—though it be only an unfair bargain you made yesterday, or a selfish thought as that you were not going to bestir yourself for the public good—counts and tells. It is for lack of imagination that we do not realize these things—and how much better, I sometimes think, to use imagination to picture and bring home to the souls of men what happens in this world than to be always occupying it with the affairs of another! It is for lack of imagination, it is because we do not make the distant near, it is because we do not see in one picture our deeds and all the issues of them, that there is so little fear and trembling in the world in doing base and mean and selfish things. For all of it, every bit of such conduct, means calamity to the world—yes, could we but read our souls as we see our bodies, calamity to our own souls. Does it make any difference who brings the calamity—God or nature or the neces-

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\* J. A. Froude.

† Æschylus, in *Agamemnon*, 374 ff.



sity of things? 'Tis enough, I should suppose, that the calamity comes.

And as fear may act, so may hope and love act in their simple, natural, human senses. The Archbishop speaks of suicides and of threatening anarchy. I confess I had only melancholy reflections as I read his words, particularly on suicide. He pictures a person friendless, homeless, desolate and alone—a child of sorrow wandering through the dark passes of this valley of tears. And his argument in substance is that the only thing that can keep such an one from taking himself out of this world is the fear that he will only come to a worse pass in another! Ah, why not ask, why are there these homeless, desolate persons? If we had a true society on earth, would there be such? Can we not, should we not, have an order of things in which no one could be left desolate and alone; in which men would help one another and sustain one another; in which there would be a place, a work and a need for everyone?

So with anarchy—not now in the scientific sense of that word, but in the popular sense, as a synonym for violence, as a social disease. The only thing that can keep it down, says the Archbishop, is the fear of God. But the fear of man can have some potency to restrain it, and yet the true way, is to find out its causes and cure it. The human mind is rare that loves disorder and riot for their own sake. Back of them ordinarily is the sense of wrong. The bottom cure for anarchy is to banish wrong, to put an end to misgovernment, to make organized society a palpable, living benefit—not to a few, but to all. Let a society become a true co-operative

brotherhood, and there will scarcely be a man, woman or child to lift a finger against it—unless it be those whose opportunities to satisfy their greed would not be so great as now and who might want to proceed to buy it out and run it for their private profit, as we hear that some greedy financiers are plotting to get hold of some of the municipal property of our own local community now.\* What we want, I venture to say to the Most Reverend Archbishop, is hope, in the simple old-fashioned sense of the word, hope for this world. What drives men and woman to suicide and anarchy is ordinarily despair. They are desperate—not from original sin, but because circumstances have made them so; they can't see any way out—for themselves and perhaps for their children. Give them a gospel of hope—show them, and more than that, show the world, how society might be arranged, so that for every willing soul there should be a place, an honorable place, a place becoming to the dignity of one who has a human nature within him, a place by honestly filling which he might get his living and have his share in the general blessings of civilization. But talk of heaven and hell will never satisfy men living on this earth, and it never should. You will find it hard after a while to make men believe in heaven, if you consent to their being made brutes of here. I have nothing against the hope of heaven, I rather in my own way share in it; but I do so, not because of my despair of life but because of my belief in the infinite possibilities of life, whether here or hereafter. The thing that makes heaven credible makes it possible to believe in a better society on earth, and if

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\* I refer to the rumors of a syndicate to buy out the municipal gas plant of Philadelphia.

you speak of poor despairing creatures as if there were nothing to do for them but to overawe them with authority, you make the skies black over your own head and put out the only light that beckons towards immortality. I said it on almost the first occasion I spoke on a free platform, and I say it again now, "Christendom has seen the unlimited development of the ideas of God and another world. What is now wanted is an unlimited development of the idea of the of duty in relation to this world."\* Social duty—that is the word of the future; it will be a bigger thing than all the charity and philanthropy the Church has practiced in the past, excellent as that was in its way; and hope, anticipation, expectation, represent the very spirit in which it will be accomplished.

And love? Yes, that will be the motor force of all. Love of good, love of God, if you will, love of all men as having in them the possibilities of the good, "partakers in the divine nature"—love taking us out of ourselves and making us work for the good, love making us feel another's failure or shame as if it were our own, love making us indignant over others' wrongs, love making us bold, strong, persistent, love making us think our lives well spent if we have contributed, however little, to the great consummation for which the heart of humanity sighs.

And so, friends, if your sympathies go with me, you will feel as I do, that we want a bigger thing than the Archbishop would give us. He would unite all Christians; we would unite all good men. He would say Agnostics

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\* A lecture on "After Free Religion, What?" before the 28th Congregational Society, Boston, 12 June, 1881, printed in *The Index*, 21 July, 1881.

may possibly be saved in another world, but they cannot belong to the fellowship of the faithful here; but we, not because we love agnosticism, but because we love goodness above every ism, would have a fellowship here in which all who have this love may stand on equal terms, whether Agnostics, theists or anything else. The Archbishop sighs for union; so do we, but we must have it on terms consistent with the intellectual self-respect of every man—we must have a sort of union from which the last stigma on honest belief is banished, in which he who believes in God and he who is overcome by perplexities when he turns his thoughts that way, he who regards Jesus as the Son of God, and he who simply honors him as among the first of the sons of men, he who looks for immortality, and he who does not, in which all who will do their duty, can sit down as brothers to one another because, more than all that could divide them, they have this to unite them, that they alike own the great laws of life, that they alike are filled with the love of human kind, that they alike are ready to work and to sacrifice and to deny themselves to bring in a better day. I take encouragement from much that the Archbishop said, but I ask for more.

“ I like a church ; I like a cowl ;  
 I love a prophet of the soul ;  
 And on my heart monastic aisles  
 Fall like sweet strains, or pensive smiles ;  
 Yet not for all his faith can see,  
 Would I that cowlèd churchman be.\*”

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\* Emerson, "The Problem."

## CONSOLATIONS.

BY FELIX ADLER.

GRIEF is a spiritual malady. Is it curable? Doubtless in many cases it is. Little children deprived of their parents before they are old enough to realize what they have lost quickly outgrow their temporary sorrow. Frivolous and selfish persons may lose their nearest, and yet before very long, they will make shift to accommodate themselves to new companions and new conditions; either because they lack emotional depth, or because their egotism leads them to banish such recollections as interfere with their comfort.

I have heard care-takers of the insane say that it is remarkable how many of those unfortunate persons remain uncared for and unvisited by their friends. Care-takers of cemeteries, no doubt, could tell a similar story. Husbands do not always mourn wives, nor wives husbands, nor children parents, nor friends those whom they have called friends. It would be unduly to idealize actual conditions to suppose that love is always strong where one would expect it to be so. At the same time, in many cases grief is real, only too real!

I have called sorrow a disease. It has all the symptoms of one. It lowers vitality. It sickens the appetite, not only for the pleasures, but often also for the business of life. It produces a profound dejection. It fills the mind with gloom. Is this disease curable? I

believe that it is curable always ; that, even in the case of the most extreme and terrible bereavement, we can regain our spiritual health and peace. But, of course, we must, to begin with, realize that grief is not a normal condition to be in. We must recognize that it is not normal that a man's spirit should be permanently darkened, no matter what he has lost, or that he should go through life bowed like a reed ; that it is all wrong,— this blackness which is connected with death — these funeral palls, these sable garments and the inward gloom corresponding to such externals. Death and the dead should be associated with what is brightest and purest, with the light and with lilies, with the glory of sunsets, with the dawn of summer mornings, with the fragrance of spring, with the laughter of children. But, it must also be admitted that not those who are in the primary stage, but only those who are far advanced on the road of moral development can attain to this high view. Consolation is a spiritual medicine, intended to cure us of a spiritual malady. It may also be likened to a weapon placed at our disposal to combat sorrow. Let us, then, review the arsenal of consolations, and examine the weapons stored therein to determine in how far for us they are available.

It is said that when Alexander the Great, on his fabulous journey to the far East, reached the Gate of Paradise, a skull was thrown to him over the wall with the direction, "Weigh this in the balance." Thereupon he caused silver and gold to be brought and placed in one scale, and the skull in the other. But the skull outweighed the precious metals. He next commanded that all the treasure, of which the camp was full, should be

brought and weighed against this skull. But the skull outweighed all the treasure. Then one of the wise men among his counsellors said: "Let the gold be removed, and let a handful of earth be placed in its stead." And no sooner was this done, than the scale in which the skull had been placed dipped, and the other rose. The skull in this story is the emblem of man. So long as man lives his craving for earthly goods is insatiable. The more gold he has the more he seeks. Heap treasures mountain high, and his desires will still mount higher. But, at the last, a handful of earth shall subdue him, and a few feet of sod are sufficient for him whom a world could not content. The story was intended as a commentary on the ambitions of Alexander the Great. He, too, the proud conqueror, succumbed to Death at last. Death is the universal doom from which no one is exempt. The same idea is contained in a well-known story of the Buddha. One day there came to the Buddha a woman who had lost her only child. She was frantic with grief, and said to him: "Oh, Buddha, I have heard that thou art a great prophet. Restore my child to life!" "I will do as you have bidden," he answered, "if you will bring me a mustard seed from a house into which death has never entered." And she took up her dead child,—for she refused to be parted from it,—and went on a long and weary pilgrimage seeking the house into which death had never entered. But she found it not. And, after a time, the meaning of the prophet's words dawned upon her, and she buried her child and resigned herself to her lot. This, then, is the thought. The doom is an universal one. Is it reasonable for you to claim exemption? It is true that

some are far happier than you are, being permitted to retain their loved ones during the greater part of their earthly journey. But others are far more miserable. Wretched as your state may be—I care not how wretched—you will, on looking around you, always find some who are more wretched still. The blows of adversity fall where they must. The decrees of destiny are irresistible. You must yield to the Inevitable. “Hope and fear,” says Spinoza, “are founded on the belief that things might have turned out otherwise. As soon as we realize that things must turn out as they have, we are freed from both hope and fear.” And there is an element of truth in this. The thought of the inevitable does produce a pacifying effect upon our feelings which may be compared to a calm at sea. Ah, but it is a leaden calm, like that which mariners fear who sail under the tropics. The thought of the inevitable induces torpor, rather than peace. Our faculties are benumbed by it. Our desires are repressed. Since the doom is universal, we feel that we have no right to ask that an exception should be made in our favor. But the question cannot help suggesting itself: “Why, then, should there be this universal doom of woe?” If any one tells me that all men suffer, and that I have no right to complain, I will make the cause of the human race my own, and ask: “Why, then, should all suffer?” A thousand times worse that all should suffer! If only a few were called upon to pass through this fearful ordeal it could be borne more easily. “Der Menschheit ganzer Jammer fasst mich an.” Submission to affliction on the ground that it is the universal lot, therefore, is not, at bottom, a satisfactory means of consolation.



Sympathy is a second form of consolation. And any one who has passed through the searching experience of bereavement knows how much genuine sympathy is worth. We had not supposed that there is so much kindness in the world. Persons with whom our relations had been quite formal and distant, and whom we had believed indifferent to us, display an interest that astonishes us. There is in grief that touch of Nature that, for the moment, makes the whole world kin. Perhaps what we prize most in these demonstrations is not so much the sympathy manifested with our pain as the honor shown to our dead. Paradoxical as it may seem, there is hardly anything so comforting to recent mourners as to assure them that they have the greatest possible cause to mourn. We have the most intense desire to assure ourselves and to be assured that the life just ended was very precious. All its defects shall be obliterated ; all its virtues magnified, if possible, or, at least, set forth in their full splendor. The more we are told that our friend will be missed, the more we are soothed ; the greater the gap he leaves behind, the better we are satisfied. It is pathetic to see how, even in the case of one of whom little that is praiseworthy can conscientiously be said, the survivors strain themselves to put the best possible construction on his career, and bring to the obsequies such poor shreds of goodness as they have been able to gather to cover therewith the nakedness of death. It is an assuagement of sorrow to know that the life that has ended was a valuable life. The greater its value, the more we are comforted. And the chief service which the sympathy of friends renders us, I repeat, is not so much that they share our pain, as

that they testify by their appreciation to the value of our dead. Therefore, sympathy is a real consolation. But, alas, it is usually short-lived. It pours in like a tide. Often it is too abundant; it is more than we can endure. But, after a short period, it ebbs away. A few faithful ones remain at our side, though even these are largely occupied with their own affairs. We cannot wish it otherwise; we cannot expect the world to stop in its course for our sake. We cannot desire that the joy of those who have reason to be joyous should be darkened on our account. It is all as it should be. But then come the solitary seasons, the hours, whether by day, or in the stillness of the night, when we are left to ourselves with only grief for our companion. De Quincy has drawn a weird picture, which you may remember, of three spirits whom he calls the Three Ladies of Sorrow. The first is the Mother of Tears; the second the Mother of Sighs. But the third is the most awful of them all. He calls her *Mater Tenebrarum*, the Lady of Darkness, the Mother of Lunacies, and the Suggestress of Suicides. With these three—with one or the other, or all of them, many of us have wrestled in the silent hours after the stream of sympathy has ebbed away. With them we must come to terms. What means have we for doing so?

Now this brings me to the third form of consolation. It is said that time heals, and certain it is that time does dull the poignancy of pain. But, in reality, time merely blunts the feelings. It does not heal. The force of habit enables us, after a while, to fit ourselves to the new conditions of our life, since we must,—and we live on, after the glory has departed. But just this is, to my

mind, the saddest part of the story of affliction, namely, that it has a distinctly deteriorating effect upon many persons, impoverishing their hearts, and lowering the tone of their thoughts and feelings. Emerson says :

“ The eager Fate which carried thee  
Took the largest part of me ! ”

How many have felt with him that some loss which they have sustained has taken away the largest part of them, and that they are condemned to lead poorer lives ever after. This should not be, but, can it be prevented ?

“ For this losing is true dying ;  
This is lordly man's down-lying ;  
This his slow, but sure declining ;  
Star by star his world resigning. ”

The poet compares the consequences of sorrow to the quenching of the stars in our inner firmament. One by one, they are extinguished, and leave us in darkness, or, what is worse, leave us contented with the common light of day, with a common-place, empty, meaningless existence. One who has long enjoyed the freedom of the breezy hills, and is suddenly shut up in a dungeon may, after a time, cease to pine for liberty, and may adapt himself to the close quarters, the clanking chain, the bare walls. One who, like the Prodigal Son in the Parable, has sat at princely banquets, may, after a time, be content to feed on husks. And one who has loved and lost may sink so far—we see it every day—as to lead an almost purely vegetable existence. Physical comfort, trivial employments, the gossip of the newspapers, may come to be matters of importance to him. And thus affliction may, and often does have for its result—degen-

eration. For it is in the nature of love that the noble and the good and the wise—if we are so blessed as to have them for our companions—impart to us of their excellence, maintain us on their level, and make it natural for us to breathe the air which they breathe. Yes, they cause the wings of our spirit to grow and give us confidence in our own untested powers of flight. They inspire in us a sense of our own worth. Seeing that they believe in us, we cannot be worthless. Seeing that they have chosen us, we cannot be wholly undeserving. But when the sustaining arms of love are taken away, then, in many cases, follows an abrupt descent; loss of faith in one's self, loss of power to dwell in the higher regions of thought, loss of interest in the higher aims which it had once seemed natural to pursue. Time heals, you say. Time, I say, in these cases, merely accustoms the poor shriveled soul to its shriveled condition; accustoms him who had dwelt in the Royal Courts of Love to lead a beggar's life, accustoms the prisoner of the common-place to feel at home in the common-place. Time, therefore, in such cases, does not bring consolation, but merely produces habituation. Affliction often stunts and cripples people; reduces their mental and moral stature; diminishes their lustre; makes them poorer specimens of humanity in every way. This is undoubtedly so in many cases. Must it be so, or can it be prevented?

You find yourself face to face with one who refuses to be comforted. You tell him that the decrees of destiny are inevitable. The reply is, "They are not therefore the less cruel." You point to the sympathy of the world. The reply is, "That is of brief duration, and,

at best, a palliative, not a cure." You speak of the soothing influence of time. The answer is, "I shudder when I think of all the vacant years that still lie before me. I wish that the end might come now." Is there nothing more to be said from the purely human point of view, without having recourse to ulterior, transcendental hopes?

The Day of Atonement, the chief Holy Day of the Hebrew Calendar, has come to be a kind of All Soul's Day. It is set apart for the confession of sins, and consecrated to the memory of the dead. In the Old Testament we read: "You shall number seven times seven years, and you shall cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the Day of Atonement throughout all your land; and you shall hallow the year and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof, and you shall return every one unto his own." There is no connection in the original between the proclamation of the jubilee and the memory of the dead, but we may well bring the two thoughts together. The jubilee of mankind, when every one shall return to his own; when wrong shall cease, and true liberty shall everywhere prevail, has not yet come. We are under obligation to aid in bringing it nearer. We are soldiers in the Army of Humanity. The trumpet that sounds on the day of affliction is the war trumpet calling us to the fight. We are not excused. We may be wounded and crippled, but we must still fight on. The soldier who has been wounded in battle is carried to the hospital. But, if he be truly devoted to his cause, he grows impatient of the weeks that keep him prostrate. He longs for the time when he may return to the field of action.

So must we return to take part in the world's struggle. Duty prompts us to do so. The sense of duty is the best tonic in times of sorrow. Action is the best cure for suffering.

Even if we can do no more, after having sustained a great loss, than to attend promptly and diligently to our ordinary business, there is some help in that. We are not free to disregard the interests of those who still depend on us. We are in duty bound to provide for them. And, if there are none that directly depend upon us, there is the great multitude of the poor whose cry goes up day and night; the orphans, to whom we can take the place of parents; the friendless, to whom we can be friends. It is not only wrong for us to sit down inactive, merely nursing our grief; it is contrary to our best interest to do so. They say that it is a blessed relief, in hours of affliction, to be able to shed tears. As Tennyson puts it: "She must weep, or she will die." But it is a still greater relief to be able to dry the tears of others, and thus to forget self in unselfish thoughts. We must keep moving in times of affliction. The effect of sorrow is like that of intense cold. It is said that on the retreat from Moscow, thousands of Napoleon's soldiers perished because, overcome by great fatigue, they allowed themselves a moment's rest by the roadside, a moment's sleep. From that sleep they never awoke. Sorrow is like the bitter cold of the Russian winter. If you give way to it; if you allow yourself to sink into inactivity, you are lost. You must keep on marching. But, of course, it is easier to keep on marching if we know that it is not a disastrous retreat and flight in which we are taking part; that we are marching

not to defeat, but to victory. And the testimony of our moral nature kindles in us the hope that such will indeed be the outcome of the great conflict in which humanity is engaged.

Again, there is the thought, which is helpful to dwell upon, that affliction imposes larger duties, duties more difficult than any of which we were cognizant before. It is precisely the difficulty of the task thus laid upon us that elicits all our latent strength. As the popular saying is, we never know what we can bear until we have to bear it; we never know what we can do until we have to do it. And thus affliction contributes very wonderfully to our moral growth, and makes us wiser and nobler, if sadder, beings. One may refuse to undergo so painful a transformation. But life is a school, a discipline. Either we profit by the discipline of affliction, and are advanced into a higher class, or we fail to profit by it and sink lower. Thus, for instance, it is very hard for the mother, when the father of a family has been taken, to struggle alone with the task of supporting, or of rightly educating her children, without her husband's aid and counsel. The larger duty which affliction imposes upon her is that she shall be both mother and father to her offspring. But there is a mighty, tonic influence in the thought that she ought to take upon herself this double duty, and a supreme satisfaction in the consciousness of having even approximately discharged it. And the same is true whenever any of the dear and holy ties have been prematurely ruptured. They said in the olden times, "When a brother dies it is the surviving brother's duty to raise up offspring for him, that his name may not perish from the

earth." Much more is it for us to fulfill for the departed those obligations which they themselves are no longer able to fulfill, to round out their broken lives, to discharge their duties for them! Such a motive is a source of genuine consolation.

And, of course, in acting in this manner, the memory of the dead is of great assistance to us. We see their faces ever before us. We think of them as transfigured—all their little weaknesses blotted out; their virtues only radiant. We question them: Would they sanction such a course of action as we are about to pursue? Is it in accordance with their spirit that we are acting? If we can believe so, we are sustained and strengthened. Would they nod in approbation, or turn away in pain? Their approbation or disapprobation becomes our standard. I think we make too little of the communion with the departed. It is possible to maintain it without the least trace of mysticism. We should dwell in thought with them more than we habitually do. In the story of "Peter Ibbetsen" the author speaks of one who had the art of what he calls "dreaming true"—that is, he would lie down in a certain position, and apparently fall asleep. But, while in this condition, he would travel far away, revisiting the home of his childhood, and living over again experiences which, in his ordinary moments, he would not have been able even to recall. We can all, to a certain extent, practice the art of "dreaming true." The brain is like a sensitive photographic plate, bearing innumerable traces upon it, which seem obliterated, but are not. Our life of yesterday is fresh in our memory. Our life of twenty or thirty years ago is for the most part forgotten. It seems to have vanished,



but it has not. The record of it is faithfully kept. We can revive this record if we will. We can restore these half-obliterated traces to new distinctness—not entirely, but to a far greater extent than is commonly supposed. We can, in this way, live over again the life that we lived in common with our friends. We can see anew, with the mind's eye, the scenes in which they figured at important moments. We can see again the very expression of their countenances, and hear, as it were, the very accents of their voices. We can feel anew the influence of their personality almost as if they were present. Reading old letters, if we have preserved them, will greatly assist us in this; or reading the writings of the dead, if they have left any behind. But, even without such aids, we can, by a sheer effort, recover many of the treasures of memory which now seem lost. We all live too much in the present. Without encouraging morbid sentiment, or a brooding tendency, it would be well to give more attention to the art of recalling the past.

But, after all, you will say the hall of memory is shadow-haunted. In our communings with those who have left us we are not dealing with real personages. Are, then, the dead become mere shadows? Or, shall we now take courage to essay a higher flight, and think of the possibility, the hope of immortality? Let us pause for a moment, at this point, to consider how the old religions have consoled their followers. "I heard a voice from heaven, saying: From henceforth blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." These words we read in Revelation, as quoted in the touching burial service of the Episcopal Church. And St. Paul says: "For now

is Christ risen, the first fruits of them that slept," etc. Christianity comforts its followers by means of the precedent of Jesus ; just as he attained to a blessed immortality, so can others, following in his footsteps. And how does ancient, venerable Judaism console its followers? In a very remarkable way, difficult, at first, to understand: The Jewish mourner's prayer, the *Kadish*, as it is called, is a prayer of sanctification. It seems to ignore the private sorrows of the bereaved, and that, too, in a prayer intended especially for their use. It begins with the words: "Magnified and sanctified be the mighty name of God, in the world he has created. Blessed, and glorified, and exalted, and lifted high, above all praise that human lips can frame, be He, the Holy One!" The great emphasis is laid upon the excellence of the Infinite God, and only in a secondary way is introduced the prospect of the millennial felicity in which the dead are to participate. Both Jewish and Christian thought are valuable. May they not be combined in a larger synthesis! Ethics, taken apart from religion, offers us, in its cup of consolation, the tonic of duty. Ethics appeals chiefly to the will. A religion founded on ethics—if we are to take the step forward to it—like all religions, will appeal chiefly to the feelings. Nor, will it restrict itself to this earthly life. It will look beyond, and fix its attention on a transcendental hope. What basis is there for such a hope?

I now return, at the end of my present course of lectures, to that thought which has been the key-note of the entire series. Nature and man are the two terms that together make up the whole context of human experience. But man alone is the revealer of the divine.

Into his heart we must look for glimpses of a world higher than that of the senses. The life of humanity is the bible, in which alone we can find hints, revelations, of a supreme holiness. Nature displays power, order, beauty, but not goodness. A conception of the Infinite, embracing all attributes save goodness, would never satisfy. Goodness is revealed only in the human soul. Search far and wide throughout nature, and you will not find it. The sea knows nothing of it, and the winds know nothing of it, and the stars know nothing of it. There is no trace of goodness in the waves of the sea, and no waft of goodness in the blast of the wind, and no glint of goodness in the ray of the stars. The heart of man is the hearth where goodness glows. If the infinite cause is to be interpreted by its effects, it is the goodness which appears in man that alone warrants us in attributing goodness to the cause of man.

The religion of humanity is not a religion which makes humanity the object of its worship. It is not characterized merely by the circumstance that it pursues humanitarian ends with a religious ardor and passion. The religion of humanity, as I understand it, justifies its name by the circumstance that it regards primarily, not nature, but humanity, as the vehicle of revelation; that to its good men and good women are the revealers of a goodness deeper than their own—of an infinite goodness behind them. Are not the noble and the wise invested with a new dignity by this manner of looking at them, since they take the place to us of seers and witnesses!

I pointed out a year ago that the belief in immortality flamed up with unprecedented fervor in the world at two

particular epochs ; the one just after the death of Socrates among the Greeks ; the other just after the death of Jesus in Palestine. And I tried to show particularly in regard to the latter that it was not his death and resurrection so much as his life which convinced men of his immortality ; since it seemed impossible to believe that such a life as his could wholly perish ; that such high gifts could be dissipated like an idle wind.

And the same effect is produced when we consider, not Socrates nor Jesus, but those good men and women whom we ourselves have had the privilege of knowing. The friend of my bosom, whom I have known and loved, is, in a sense, worth more to me than even the greatest characters of the past, because he is nearer to me. I look upon him with a certain awe and wonder. Such qualities of heart and mind, then, this world is capable of bringing forth ! A world cannot be bad which is capable of achieving such a result. Suddenly, a fatal disease overtakes him. He suffers for a few weeks. Medical science exhausts its resources in the vain hope of saving him. But he declines visibly day by day. When the end comes he is still in possession of all his faculties. Words of gentlest counsel, tenderest messages, fall from his lips. Never did he seem wiser, greater, than just at that moment. Then the machine comes to a stop. There remains with us nothing but a waxen form, soon to fall into dust. Can this be all ? Can that high and aspiring spirit have been utterly annihilated ? Can it be that nothing remains of that noble life ? It is impossible to believe. You look for the proofs of immortality in the wrong place. You search in laboratories ; you pore, perhaps, over ancient books hoping to gain

enlightenment. You look in the wrong place. Look into the faces of those you love best; of those who are the best you know, and there, if anywhere, you will find the evidence you seek.

Of course, we have not the least idea of what any other existence except the present may be like. Even Dante, boldest of travellers, who compassed the circles of Hell, and climbed the steep ridge of Purgatory, and rose from sphere to sphere, Beatrice sustaining him, to the highest heavens,—is cautious in the language he uses when he speaks of the state of the blessed. Thus, for instance, when he tells us that in the third heaven, he met St. Thomas, he does not say that he met the spirit of St. Thomas, as if he were speaking of a disembodied ghost; but the word he uses is “the life of St. Thomas.” The “life”—that is the word to use. There is a life underlying our life, which is imperishable, though we know not the how or where of its continuance. The light shines through a prism, and beautiful to the eye are its rays as they pass. The prism is broken, but the light remains. So the life of life shines resplendent from the earthly forms of our friends. The form is shattered, but “the life” remains.

With the Christian, then, we may fortify our faith in immortality by the excellent lives that have been lived, not only the life of Jesus, but the lives of all the good and true, and especially of those whom we have known most intimately. And with the Hebrew, we may lift up our voice to assert the essential holiness of the Infinite, precisely at the moment when it seems hardest to do so; when experience seems to point most pitilessly the other way. For, when our friends are taken from us, then the

world seems dark, and we are tempted to say that a world in which such things can happen ; in which the good, and the noble, and the true perish before their time, must be an evil world,—a meaningless chaos. But if then we consider that these same beings, so lovely and so lovable, so great and so noble, have emerged out of this world ; that they are the product of this universe, then, if we judge the cause by its effects, we cannot say that the world is evil. But we will say, on the contrary, that, at its core, it is cognate to what in us is best and truest.

The great mistake we make is that we do not look upon our friends in the right way while they are still alive and present with us. We cannot think of them rightly when they are gone, if we do not think of them rightly while they are still living. Often we regard them as if they were our property. We believe that they exist for the sake of our happiness, though we admit that we also exist for the sake of theirs. But happiness is an ambiguous term which easily becomes misleading. We should look upon our beloved with more of awe. Their true ministry is to be for us Revealers of the Divine, to teach us to estimate rightly the things that are worth trying for and the things that are not, to help us to become equal to the standard of our best performance, and to grow into our own true selves. And the world is not dark when they have departed, because what they have revealed remains. Their influence remains. The light of their countenance still shines upon us. And to walk always in that light, to live in the spirit of the holy dead—worthy of them—is the supreme consolation.

## WORSHIP IN THE SPIRIT.

BY W. L. SHELDON.

WHAT I have in mind is the saying, which, as we are told, was uttered by Jesus to "the Woman at the Well."

"Believe me ; God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

It strikes me that more human experience has been crystalized in this one saying than in any other single utterance in the whole realm of religious literature. I speak of it as "human experience." Unquestionably it must have come at first from the lips of one man. But unless mankind had been slowly developing up to the point of realizing such a truth, a thought of this kind could not have won acceptance. It had to be, as it were, the discovery of one man and of humanity at the same time.

The claim is made that this teaching actually came into the world by means of the philosophers of Greece. But the point is of little consequence. Why should it matter whether such a thought really came from the lips of Jesus or not? A discussion over that issue would imply that we did not appreciate the import of the very idea we were talking about. We should be estimating the value of a truth by the mere incidents connected with its discovery.

In so far as we are personally concerned in the worth of this teaching, what significance is there in the endless discussion which has been going on during the last hun-

dred years as to the authenticity of the several books of Sacred Scripture? We may be interested in settling these questions purely as matters of history. But the ethical weight of the teaching is just the same, whether it came from one individual or whether it was the discovery of all human society. Truth is truth. A fact is never any more or less a fact, no matter who first expresses or discovers it. History is a record of the way men have been influenced by truths, rather than of the method by which the truths have been discovered.

We know that this teaching belonged to the great movement or tendency inaugurated by Jesus. What more can we ask? We may be as little able to determine the very words he used as to revive the sounds of his voice or discover the features of his face. A great occurrence took place in the world of religious thought at that epoch, and then civilization took a new start. Christendom has accepted Jesus as its ideal type, because of the life and teachings associated with his name. The effect of the past influence of such an ideal type of character would not be altered, whatever might be learned about the actual life of the man who is supposed to have exemplified it in himself. It is much easier to trace the course of an influence down through history than to get at the precise origin of that influence.

This central thought—worship in the spirit—has been doing its work independent of the historic basis of Christianity. Its value is unquestioned. But its effect as yet has only been partially realized. The revolution which began eighteen or nineteen centuries ago is not yet completed. It will not come to an end until this one teaching has secured universal acceptance and estab-



lished itself as the basis of all religion. It was the message of universality. It proclaimed one human race, one perfect ideal, one heart, one universe, one power behind the universe. It was the most epoch-making discovery, so far as I know, since the appearance of the human race on the earth.

It had been uttered in some aspect or another, again and again, by other teachers. It was voiced in the music of the Psalmist ; it was suggested in the teaching of the Prophets ; it was surely a conviction of Plato. It has reappeared again and again, sometimes in the form of poetry, and then, on the other hand, in concise, definite prose. Each occasion, when we meet with it in new form, we are startled by it. Emerson, for instance, once said : " God builds his temples in the heart, on the ruins of churches and religions." Many a person has been shocked by that assertion. But it is almost identically the same as the teaching attributed to Jesus centuries ago.

Human society is obliged to experience these shocks. It is always having local upheavals. They belong to the one great revolution which has not completed itself. Such experiences were true of Judaism and of the children of Judea. They have been true again and again of Christianity, or of the sects of Christianity. A special teaching, after it has endured for a time in one form of language, becomes either so worn away or crusted over by everyday usage, as nearly to lose all significance. Then it is expressed once more in a new form of language. People are alarmed at its revolutionary tone. But by and by they come to recognize its identity with earlier teachings.

Every new age is obliged to begin with work of this kind. It must recast the old thoughts; it must put them into a new mould. We are driven to tear away the exterior crust which covers over the spirit of a great truth. Every quickening of the world into new life, new energy, new ambition, new enthusiasm, has come by the same process of striving to get back to the spirit. We seek to penetrate the heart of the thing; and if we do so we must tear away the husk from the outside. When we make the effort, it always creates dismay. Yet it is the husk only which is decaying or which we throw away; what is at the center survives. This kind of work should be undertaken by the most reverential natures and not be left to the iconoclast.

Why should we be so anxious about the creed, the name, the form, or the institution? The creed is only a set of words. It may change as language changes. But the alteration of a creed or an institution, need not affect or destroy the ultimate truth which the institution or the creed is supposed to represent.

Truth does not change; fact is fact. The human soul may alter from age to age; but the universe cannot alter. It is the same universe to-day that it was two thousand years ago; it will be the same universe two thousand years hence. The central fact abides. There is only one law. We change; but there can be only one truth at the center.

The decline of the sects and creeds at the present time alarms many persons. They think that it means a decay in respect for religion itself. Men are anxious and disturbed over the absence of definite belief. But as a matter of fact this whole tendency indicates a new recognition of that old teaching about worship.

Christianity is not looked upon nowadays by the broader minds as a mere body of doctrines. Its disciples are falling back on that sublime type of the Man of Sorrows. It is the man himself and not the doctrines or creeds, which they are thinking about more and more. They are saying, he is Christianity; not the Apostles' creed, not the church, not the Sermon on the Mount, not the Gospels or the Bible, but the man himself,—that is, the type of character which he has represented. He is the *spirit* of Christianity. But when we are speaking of him, it is to be remembered that we are thinking of the story of his life and teachings *as they have been described to us*, irrespective of their authenticity as facts of history. We view him as such a type; and the type itself *is* a fact of history. Christianity is the story of the influence of that type of character.

We could all believe in such a Jesus. We could look upon him as our ideal, our type of perfect heroism. It is enough, so long as we have the type. But if religion were a question of belief as to the facts of nature or the facts of history, then there would be a multitude of religions so long as the human race survives on the earth. If, however, religion implies an instinctive worship of the human heart for an ideal type of the spirit, then, possibly, as the centuries go on, we shall draw nearer and nearer together, and there will be less and less of race or local religions.

For my part, I see it in this light. The whole subject, to my mind, is not affected in any shape or form by what we know or do not know of the bare facts of history. But it is tremendously affected by the kind of heroes and heroism we believe in.

It is the unconscious rather than the conscious worship which influences or refines human character. We choose our heroes or types of heroism by instinct, and then bow down and worship. That is the kind of worship which exerts a positive effect on human life.

We are influenced by men more than by their ideas ; by what they do more than by what they say ; by what they are more than by their appearance. Now and then a few persons are stirred by an idea, by a picture or an abstract ideal. But the majority of us are affected rather by living men and women. We take our cue from the best persons we know ; they give us the impulse to action. If Jesus does not reproduce himself in *them*, then he is not being an influence ; however much we may pronounce his name, read his sayings or talk over his life.

We raise the issue therefore : where is the Jesus of to-day ? Search the earth over and find him. Let us look upon his face, hear his voice, see his work and feel his personality. If he is there, then the Jesus of nineteen hundred years ago is exerting an influence. We want to see the dead past quicken the living present ; give us souls and not words, lives and not thoughts, characters and not pictures, men and not history. We do not seem to realize what the study of history is for, or what gives it a value.

The lives of men gone by are of worth to us, only in so far as what was best in them reproduces itself in ourselves. We worship the divine in the true sense only when we call it forth and develop it out of our own hearts. Men pay reverence to the man Jesus just to the extent that they develop a possible Jesus in themselves.

They can dream their lives away, stare at what is beautiful, look at ideals, contemplate what is divine, express devotion with rapturous hymn and prayer, and yet it may not be worship at all. There may be nothing divine about it. There may be no religion there. We hear that name upon people's lips; it comes to us in their songs; it echoes and re-echoes through the oratorios and symphonies, it is written on the walls of the churches and cathedrals. But the sublime surrender of one's self, the suppression of what is low and base, the calm devotion to duty, the giving up of one's private aims for the welfare of mankind,—we do not see much of this anywhere. Yet that is what I should call worship; that is what I would understand by devotion "in spirit and in truth." Men dwell on a name, they dispute about the facts of history, they discuss whether he said this or that, they analyze the conditions of the age; they do everything, but determine to reproduce the same type of character.

I never can help thinking how Jesus himself would be impressed if he were to come back and be alive on earth at the present time. Would he not look abroad in vain for the kind of spirit he wanted to have cultivated in the human race? How futile would be his search for the examples of lowliness, meekness, and purity of heart, such as he had desired to call forth everywhere. No doubt he would say: "They bear witness to me, they reproduce my teachings, they establish a worship of my name; but they seem to go on in just the same old worldly way as if I had never lived. Where, then, am I, and where is my influence? Where is the spirit I sought to kindle in the human heart? They address me by my name, but they have lost sight of the thing I strove for.

They have not reproduced me ; they have only kept my words. The weary and heavy laden have not come to me ; they have only adopted a form. There is no rest anywhere. And why ? Because they have not sought to awaken in themselves the spirit which alone could give them rest. Poor, weary humanity ! struggling against every conceivable kind of trouble, seeking repose and never getting it ; but never realizing that the rest and peace they long for are something which must come by what they create out of their own hearts ! They have not found peace because they worship my name, and do not produce the kind of life and the kind of spirit I sought to call forth in them."

We worship the divine by reproducing the divine. That is what it means to "worship in the spirit." The prayer, the act of devotion, the bended knees, the bowed head, the song of praise,—these are so many external aspects. They are not really acts of worship ; they are only so many different methods by which to call forth the spirit of worship. When the divine element is awakened, and men show it in their lives, then they are displaying a true spirit of worship. They can never actually realize the entire ideal they are struggling for ; but they can always be coming nearer to it.

There is a sigh for more true religion everywhere. Many are asking for more devotion. They decry the prevailing materialism ; they summon men to lift their hearts in worship toward the divine. But, they insist that they shall do it in a particular way ; they want to define the form or method, lay down the rules or laws by which it shall be done. They concentrate so much of their enthusiasm on the external aspect ! They are

endlessly debating over the form or creed. They persist in saying, "Believe in *my* God; take *my* Christ; read *my* Bible." Well, so long as they do this there cannot be more religion in the world any more than there can be more worship. Men will be simply reproducing the name and not the spirit. They will be looking backward nineteen hundred years; and no religion of to-day will appear.

We say: Give us the spirit of the thing and not the name, the life and not the form, the kernel and not the husk. If a man wants to teach and proclaim Jesus to-day, if he wants us to believe in Jesus, let him be a Jesus himself,—or at least, show in himself something of that divine type. No other method can win disciples for Jesus. If men try it by this method, they will soon lose all special interest in the mere name or form; they will not care so much about belief or discipleship; they will think of the coming man, the resurrection of the ideal in each human soul,—which lies dormant and dies away because we think so much of what is on the outside. We say, in all reverence, each new century or each new generation can have its own Christ. Every generation begins over again with the problem of religion and the problem of worship. It has to call forth its own church, its own state, its own types of ideal character; yes, its own Jesus. We study bygone humanity for the sake of coming humanity. We revere the dead for the sake of the living. It is the Jesus of to-day and of the future that we are concerned with.

It is a sign of weakness and decay, an indication of decline, when people become over-anxious about the mere name. When the religious element is losing its

influence over the people, then they begin to cry out for more form and ceremony, more songs and music, more utterance of words, more outward belief. They would write the name of God everywhere, and scroll the name of Jesus on the skies, on the rocks, on the hill-sides. But alas for their efforts! It is as if they were trying to maké the name immortal by writing it on the waters. We do not fix the influence of a man or of a divine personality on our hearts by seeing his name everywhere. Poor mistaken humanity, that cannot read the handwriting already in the skies and on the rocks and hillsides! They do not see that the rocks and hillsides *are* the handwriting; and so they want to improve on the divine methods with human inscriptions.

We should look underneath, search for the heart, penetrate to the center, care for what is within,—that is the sublime lesson of religion. As we grow in spirit we think less of names, less of forms and less of inscriptions; we may even lose the desire to have our own name immortal; the anxiety over our own personal future wanes more and more. The more we live within, the more we worship in the spirit, the more we are interested in the heart of things; the less we think about ourselves, the more we care simply that *our work* may survive,—that the *results* of our efforts may never die. As we grow in the spirit, it is the spirit of the work that we wish to have remain, and not its name or form. It is the divine in ourselves that we desire to see realized. We become supremely anxious that the power at the center shall be the power everywhere.

There has been a tendency to do with the idea of God just as with the idea or personality of Jesus. Men have



been afraid to look at it in the face lest it might change. As though the universe itself could change! As though, indeed, it were not there always before our eyes! Yet men cling to a local name or special form of institution—to this, that or the other notion of God, in fear lest the world by and by may come to have no God at all. Yet it has been the fearless men who have saved and rescued worship from permanent decline. If it had not been for such men as Copernicus, Gallileo, Kant and Darwin, the belief in deity might have died out altogether. They are the persons who have preserved it. They did this because they were so indifferent to mere form, or so careless about what was merely on the surface. They were so brave because of their abiding faith in what was on the inside.

Weak human nature has always been half inclined to struggle against knowledge. It liked to play on the surface, to see the universe as a vast multiplicity of things. It loved the ripples of the sunlight, the floating clouds, the fleeting colors. It liked to think of *them* as the world. But the poet, the philosopher, the scientist, the prophet,—they had been saying all the while “That is not the world. What you see with the eye will come and go; it is the fleeting and shadowy, beautiful to-day but gone to-morrow. If you want to get something to keep and possess as an eternal fact or an eternal beauty, then go down underneath; see how the ripples of sunlight, the floating clouds and the floating colors hold together and belong to one another. Get at the heart, find the center, discover the spirit: then you are secure; then you can worship in the spirit; then you will know where you are.”

What, then, is worship for? Shall you treat it as something to be used for a purpose? What can it do? Shall we harness it as we harness the steam, the wind, and the water? Shall we make it practical? Should we cultivate it in order to make men behave themselves? Should it be used as an instrument for the purpose of keeping order in society? Can it make men loyal and true? Shall it be regarded as a means for developing fellow-feeling or a sense of brotherhood? Shall we attach it to the state or the nation? Shall we tie it down to a materialistic purpose? Shall we encourage it as a great means for developing what we now call altruism?

If we do this we shall take the step which will surely tend to destroy worship in the spirit altogether. You do not stand in reverence of something which you can use as a practical means to something else. You are not going to be in awe of the mere instrument.

Worship does not create altruism. It is not the first source or cause of fellow-feeling or the sense of brotherhood. When you treat it in that way; when you would use it specifically for that purpose, you are reducing it once more to superstition or make-believe. It is treated as a mere dread or fear of something you can never understand. This is superstition, not reverence. Religious awe never actually began in that way. Altruism, fellow-feeling, sympathy, tenderness, came into the world long before the birth of a genuine worship. We could say that religion was the child of altruism, far more than that altruism was the child of religion. Until men come to have fellow-feeling and a sense of brotherhood, they could not have had a true sense of awe. Fellow-feeling

is not necessarily a late appearance in the world's history. The universality of it may be recent ; but it starts far back in the pre-historic ages.

Altruism and fellow-feeling are as original in human nature as in animal nature. Love, sympathy, tenderness, belong to our natural being. They are not artificially created, although they can be broadened and stimulated. Religious worship did not call them into being. If those feelings had not existed previously in human nature, you might almost say that religion itself would not have appeared. Buddha and Jesus might have talked about loving kindness and self-surrender ; but Christianity, Buddhism or Judaism would never have developed as religions if there had not been this pre-existing natural altruism in the human heart.

Men, then, do not need the sense of religious awe in order to behave themselves. Many a man leads a true, honest, upright life, who may be quite destitute of all sense of religion. Society can never be made to hang together, social order can never be preserved, human character can never be developed into a fixed integrity, unless that order or integrity is something natural and has developed as a natural feature of the human race. What a strange unmoral universe it would be, if the highest class of beings—the human race itself—could only be made to continue in order and fellowship through fear or dread ! What a strange anomaly it would be, if high conduct could only prevail because of an ultra- or supernatural sanction—that is, because of the dread of an Unknown ! What make-believes we would be ! What a parody all our religion would appear !

You tell me that altruism was born from the influence

of religion. I answer, no ; fellow-feeling, sympathy, the care for the welfare of all our human race, started in another way. It began in a fellowship of suffering. It is because we all endure pain and trial and difficulty, that we feel for one another, and that we feel with one another. It is the awful struggle for existence which makes fellow-feeling and fellowship. Far back in history, when it was one terrific struggle for the human race to keep alive, then it was that the feeling of brotherhood began. Shoulder to shoulder man had to move on in trial, pain and difficulty, in order to preserve existence. It was in such struggle that fellow-feeling or altruism had its origin.

If we were all happy, and the world went easy with us, if we could have had our way and none of us ever had to endure pain or struggle, there would be little or no fellowship in the world. We should each be a concentrated self. There would be no brotherhood or sense of brotherhood, no consciousness of our common humanity. If the millennium had been at the beginning of history, there never would have been any sense of brotherhood, there never would have been any altruism. Fellow-feeling starts from this sense of a common brotherhood of trouble, and so long as trial and difficulty continue, that sense will exist. It requires no religion to call it into being ; it requires no religious awe to sustain it. Worship has another purpose, another end. Unless our integrity of character can exist by itself, unless our social order can sustain itself through the natural conditions of the human heart, neither that integrity nor that social order will be worth preservation.

Religion is a rather late appearance in history. It

does not exist at the start. It grows up out of the earlier experiences of the race. As the human consciousness expands, as fellow-feeling develops, as the sense of brotherhood grows wider, the sense of awe and the disposition to "worship in the spirit" awaken.

What, then, is religion for? Why do we care for it? What makes us cultivate it? What leads us to give ourselves over to its influence?

I ask you, why do you care to go and visit the Alps? What makes you want to go to the mountains? Why are you ever desirous of looking upon beautiful or sublime scenery? What makes you care to go and listen to music, to the sonatas of Mozart or the symphonies of Beethoven? Why do you care to go and see rare and beautiful examples of architecture? What makes you sometimes want to go and look at beautiful sunsets? Is it because they will improve you? Is it because it will make you a better person just to listen to that music or look upon that scenery? No, it is the other way; it is because you have become a better person, that you care to look upon that scenery or listen to that music.

Yet answer me such queries and I will tell you what we care for in religion. Then we will explain what worship can do and be. It can accomplish what grand and noble music accomplishes; it can effect what sublime scenery can effect. It can make your whole inner self luminous with more light, more life. It is not something which can be given to you, unless there is a craving for it in yourself. You must grow up to the need of it, to the care for it, just as you grow up to the care for beautiful scenery or noble music. It will not make you necessarily better behaved; it may not

strengthen you in your integrity ; it will not necessarily preserve you any more completely in the paths of virtue. Religion does not necessarily supply the light of guidance for character. What it does, is along another line.

You ask, then, what religion is for? I remind you of your experience in the world. Practical life is not necessarily bad ; it does not of itself injure the character. But, on the other hand, it develops the coarser parts of one's nature. It makes us self-assertive, self-assured ; the harsher features of our nature are called forth by it, while the finer parts decay. Religion, in the aspect which I am sketching for you, keeps the finer parts from decay. It preserves them. It calls them forth into life.

The revolution I have been describing is still incomplete. Yet it may be, as time goes on, as the years roll by and the centuries fade away, that the human race will draw nearer and nearer together by more and more appreciating this sublime utterance. If that takes place ; if we come into closer fellowship, so as to have one religion and a uniform basis of worship, it will be because the world has at last caught the great significance of that lesson of earlier days. If that should come to pass, then the fundamental teaching of Jesus would have been realized. He would be incarnate again. His great thought would have become triumphant.

## THE FREEDOM OF ETHICAL FELLOWSHIP.

BY FELIX ADLER.

The spirit of the Ethical Societies is expressed in the title of the present paper. They offer to their members a moral fellowship or comradeship, the distinctive mark of which is freedom; the word being used primarily in the negative sense to indicate the absence of any limitations of the fellowship to the professors of a particular creed, or the adherence to a particular metaphysical system, while there is at the same time an underlying reference to the positive content of the term "freedom," inasmuch as it is the belief of those who established the Ethical Societies that the broader fellowship which they contemplate will prove favorable to the larger scope and exercise of the moral faculty itself.

Co-operation for moral ends is the aim of the Societies. There is, indeed, one department of morals in which the co-operation of persons widely differing in religious opinion and belief has, to a large extent, already been secured,—namely, in "good works." The abatement of the controversial spirit in theology and the softening of sectarian prejudices, in which our age rejoices, has brought about this happy result. It is, nowadays, no unusual thing to see Roman Catholics, Protestants of every denomination, Jews, and Freethinkers sit on the same charitable committees and unite in efforts to procure food for the indigent, to build hospitals for the sick, and, in what way soever, to relieve the needs of suffer-

ing humanity. Thus far the lesson of universal brotherhood has been impressed.

It is the aim of the Ethical Societies to extend the area of moral co-operation, so as to include a part, at least, of the inner moral life ; to unite men of diverse opinions and beliefs in the common endeavor to explore the field of duty ; to gain clearer perceptions of right and wrong ; to study with thoroughgoing zeal the practical problems of social, political, and individual ethics, and to embody the new insight in manners and institutions.

Now, in view of the received opinion, that a religious or philosophical doctrine of some kind is the only adequate basis for moral union, it will be necessary to explain and justify the position just announced in some detail. Let the reader put himself in the place of men who are sufficiently free from the influence of tradition to be willing to plan their lives anew ; who are as ready to question current doctrines, with a view of testing their real value, as the inhabitants of a distant star suddenly descending upon earth might be conceived to be ; and who, moreover, happen to be supremely interested in making the best of their lives, morally speaking. They are told that it is indispensable for them to adopt some form of faith if they would succeed in what they propose. But here two objections present themselves. First, no single form of faith is universally adopted, and there is even to be observed a tendency in modern society towards increased divergence in matters of belief. The sects are multiplying. On the other hand, there are good men in all the churches and outside the churches. No one will deny that there exist in the Catholic Church veritable saints,—that is, persons who



lead really saintly lives. No one will doubt that men of admirable character are to be found in every one of the greater or lesser sects into which the Protestant camp is divided. And no one who is not utterly blinded by prejudice will gainsay that persons enamored of the "beauty of holiness" are also to be found among Jews and Freethinkers. They are at present hindered by the circumvallations of sectarian opinion from coming into touch, from working with united force towards the ends which they all alike cherish. It is necessary, therefore, in order to speed on these ends, to disregard the conflicting creeds. If the charitable work of society is better done because the most able and most zealous persons, regardless of sectarian divisions, combine to do it (and no one questions that this is so), is it not reasonable to expect that greater moral progress in other directions, too, would be achieved if all who love the right would help each other in the study and practice of it, no matter how they may disagree with respect to its ultimate sanctions? Moreover, since, in any community, the number of persons seriously and deeply interested in the ends of moral progress and capable of promoting them is small, it seems all the more intolerable that these few should be kept apart and estranged from one another. They should, rather, be brought together. The best men in every community should be formed into a coalition, so that their efficiency, both singly and collectively, may be increased, and that they may present a united front to the moral evils by which the very life of society is threatened.

The same objection lies against the adoption of a philosophical formula, or set of formulas, as a basis of moral union. In the first place, there is no philosophical sys-

tem which commands universal assent. Is any one hair-brained enough to suppose that we can propose one? If not, then we must choose, and whichever way our choice may fall out we shall hinder moral co-operation. Shall we adopt the philosophy of Kant? of Hegel? of Schopenhauer? of Mill? of Spencer? of Comte? To select any one of these would be tantamount to ruling out the adherents of all the rest. But there are excellent men, men whose moral co-operation is worth having, in each of the schools. Why, then, exclude them? Why weaken the small band of earnest workers by drawing the line of demarcation along the narrow boundaries of any metaphysical theory? To adopt a philosophical formula as a basis of union would be to proclaim ourselves a philosophical sect; and a philosophical sect is the most contemptible of all sects, because the sectarian bias is most repugnant to the spirit of genuine philosophy. And there is yet another reason why it would be ill advised to build up a society—that is to say, an institution—upon opinion as a foundation. Not only can we never be absolutely sure that our religious and philosophical opinions or convictions are the highest expression of truth attainable in our day, since many of our contemporaries differ from us, but even if we possessed this certainty, it would still be a wrong and a hindrance to the further extension of truth, to raise above our opinions the superstructure of a social institution. For institutions in their nature are conservative; they dare not, without imperilling their stability, permit a too frequent inspection or alteration of their foundations. Let us be careful, then, how we embed opinions, which require constant modification, in such foundations. The

wealth and depth of spiritual insight would, no doubt, to-day be greater in the world if spiritual truths had been kept in the fluent state and had never been made the corner-stones of organized churches. It is a significant fact that the highest reaches of the religious life were ever attained in the early days of religion, before the visions of the seers had crystallized into hard and fast dogmas ; or during epochs of reformation, when the organized forms of creed and worship, till then prevalent, had been broken up and had not yet been replaced by others. Is it altogether a vain hope that the spiritual life may be kept plastic by leaving it hereafter to the free play of individual spontaneity ?

The history of thought enforces the same lesson with regard to philosophic opinion. Wherever institutions have been established on the basis of a prescribed philosophy, the energy of the mind in the pursuit of truth has flagged and stagnation set in. So long as Aristotle ruled the schools, the human mind sat like a caged bird within the bars of his system and seemed incapable of further flight. So long as a special kind of orthodox opinion was petted in every American college and anxiously protected against the intrusion of rival speculation, the American colleges hardly rose above the level of high-schools. It is the influence of the German universities that is now setting them free. The principle of the German university exactly expresses what we have in mind. The German university permits conflicting theories to vindicate their claims within its walls. It has witnessed during the present century the rise and fall of a number of metaphysical dynasties which have successively occupied the throne of philosophy in its midst. But the univer-

sity committed itself to none of these systems, conscious of a larger mission in the pursuit of ever widening and extending truth. And this is the secret of the commanding influence which it exerts throughout the civilized world to-day. The Ethical Society, so far as it is an institution devoted to the advancement of moral knowledge, adopts the principle of the German university. It is consecrated to the knowledge of the Good, but not to any special theory of the Good. All theories are welcome in so far as they can aid us the better to know, the more precisely to distinguish, right from wrong.

But an Ethical Society is an institution not for the advancement of ethical theory only, but also, and pre-eminently, for the improvement of ethical practice. And, it may be asked, how is this end to be attained, unless an agreement has previously been reached with respect to first principles? As some one has expressed it, "Men will not act as they ought unless they know why they ought." It is necessary to offer them a reason, or reasons, for moral conduct. Therefore, an Ethical Society without a philosophic or religious basis will necessarily lack coherence. Granted that it may subsist for a time on the enthusiasm of its leaders, yet it will crumble to pieces as soon as the compelling force of personal influence is withdrawn. Now this statement—that men will not act as they ought without a reason—is the fundamental objection which meets us at every turn. Is it well or ill founded? Certainly, an illiterate man of generous impulses may leap into the water to save the life of a drowning fellow-being without realizing the theoretical grounds on which rests the doctrine of the sanctity of life. A good son may perform his filial duties with-

out comprehending the moral theory of the parental and filial relations. A person who has received timely succor from another may display genuine gratitude towards his benefactor without being in the least capable of analyzing the somewhat subtle principle which underlies the duty of gratitude. And the humblest citizen may lay down his life for his country without understanding the ideal of the state. Men have thought logically before ever they were acquainted with the formal rules of logic ; even children use the syllogism without knowing so much as its name. Men admire what is beautiful and are displeased with what is ugly and deformed without being able to give an account of their preferences, much as men see without possessing a theory of vision and walk without understanding the mechanism of locomotion. There are certain predispositions, founded in the very constitution of the human mind, which impel and regulate its functions. These driving forces, coming from within, constrain our moral judgments. Conduct comes first ; the laws of conduct are winnowed from experience, are won by reflecting upon the lines of conduct which we have actually followed, and comparing them with those which we are impelled to approve of. I would not be understood as saying that this instinctive morality is the best or the highest. I am engaged in refuting the fallacy which lies in the assumption that men will not act unless they know the reason why.

It is highly important to discriminate between the inextinguishable desire on the part of intelligent man to live in harmony with himself,—that is, to bring his emotional and volitional nature into agreement with his reason, on the one hand, and the actual play of the

motive forces which govern him, on the other. It is one thing to say that, after men have acted for a long time and have reached the stage of reflective self-consciousness, they will try to borrow from the realm of ideas a sufficient reason for accepted rules of action, and another thing to maintain that men will not act at all unless they possess a reason. Nor is it possible to deny that, after these reasons have been formulated, they do modify human conduct, though to what extent they do so would be difficult to determine. Certain it is that men constantly act in obedience to motives, which are often worse, and sometimes fortunately better, than the doctrines they profess. Our reasoned-out scheme of ethics depends upon first principles,—that is, upon ideas with which we seek to bring our volitions into agreement. These ideas are imported from the region of speculation or of science. They are, necessarily, of various types, as represented, for instance, in the various systems of religion and philosophy, and there is a tendency towards ever-increasing variation. In regard to them, therefore,—that is, in regard to first principles,—it is hopeless to expect agreement. But the main leadings of the moral force within us, as exemplified in the preferences of civilized men, are, on the whole, in one direction. And we have only to observe these leadings to collect from them certain secondary principles, which will answer as a practical basis for moral union. The distinction between primary and secondary principles is vital to the Ethical Society. As an example of secondary or practical principles, I may mention the Golden Rule, which, though it by no means includes the whole of duty, covers a vital part of it. Consider the precept that we should

act towards others as we would have them act towards us. Plainly, it may be defended on various grounds. The egotistic hedonist may advise us so to act on grounds of enlightened self-interest. The universalistic hedonist may exhort us to carry out the rule in the interest of the general happiness. The evolutionist may recommend it on the ground that it is the indispensable condition of social order, and, therefore, of social progress. The Kantian may enforce it because it bears the test of universality and necessity. The follower of Schopenhauer may concur in teaching it on grounds of sympathy. Is it not evident that the simple rule itself is more certain, more safe, more secure, than any of the first principles from which it may be deduced? With respect to them, men have differed and will differ. With respect to the rule itself, there is practical unanimity. And it is the business of the ethical teacher to impress the rule; to lead men to obey it, by the contagion of his own earnestness and example; to extend the application of it to cases to which it has not yet been applied, and thus to refine the practice of it.

As Ethical Societies, we make the accepted norms of moral behavior our starting-point and the basis of our union. "Whilst the parties of men," says Locke, "cram their tenets down all men's throats whom they can get into their power, and will not let truth have fair play in the world, nor men the liberty to search after it, what improvement can be expected of this kind? What greater light can be hoped for in the moral sciences? The subject part of mankind, in most places, might instead thereof, with Egyptian bondage expect Egyptian darkness, were not the candle of the Lord set up by him-

self in men's minds, which it is impossible for the breath or power of man wholly to extinguish." It is to this "candle of the Lord set up in men's minds" that we look for illumination. It is in the light which it sheds that we would read the problems of conduct and teach others to read them. We appeal directly to the conscience. But, it may be said, by way of criticism, that the utterances of conscience in different ages and among different peoples are variable and often conflicting. To which we answer, that we appeal to the conscience of the present age and of the civilized portion of mankind. Again, it may be said that, even in civilized nations, there is no complete agreement in regard to the standard of right and wrong. To which we answer that we appeal not to the abnormal, but to the normal conscience, as represented by the educated, the intelligent, and the good. Once more it may be objected that the moral judgment, even of the good, is often warped and deflected by the influence of passion and self-interest. To which we reply, that different men are apt to be tempted on different sides of their nature; that their judgment is likely to be correct in cases where their own peculiar weaknesses do not come into play, and that, on the whole, these deflecting influences mutually neutralize each other. There remains as a residue a common deposit of moral truth, a common stock of moral judgments, which we may call the common conscience. It is upon this common conscience that we build. We seek to free the moral life from the embarrassments and entanglements in which it has been involved by the quibbles of the schools and the mutual antagonisms of the sects; to introduce into it an element of downrightness and practical earnestness; above all, to se-



cure to the modern world, in its struggle with manifold evil, the boon of moral unity despite intellectual diversity.

The contents of the common conscience we would clarify and classify, to the end that they may become the conscious possession of all classes. And in order to enrich and enlarge the conscience, the method we would follow is to begin with cases in which the moral judgment is already clear, the moral rule already accepted, and to show that the same rule, the same judgment, applies to other cases, which, because of their greater complexity, are less transparent to the mental eye. That cases may arise under this procedure which the simpler rules will not fit, and which will compel the expanding and recasting of our ethical maxims, is a result as much to be expected as desired. For it is in this way that the moral knowledge of the race will be advanced, and that moral progress will be secured without prejudice to moral unity. "Life," says a well-known writer, "is the great antiseptic. The untrammelled action of the moral forces of society sustains its integrity as surely as the unhindered flow of a river sustains the sweetness of its waters." And not only does the application of ethical maxims to life sustain the integrity of morality, but it tends, in the manner just described, to the extension of its territory, to the reclaiming of those vast waste-lands of human conduct, which still remain, at the present day, unmoralized. Indeed, the "midwifery" of action in bringing to birth the true principles of action may be put forward as the cardinal thought of the movement in which we are engaged.

And here it may be appropriate to introduce a few reflections on the relations of moral practice to ethical

theory and religious belief. To many it will appear that the logic of our position must lead us to underestimate the value of philosophical and religious doctrines in connection with morality, and that, having excluded these from our basis of fellowship, we shall inevitably drift into a crude empiricism. I may be permitted to say that precisely the opposite is at least our aim, and that among the objects we propose to ourselves none are dearer than the advancement of ethical theory and the upbuilding of religious conviction. Let me attempt to set this matter in a clearer light. Ethics is both a science and an art. As a science its business is to explain the facts of the moral life. In order, therefore, to improve it as a science, it is necessary before all to fix attention on the facts, to collect them, to bring them into view, especially the more recondite among them. It is necessary to effect in the treatment of the subject a revolution analogous to that which has taken place in the natural sciences,—namely, instead of beginning with theories and descending to facts, to begin with the facts and to test theories by their fitness to account for the facts. But the moral facts, unlike those with which the natural sciences deal, are not to be found in a stable, external order; they are discovered within ourselves, they are found in moral experience. Hence, the richer our moral experience is, the more likely we shall be to possess an adequate inductive basis for our moral generalizations. It is not from the solitary thinker who passes his days in the closet, apart from the varied life of men, not from the metaphysician who has spent the greater part of a lifetime in grappling with the fundamental conceptions of space and time, of matter and force, that we may expect the truest

ethical philosophy. Many of the moral systems which have had a certain currency in the world plainly suffer from one fatal defect,—the shallow moral life of their authors. The superstructure of reasoning which they have raised is true to the approved rules of mental architecture, but the premises on which the whole is founded are narrow and poor. Rather will he be fitted to advance ethics as a science who unites with the discipline of the trained thinker a profound practical insight into the various moral relations, such as is gained only by experience. And, on the other hand, since the spread of right ethical theories depends quite as much on the public which controls as on the author who propounds them, it is equally important that the general public shall have the facts of the moral life placed within their reach. And this again can only be accomplished by leading them into the ways of moral experience. Now, the Ethical Society sets men doing ; it insists on moral action. It thus tends to uncover the moral facts, to bring into view the deeper facts previously overlooked. And every addition to the fund of facts is in the nature of a provocative to the thinker, calling upon him to modify, purify and enlarge his theoretical conceptions.

And again, ethics is an art. As such its office is to offer suggestions for the practical improvement of conduct. But will these suggestions be forthcoming unless the likelihood exists that they will be appreciated? Will there be a supply unless there be a demand? The purpose of the ethical movement is to create such a demand, to collect into societies men who, being desirous of improving conduct, feeling deeply the need of moral betterment, will by their attitude of expectancy call such

suggestions forth. Can any one doubt the great influence which the industrial arts have had upon the promotion of knowledge? Can any one question that the desire to utilize electricity for practical purposes has had the effect of attracting eminent minds to the scientific investigation of electricity, with fruitful results, to the understanding of the subject on its purely theoretical side? Can any doubt that chemistry as a science has gained by the solicitations which have come to it from the textile and other industries? Or will any one deny that the fine arts attain their highest splendor when the artist is sure of a public prepared to expect and ready to appreciate the best he can do? When men are bent on having something done, so that it be within the compass of human capacity, there usually rise up those who will do it for them. The Ethical Society is a society of persons who are bent on being taught clearer perceptions of right and wrong, on being shown how to improve conduct. At least, let us hasten to add, the ideal of the society is that of a body of men who shall have this bent. Is it vain to hope that there will in time arise those who will render them the service they require?

To recapitulate, we maintain the capital importance of right motives, without which morality dwindles into mere legality. We impress the truth that the whole value of the deed is in the motive which inspires it. We take towards ethical theories a twofold attitude: holding it to be the prime duty of every one in his individual capacity to rise to the ever clearer apprehension of first principles, but for that very reason abstaining in our collective capacity from laying down any set of first principles as binding. We do teach ethical theories in our societies and

hold ourselves free, each to the best of his ability, to defend and recommend his own. But our bond of union is not a common doctrine, but a common practice, a common understanding as to ways of living. Just as the refined and educated are distinguished from the vulgar by their manners, these, however, relating chiefly to externals of behavior, so we may hope that the Ethical Society will in time come to be distinguished by certain modes of behavior, these, however, related to the inmost matters of the soul. It is the aim of the Ethical Society to help its members to reach this higher normal development, and to this end to bring forth institutions in which the better life will be embodied and secured. The instrumentalities hitherto employed in furtherance of these aims have been chiefly educational,—schools for the better mental, moral, and æsthetic training of young children ; public lectures on Sundays ; the discussion on the platform and in classes of the principal moral problems, such as the right relations of the sexes in and out of marriage, the right relations of the social classes to one another, the moral side of economic questions, the true ideal of the state. The charitable work of the societies has been so far prominent as to appear in the eyes of some their distinctive feature, and the false impression has thus gained ground that the Ethical Society exists purely for philanthropic or humanitarian purposes. But charity, apart from its importance as a social duty, has been employed by us chiefly as an educational instrument, as a pedagogue unto the higher life, as a plough wherewith to make the first incision into hearts hardened by selfish and sordid interests, to prepare them for the reception of the seed of moral ideas.

Finally, it remains to speak of the attitude of the Ethical Society towards religion. Recent investigations in primitive culture have given us glimpses of a time when religion was still distinctly unethical. As we follow the line of development upward, we see that the ethical element is introduced, at first as a subordinate factor, that it becomes gradually more and more prominent and dominant, and that religious conceptions become ever purer and more elevated in proportion as this moral factor works its leaven into them. It is safe to say that every step forward in religion was due to a quickening of the moral impulses, that moral progress is the condition of religious progress, that the good life is the soil out of which the religious life grows. Witness the prophetic movement among the Hebrews, the rise of Buddhism, the Protestant Reformation! And why may we not add, the founding of Christianity itself to our instances, or rather place it at the head of the list? The teachings of Jesus, as they have been handed down to us, are capable of being condensed into the one great lesson,—that it is necessary to live the spiritual life in order to understand spiritual truths. The truths of religion are chiefly two,—that there is a reality other than that of the senses, and that the ultimate reality in things is, in a sense transcending our comprehension, akin to the moral nature of men. But how shall we acquaint ourselves with this Supersensible? The ladder of science does not reach so far. And the utmost stretch of the speculative reason cannot attain to more than the abstract postulate of an infinite, which, however, is void of the essential attributes of divinity. Only the testimony of the moral life can support a vital conviction of this sort. He who is enslaved

by his senses will be sense-bound even in his thinking. But he who triumphs over his passions may realize in himself the impact of a spiritual force different in kind from the forces of nature. He who having received an injury returns it, obeys a mechanical law analogous to that which causes a cannon to recoil or an elastic ball to rebound. But he who forgives his enemy becomes conscious of a spiritual law to which the mechanical interaction of phenomena affords no parallel. Thus, too, he who in affliction so far prevails over his will as to assent to the loss of personal happiness, and goes on working and striving for the general good, ceases to be a mere atom among the circling worlds, and becomes aware in his own soul of that public nature in things to which he yields. "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted;" "I say unto you, love your enemies;" "Who-soever looketh on a woman with an impure eye hath committed adultery already in his heart." Plainly, the precepts of Jesus enforce the truth that the purification of the heart is the condition of spiritual perception. "Only the pure in heart shall see." The symbols of religion are ciphers of which the key is to be found in moral experience. It is in vain you pore over the ciphers unless you possess the key. Face answers face as in a mirror, and only like can understand like. To understand the message of a great religious teacher one must find in his own life experiences somewhat akin to his. To measure the stature of those who stand on the pinnacles of mankind one must rise to an eminence in line with theirs, however inferior in height. To the children of the world,—that is, to worldly-minded men,—what meaning, for instance, can such utterances as these have?

“ You must become as little children if you would possess the kingdom of heaven ; ” “ You must be willing to lose your life to save it ; ” “ If you would be first you must consent to be last ; if you would be masters you must serve. ” To the worldly-minded such words convey no sense ; they are, in fact, rank absurdity.

The Ethical Society is planted outside the churches for the reasons detailed above, but it should be regarded by them as a friendly ally. All the fruits it may be expected to produce,—the better moral training of the young, the clearer delineation of the boundaries of right and wrong, the awakened sense of responsibility with respect to social problems, the wiser methods of fashioning character,—all these the churches may adopt and seek to harmonize with their own aims. The Ethical Society is friendly to genuine religion anywhere and everywhere because it vitalizes religious doctrines by pouring into them the contents of spiritual meaning.

And beyond the churches, also, it is fitted to embrace the ever-increasing masses of the unchurched, inasmuch as it provides for these a resting-place on their journey towards the new religious home. Nay, more than that, a movement for moral culture appears to be the indispensable positive condition of a new *avatar* of the religious spirit. A new moral earnestness must precede the rise of larger religious ideals. For the new religious synthesis, which many long for, will not be a fabrication, but a growth. It will not steal upon us as a thief in the night, or burst upon us as lightning from the sky, but will come in time as a result of the gradual moral evolution of modern society, as the expression of higher moral aspirations, and a response to deeper moral needs.



# THE NEXT STEP IN CHRISTIANITY.

BY WILLIAM M. SALTER.

A large-minded Episcopal clergyman of Philadelphia gave not long ago a notable address on "The Next Step in Christianity." \* In speaking on the same subject, I have no controversial purpose, and should rather like to bear witness to the scholarship, the breadth of historical perspective and the ethical spirit revealed in the address. I wish simply to present certain thoughts of my own.

Though I am surely not a Christian (in the ordinary sense of the term), I cannot affect indifference to Christianity. I should rather like to think of it as a movement than as something whose character is already settled—a movement that may yet take a bold step in advance and come into closer alliance with the progressive forces of the age.

And yet I do not wish to attempt the rôle of a prophet and say what Christianity is actually going to be. Predicting the future is more or less uncertain business—at least for one who is so little of a student of history or observer of the present as I am. I suppose it is rather the step that, to my mind, ought to be taken than the one that will be, that I am now thinking of—the step, that is, which needs to be taken if Christianity is to be as much of a blessing to the world as it is capable of being.

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\* Vide *The New World*, June, 1892, "The Next Step in Christianity," by Rev. S. D. McConnell, D. D.

My first remark is that the church should offer free room for the intellectual spirit of the time. The demand is sometimes made that the creeds should be simplified. I say something different from this advisedly. For when I am no longer carried away by popular currents of thought, and look at the matter critically, I cannot see that a simple creed is more acceptable than an elaborate one. Rather, if one thinks at all, one wishes to think thoroughly,—to take in all the facts, to have as perfect a theory of them as possible, and to follow out the theory to all its consequences. What would be thought of a philosopher who contented himself with two or three propositions,—of a man of science who gave us only a handful of facts and one or two generalizations? It is the extensiveness, the thoroughness, the systematic completeness, of a man's work that marks him as a thinker in any department. Now creeds, articles of faith, or confessions are ordinarily related to the moral and religious life somewhat as philosophies and scientific theories are to their respective data. They are the fruit of thinking, of the effort to understand, to explain, to formulate, to arrange systematically. The thinking may not always be as close, as thorough, in the religious as in the other spheres, but it is intellectual effort of the same order. The Athanasian Creed, for example, is in its main parts a marvel of thinking and accurate statement; you may disbelieve it, and yet, if you have been a sympathetic and broad-minded student of church history, you can hardly fail to admire it; and I very much question whether, in case you grant certain premises, you can deny its truth. So with the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England; so with the Westmin-

ster Confession of Faith,—we have only to look at them with care and serious attention to see that they are a sort of philosophy of Christianity. Christian thinkers may philosophize differently to-day, but these are the ways in which some of the most eminent and learned Christian believers thought two or more centuries ago.

It is not an advance, then, intellectually speaking, to make an elaborate statement give way to a simple one ; it is only an advance to make the statement of one age give place to the statement of another,—to allow freedom to new interpretations, to give room for fresh minds. The objection to the old creeds is simply to their being made obligatory on the present.

Yet, if this much is admitted, we have only to reflect a little to see that logical consistency demands that we object also to making any new creeds obligatory. If different generations have their rights, so have different individuals. To make a revised form of the Westminster Confession, for instance, the law or standard of the Presbyterian Church would be as objectionable as to retain the present form ; those who held to the old Confession could not accept the new, and some who wish a change might not be satisfied with the change actually made. Hence, if these various persons were intellectually earnest (as they should be), there would come fresh divisions in the church. The simpler and truer way would be to begin to allow liberty ; not to revise or reprobate the old creed, but to let it stand as a historical monument, and to let the indorsement or rejection of it be a personal matter,—in a word, to cease to consider the Confession as the creed *of the church*.

Instead of adopting a new theology and rejecting the

old, the church should give to both equal right and standing. Not to do this is to continue the intellectually vicious course of the church in the past,—of the church, one must confess, in all its branches. There have, of course, been “ Liberal ” Christian denominations ; but they have worked not so much for largeness and toleration as for some new set of views. The Unitarians, for instance, have allowed themselves to be stamped by a certain set of doctrines about God, Jesus, and the Bible ; and Christians who could not agree to the Unitarian views have not felt at home among them. The Universalists have their own dogma ; those who think differently about the fate of the wicked after death are virtually disfellowshipped by them. The thought has yet apparently to arise of a church in which all who wish to live the Christian life shall dwell together as brethren, tolerating each other in the varied results of their religious thinking. All who gain new views seem to want to form a new church ; though in some cases the fact is rather that they are not allowed to hold their views in the old church, and so are compelled to form a new one, if they are to have a church at all. The Catholic Church, which claims to be above all sects, is really in a sense the parent of them all ; instead of allowing varying types of theological belief within its pale, it allows only one, and will never, in the interests of true catholicity, recede from a definition it has made. Each Protestant sect reproduces the old seed of intellectual narrowness in its own form. Hence, instead of one great fellowship of men striving above all to make right and justice prevail on the earth and the “ will of God ” be done, there are a thousand and one sectaries, so prone in

their warring with one another to forget their true and divine calling that the world outside the church sometimes comes nearer Christ than the church itself.

There has, indeed, been a better instinct now and then, but it has hardly ever become a distinct thought and policy. The Broad-Church party in each denomination may be said to incline this way, but its actual influence seems to be more to make men feel that they can subscribe to the creeds though they do not believe in them, than to alter the church's attitude in relation to the creeds. A Broad-Church party seems always somehow ineffectual (save in keeping its place in the church), perhaps because it lacks the inspiration and the energy that come from downright honesty ; yet its instinct is on the right side : it is for freedom and tolerance ; and, were the church already what this party has hardly the energy to make it be, Broad-Churchmen would be in the right. The ideal church would be large enough to contain all varieties of opinion that are consistent with Christian living. The higher inspiration is visible in the quaint language of John Hales, of Eton : " I do not see . . . that men of different opinions in Christian Religion may not hold communion in sacred things and both go to one church. Why may I not go, if occasion require, to an *Arian* Church, so there be no Arianisme expresst in their *Lyturgy*? And were *Lyturgies* and *Publique formes* of *Service* so framed as that they admitted not of particular and private fancies, but contained only such things as in which all Christians do agree, *Schismes* on opinion were utterly vanished." One of the church fathers, Epiphanius, even held that, in the first period of the church, wickedness was the only heresy,—that im-

pious and pious living were the dividing lines between erroneous and orthodox. It is often said that at least accepting Jesus as one's Lord and Saviour should be necessary for admission into the church ; but Jesus declared that only one thing was a prerequisite for admission into his heavenly kingdom,—namely, doing the will of God ; and surely what would open the gates of heaven should open the doors of the church on earth.

The true method of procedure for the Christian church is, then, not to abolish or revise the old creeds, but simply to grant complete liberty of belief with regard to them ; to let them stand for those to whom they are still satisfactory, but to give others the right to amend or reject them ; to take no position as a church upon these matters ; to have no standards of orthodoxy ; to say that from its standpoint there is only one heresy, namely, wickedness, and only one essential requirement, namely, the doing of the will of God.

Whether this method will be pursued, I do not pretend to say. If one judges of the future by the past, such a course may be said to be extremely unlikely ; for there is not, perhaps, an instance in Christian history in which a church, having once committed itself to a doctrinal position, has relaxed the obligations of it ; when a position is taken, the die seems to be cast, and, if other thoughts arise, they take other organs or media for expressing themselves. But if none of the existing churches will take the step I have indicated, then the next step in Christianity will be out of any of the existing churches ; the spirit of progress will secure a new organ for itself, and more and more what is earnest and forward-looking in the old organizations will disentangle itself and go to swell the new ranks.

A Scottish divine of this century, whose horizon took in more than his church, — Norman McLeod, — said : “Neither Calvinism, nor Presbyterianism, nor Thirty-nine Articles, nor High-Churchism, nor Low-Churchism, nor any existing organization, can be the church of the future.” We overdo in these days the idea of evolution, considered as an unbroken continuity of development. In politics, a large part of progress has been by a break with existing institutions, by a revolution. In religion, almost every forward movement has been possible only by making a new beginning. The Reformation is an instance ; the liberal movement among the Congregational churches at the beginning of this century in New England is another ; a similar movement in the Society of Friends is still another. Christianity itself, if it had not broken with Judaism, of which it was at first a part, would probably have perished. All, indeed, might be different. I can conceive of a political community in which revolutions would be unnecessary, though, as states ordinarily are, a revolution is required now and then, else they would become unbearable. I can conceive of a church in which an unbroken continuity of development would be possible, though, as churches have been, progress has been often possible only by going out of them. Yes, I can even imagine the churches of the present time undergoing a thorough inward regeneration, and evolving without a break into the greater church of the future ; I do not hold to the dreary doctrine that the future must follow along the lines of the past. I fervently wish this might take place ; but whether it will or not, is another question.

So much for the needed advance on the intellectual

side. As I turn to speak of what is necessary on the moral side, I shall urge what is in one sense a backward step. Strange as it may sound from one who does not call himself a Christian, I will say that the next step, morally speaking, in Christianity, is to go back to Jesus. As I look out on the Christian church at large, one of the things that strikes me is the almost total lack of that idealism, that ardor, that faith and that hope that lived in the breast of the man of eighteen centuries ago after whom Christendom is named. I do not mean that the Christian church does not value morality, in the conventional sense of that term, that it is not itself humane, charitable, full of good works. I mean that its morality is without wings; that there is no expectancy in it, no largeness of vision; that, so far as this world is concerned, the Christian seems to look for nothing better from it than any one else does. Yet the attitude of Jesus and of the first Christians was that of looking for a great change. It was as with those to-day who are carried away by what are called utopian social dreams. They believe that a new justice might be done in the world, that the state might be transformed, that a new industrial order might arise. The world as a whole looks askance on these enthusiasts, and so, alas! does the church, for the church has become a part of the world,—the church that at the beginning condemned the world as it then was and looked for a better. The church at the outset was but a body of those who were consumed with a great expectation; whose eyes were fixed on a new heaven and a new earth in which justice should rule; who blessed the name of Jesus for the priceless gift of this faith, and looked to him to come again to turn faith into sight and bring in the new age.



Where shall one look for such a faith now, and for the ardor and joy that go with it? How dreary are our lives and all the business of them, how dreary even our good works, our charities and philanthropies, if with the soul we cannot have the vision of a time when good shall conquer evil, when whatever oppresses shall be cast down, when the tears of humanity shall cease, when for sorrow there shall be gladness, and instead of wrong a triumphant right!

In the things of the spirit, in the realm of conscience, time counts for nothing; there are ideas in some of the world's oldest literature that are in advance of us to-day; the Christian church, instead of having outgrown the primitive Christian enthusiasm, has rather to go back to it, and to drink deep of those ancient springs, before it can take the step forward that is needed now.

Consider in some detail what it would mean to think now somewhat as Jesus thought eighteen centuries ago. It would mean, first, to look for a new order of things on the earth, to give up the idea that existing political and social arrangements are anywise final. It would translate one into the attitude of a person looking for a better country. While, then, one lived on in the present order, one would feel in heart a stranger to it. He would never dream of being contented with it, or of going his way with his business, his family interests and intercourse with his friends, and thinking these are all. Many features of the present order of society he would simply endure, looking for their overthrow. He would say to himself,—and console himself by saying it,—this and that law, and custom, and social arrangement, born of selfishness and injustice, are to perish; only what is

good will last. Over against the present he would put the future, and balance the weight of evil which oppresses him with the vision of what is to be. For that a judgment, an end of wrong, a putting of evil in chains, would come,—this would be the very faith on which he would live. This faith, too, would lead him to purify his own life; for, if he expected to see the new order, he would wish to be worthy of a place in it, and, whether he was to see it with his earthly eyes or not, he would wish to be one in spirit with it. If justice was to be done then, he would wish to be at heart just; if love was to be the coming rule, he would wish to drive out all contrary impulses now.

This is all very simple, every-day language, but it is somewhat as I understand the substance of the thought of Jesus. Literally speaking, it may be impossible for us to think as he and his disciples did. The kingdom of heaven itself, his central idea, has associations that take it to no small extent out of the realm of what is credible to us. But, at bottom, it was the best hope of Jesus' time and race for a reign of right and justice. It was the fine issue to which the spirits of men were then "finely touched." It gathered up whatever idealism was then alive. Jesus was daring enough to believe that the new era was near at hand. He had been inspired by another before him; he, in turn, inspired a multitude who heard him. His teacher had prophesied a judgment, so did he. He declared in detail who they were who should have a place in the order about to be: they were those who suffered and were at a disadvantage,—those whom society reviled and persecuted, those who were poor and oppressed; above all, those who were

looking and hungering for a reign of righteousness, those who hated war and inclined to mercy, those who were humble rather than self-sufficient, those who would stand any amount of wrong rather than do wrong, those who loved even such as injured them, those who tried to be perfect. Such would be the constituents of the righteous social order near at hand ; and into it no persons of a contrary sort, and, above all, no hypocrites or devourers of widows' houses, should come. In it, he once said, the righteous should shine forth as the sun. The thought is the same as that expressed in a noble poem\* of our own day, which begins :

“ Have you heard the Golden City  
Mentioned in the legends old ?  
Everlasting light shines o'er it,  
Wondrous tales of it are told.

“ Only righteous men and women  
Dwell within its gleaming wall ;  
Wrong is banished from its borders,  
Justice reigns supreme o'er all.”

This social dream is the essence of Jesus' teaching ; to look for its realization was the earliest meaning of his religion. On its side, he believed, were the Invisible Powers, however much the powers of this world might be against it ; yes, he himself would introduce the new order ; he would, under God, be the Judge ; when death stared him in the face, he none the less kept his confidence, and said to the very court that inflicted the fatal sentence upon him, “ Ye shall yet see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

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\* By the founder of the Ethical Movement, Dr. Felix Adler.

It is easy to point out the element of illusion in this expectation. Jesus has not come again in all these eighteen centuries; and it will not do to say that his coming refers to another world, since every reference to it that he makes shows that he has this world in mind. The very prayer that he taught his disciples asks that the kingdom may come on earth; the consolation for the meek was that they should yet inherit the earth. The important thing, however, is to get at the soul of truth in this expectation, and to dare to reproduce it under the altered intellectual conditions of to-day. If the churches should come into contact with the real Jesus, it would be their regeneration. They might worship him less, they would follow him more. They would extend a hand to the reform movements of the time, and welcome them to their midst; they would be one with them in their soul if not in their letter. Instead of timidly, hesitatingly *following* the progressive moral spirit of the time, they would begin to lead it; and as the early church struck blows at infanticide, gladiatorial shows, and other infamies of the Roman world, the church now would begin to banish some of the barbarities of this nineteenth century civilization.

The trouble is that the churches do not understand their Master, they do not catch the real drift of the New Testament. They have acquired such a factitious reverence for both that they do not study either with a scientific, truth-loving spirit; they have enveloped both in a sort of halo and see nothing distinctly. Liberal Christians think it a great achievement to discover that Jesus was a man; but there is no special value or inspiration in this discovery. The question is, what sort of a man

was he? To regard him simply as the great teacher of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, is about as vague and unreal as any other traditional method of interpretation. To preach the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man may be one way of helping the world, but Jesus looked for a new order of society. He thought the world as it was (and it has not changed essentially since his blessed voice was heard in it) ripe for judgment; he was for punishing and abasing as well as uplifting, for putting evil and evil men in chains. It is evident that, were he living to-day and breathing the modern intellectual atmosphere, he would be neither a sentimentalist nor a religious rhapsodist, but the leader of a great, thorough-going reform movement,—finding it the will of his Father to do this, seeing that this is true religion, and that faith and hope have their vital meanings in connection with it. Never would he have been content with what most of his followers now offer to the suffering and the wronged,—the hope of recompense in another world; never would he have consented to let the earth be the devil's and only heaven be God's; he would have said justice is for here and now, and the will of God is to be done on earth even as it is done in heaven.

What a new thing the Christian churches would be if they could catch this spirit! and who have so good a claim to it as they? How easy then would become some tasks that now seem giant-like in their proportions, so low is the tone of public sentiment, so little have the people the idea that religion means striving for justice and a just social order on the earth!

Back to Jesus, then, I say, back to his great ideal!

The church cannot look to him to accomplish it as it once did, but from him it may perchance catch the spirit by which men may be impelled to accomplish it for themselves. No longer can Christians say (if they sincerely mean what they say), "We believe that thou shalt come again to be our judge;" but by fresh contact with him we may perhaps gain the faith that mankind can be its own judge, more and more destroying what is evil and garnering the good. O, for his spirit once more on the earth! O, that he might come for one moment to lay bare the shams that are practiced under his name! O, that he might convict his own followers of their scepticism, their low content, their airs of worldly wisdom, their deafness to the higher voices! O, that he might lift them and us all into the atmosphere of a great thought, a great aim and a great hope! And so, though in another sense than that in which the cry arose from a Christian heart so many centuries ago, I, too, would say, "Come, Lord Jesus," come quickly!

Such are my views as to at least the fundamental import of the step that needs to be taken by Christianity. The mind must be given freedom and anew the conscience must be touched. And it would be ungenerous not to say that there are some in the Church whose thoughts are tending in this direction. And so I wish to add a word as to the true attitude of movements like ours to the rising liberal spirit in the churches. It is sometimes thought that those who are outside the Church must be critical towards whatever goes on inside of it. I dissent from such a judgment. I think we should love to see good, to see progress everywhere. True, there seems to be almost nothing absolutely good in this world.

What is good in one way is apt to compromise itself in another. Men in the churches have the new ideas, yet they conform to the old ideas. They protest and yet they subscribe. For all that, the new ideas and the protesting are a good. Our attitude should be one of sympathy and encouragement to all who are striving to make the Church a truly broad and catholic church. We should only say to them, Be bolder yet; make distinct demands on the Church, prepare yourselves to bring the issue to a test; be not content that you *can* stay where you are, but prove that you have a right to stay. I think that complete honesty would demand that one cease to repeat or assent to language that he does not believe; and suppose that all the clergy and other members of the Church of England, who no longer hold the philosophy of the Athanasian Creed, should cease to recite it the next time the reciting of it was called for, would not that Church be almost obliged to drop it from among the things required? And yet even comparative honesty requires that one who does not believe should not repeat or subscribe *without a protest*; and suppose simply that a protest were made against the retention of the Athanasian, or, for that matter, the Nicene or Apostles' Creeds by those who do not believe in them, and who can say that the protestants might not find that they were more numerous than those of a contrary mind, and so it become an easy matter to make the change?

The clergyman to whom I referred at the outset—and who knows the ecclesiastical world much better than I do—said there was not a single “Confession of Faith” that was believed in its entirety by even the most conservative members of the ministry of the church making

the confession. Why do not then, one and all, make themselves heard?

And yet, however interested and friendly we may be, I hold that we should stand on our own ground. As yet there is not a single communion in Christedom, to my knowledge, into which a man who breathes the free-spirit of our movement could go without in a measure compromising himself. Let us hope there may be in time, but there is not yet. It is for us to take encouragement from the liberal spirit arising in the churches, but not to feel that our work is made in the slightest degree thereby less necessary. The tendency of things is in our direction; let us witness all the more confidently for that direction and affirm all the more boldly that, in our essential ideas and spirit, we represent the goal for which the Christian world must strive. We cannot go backward to the church, it must come forward to us; yes, the Jewish church must come forward to us, too, and the walls of partition that have so long divided Jew and Gentile must go down along with all other walls, until from every nation and from every people, shall come forth one united host to do battle with the evil in the world, and to give victory to the right.



## “ETHICS OR RELIGION?”

BY WILLIAM M. SALTER.

IT is always well to clear the atmosphere, and controversy may do good that serves this end. We do not know whether we make ourselves understood till we see how others interpret us, and when we find misapprehension we should do what we can to correct it.

The impression is more or less abroad that the Ethical Society proposes a substitute for religion. This impression shows itself in a recent lecture by a well-known rabbi of this city, the Rev. Dr. Krauskopf. He raises the question, “Ethics or Religion?”—as if they were alternatives; he asks if an Ethical Society *can take the place* of the Temple or the Church—his conclusion being, I need hardly say, that it cannot.

But such a way of stating the question appears to me to betray more or less confusion of thought. How can a thing of one sort take the place of a thing of a different sort? In instruction, for instance, how can arithmetic take the place of geography, or science of literature; or, in life, how can business be a substitute for religion, or private virtue take the place of public spirit? Evidently one thing can only take the place of another when it fills (or attempts to fill) the same place and the same function.

How is it with ethics and religion? Religion (what is commonly understood by religion—for I take the

word now in its popular sense) is a certain view of the world; it answers, or attempts to answer, such questions as, Whence came I? What becomes of me when I die? Who made the world? What is the explanation of things? It is the sort of belief that seems to throw light on the mystery of life. Birth, death, all that is strange and unexpected, calamity, misfortune, are the things that stir men to religious questionings.

But ethics calls up a different set of thoughts. Whencesoever we came and whithersoever we go, here we are, alive, and what are we going to do? How are we going to treat ourselves and how are we going to treat one another? What are we going to make of ourselves? What are we going to try to make of human society? What are our ideals and what are the ways to reach them? What are the approved rules, gathered from history, experience and the nature of the case, by remembering which life may be conducted to some worthy end?

Plainly, these are a different order of questions. They are commonly called moral or ethical questions. If we have answered the religious questions we have not thereby answered these questions, and if we have satisfactorily answered the ethical questions we have not thereby learned whence we come and whither we go. The two—religion and ethics—belong to different provinces; they may be related to one another, and at some points closely touch one another, but for all that they are distinct. Yet, if this is so, how can ethics be said to take the place of religion, or how can an Ethical Society be found wanting because it is not a substitute for a Church or Temple? If ethics claimed to be the whole of

human life, or to answer the questions which religion answers, all would be different; but I am not aware that anybody has made such a claim.

The only thing that could be really a rival to religion would be science or philosophy. For they do attempt to answer the same sort of questions that religion deals with—they strive to tell us what man is, how he is made, whence he comes; to give us a view of the constitution and nature of the whole world. And the scientific or philosophical view of the world has sometimes clashed with the religious view. Yet it may ultimately be adopted by religion, just as the religious view itself may be only a reflection of the measure of scientific and philosophical enlightenment which existed when the religion first arose.

Ethics, however, is no rival of religion—and to get light on definitely religious problems we have still to go to the religion or the science and philosophy of our time. I thought it was long ago settled that we were not a religious body (in the ordinary sense of the term)—*i. e.*, when our societies agreed to welcome all to our number, whatever their theological or philosophical opinions, thereby implying that we had no theological or philosophical opinions of our own, and could not possibly clash with any body else's.

Hence to Dr. Krauskopf's critical and yet not unfriendly comments to the effect that Ethical Culture cannot be a substitute for religion, we say, Certainly; and when he urges upon us that we should be "a church as well as a school," and should have "Divine Services" at our meetings, and that in this way we might be much more successful, we answer, Quite possibly, but it would

be at the cost of giving up our distinctive character. What could it be to us to be successful as (to all practical interests and purposes) a Unitarian Church, or some new form of Temple? We are an Ethical Society, and we wish to be successful as an Ethical Society. Indeed, if we should become "a Church" and have "Divine Services," we should then first become liable to the sort of criticism which Dr. Krauskopf passes on us—for we could be strictly judged as to whether we offered anything new or better in this field than was already to be found. But as it is, we do not enter the field of religious organizations at all.

It is a mistake to oppose ethics and religion, or an Ethical Society and a Church, and to speak as if we had to choose between them. I do not see why one cannot have both. My subject of this morning I take as I find it on the lips of our critic—I should never have chosen it for myself. I do not believe in alternatives or in exclusion any more than is necessary—I rather want to take all the good things of this world, so far as I can. I am perfectly free to confess I should like a religion, and I do not see that it would anywise conflict with the ethical convictions I now have and the ethical work I am now doing. I should like a theology or philosophy, and I conceive that I should be perfectly free to hold it in an Ethical Society. If I adopted a certain creed, I should not feel in the slightest that I had to give up this Society, or cease my activity as a moral teacher. We are not an irreligious or an anti-religious movement—any more than the public schools are irreligious because they do not teach religion. So far as religion is concerned, we are simply free, persons of varying religious views and of no religious

views being equally welcome among us ; positively we are an ethical movement, taking as members the ethical point of view in dealing with life, religion, and everything else.

But, it is urged, does not religion include ethics, and, if so, what is the need for a special Ethical Society? That is a fair question, and I am ready to answer it. I think there is an abundant field for an Ethical Society, and there are three or four ways in which I want to show this to be true.

## I.

First, an Ethical Society will find a fruitful occupation in teaching what morality really is. There are those who think it is based on prudence, or, "more or less remote expediency." They allow that we should do good to others, but that in return they may do good to us. They understand Utilitarianism in this narrow way. I am surprised to find Dr. Krauskopf speaking in this manner and arguing that religion is needed to keep men straight when they are tempted to acts which their fellow-men may not see. This may be true, yet how little would religion of this sort do for the real moral education of the race! There are those who have so little sympathy and so little imagination that they do not bring home to themselves the results of their wrong actions or feel an injury to others as an injury to themselves — therefore, we will seek to influence them by fear, by the thought of retribution. But who does not see that, morally speaking, this does not make them one whit better, and that the problem of problems is to make men moral,

to get a principle into their hearts which will lead them by the force of their own feelings to do what is right? God, as a sort of invisible police, may serve a useful function, but surely like that of all police, it is a very low function, compared with that which moral principle should serve.

My point is that an agency is needed to bring out the meaning of morality, to show that it is not merely long-sighted prudence with God in the next world to take the place of police in this, that it is action according to principle, pre-eminently social principle, that (so far) it is born out of social instincts,—instincts which belong to every normal man, though in some they may not be developed; yes, that an agency is needed which shall organize itself to develop these instincts and shall go into the highways and byways of life to teach sympathy and solidarity and justice. Religion, alas! does not do this; I fear will not do it (till it acquires an ethical regeneration), for this weapon of God and the future are so ready at hand, that it puts out of sight the slower and more radical methods of education.

Then, too, a society which gave its special attention to ethics would be apt to see morality in a larger way than Dr. Krauskopf does. To him religion appears so exalted that everything else seems commonplace and prosaic beside it. Morality, he says, looks after physical needs, it deals with the material sides of life—as man is of the earth and also of that which is above the earthy, morality ministers to the one, and what is called spirituality to the other. This is familiar language, and there is no use quarreling with it — it has the same twang with the talk about "mere morality;" all I wish to say is, that

from those who think in this way, we can hardly expect any large or profound treatment of morality,—that something which Matthew Arnold called three-fourths of life and which so sorely needs emphasis and detailed treatment at this present time. We need a society that by attending to morality shall see the scope of it, and the subtle and powerful part it plays in human life; that shall not be hindered by preoccupation with God and Heaven from perceiving the august drama of human life as it unfolds itself on the earth; that shall discern the awful nature of injustice, that shall trace out the fatal effect of vice, not only on others, but on the individual himself, that shall see the corroding, destroying tendency of selfishness and the fortifying effect on human society of goodness and justice; that shall divine public spirit and the highest social virtue to be what they are, not fancies of amiable dreamers' minds, but conditions of life for societies and states; that shall recognize that the right is one with peace, with stability, with beauty and with elevated joy; that shall see that, stern lawgiver as Duty is, an infinite grace is with her and naught is so fair as is the smile upon her face. All this does not come to us at once, we have to attend to learn—and it is well, well for us, well for the public, that there should be a place which draws men's attention in these directions.

## II.

A second useful function of an independent Ethical Society is to teach what the true basis of morality is. Here I find lamentable confusion in the religious world.

I find it, I regret to say, in Dr. Krauskopf himself. He says that without religion, ethics "has neither sanction or support," that morality without God, means in the long run "humanity without morality." What an extraordinary dependence of something we know about on something we don't know about! I confess that when I look away from human nature, and human life, and human history, to nature about us or to what lies behind nature, I find no moral light or guidance at all. If any one leaving conscience to one side can find or construct an original for conscience, he has a power of divination surpassing that of any mortal man I ever heard of. Religion, we are told, places God before man as the type of perfection. But how do we make up our idea of God,—particularly on the moral side? A great bishop—one whom Huxley honored, a light of the English Church and of English philosophy, Bishop Butler—says in a sermon: "We have no clear conception of any positive moral attitude in the Supreme Being, but what may be resolved into goodness."\* Channing, the most refined and spiritual of men, says: "To love God is to love morality in its most perfect form."† Any one who stops a moment to reflect sees that instead of knowing God at first hand and taking him as a type or pattern for ourselves, we gather together the loftiest ideas of our own minds and with them make up our image of God. We may do so rightly, I will not contest this now; but it is a complete ignoring of the fact to which I have referred

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\* *Sermons*, "Upon the Love of our Neighbor."

† *Life*, Vol. II., p. 15. Elsewhere he says, "the true love of God. . . perfectly coincides, and is, in fact, the same thing with the love of virtue, rectitude and goodness." *Works* (A. U. A. ed.), p. 38.



to imagine that we know God first and then derive our morality from the feeling that we must imitate him. It is because we know of goodness and justice and love in our own thoughts that we are led to imagine that absolute form of them we call God—and, indeed, did we not have such thoughts ourselves, it would be meaningless to speak of them as existing in God.

The basis of morality is just in the facts of human life. Here we see what right and wrong mean, and how they work. Here we know what goodness is, what love is, what justice is—they are what we and others are called on to exhibit every day. They are never full, perfect here—but we can see their tendency, and we know that they are what make life tolerable and what would, if they were perfect, make it blessed. We know or can think of a father's love, and so we can picture to ourselves a Heaven-Father; we know what justice and judgment are among men, and so we can conjure up before our minds an unfailing justice, a perfect Judge above. But wipe out from your minds justice, love and goodness as you know them, strain your eyes on the heavens, or strive to penetrate to what lies behind nature around you, and what do you find? Greatness, power, order; but where will you lay your hands on an original of goodness or of love? We may believe in goodness and love at the heart of things, but we do not *see* them.

If there were time, I could show by numerous illustrations from history how independent morality is of religion and how independently it has grown and developed. Mr. Spencer in his “Sociology” shows us savages who have no words for God or soul or heaven or hell, who yet exhibit moral traits equal and even

superior to what we commonly find in Christianized Europe. Certain of them, for instance, never think of making money by a stranger ; others set so high a value on veracity that an imputation of falsehood is enough to make one of them destroy himself ; still others are singularly forgiving of injuries ; and among one tribe wealth is desired chiefly that its possessor may pay the debts of poorer men and settle differences.\* We hear and are constantly told by clergymen that the brotherhood of man can only come about by a recognition of the fatherhood of God. But these Arafuras do not wait on this round-about logic ; they practice brotherhood by instinct.

Yes, if I had time, I could show how not only morality can exist apart from anything we ordinarily call religion, but how religion can exist without any appreciable influence on morality. Dr. Krauskopf makes a singular mistake for a scholar when he says that "Religion has laid its greatest stress on morality from the time it first began to wield an influence over man." Sir John Lubbock tells us that the deities of lower races regarded crime with indifference so long as the rites in their honor were observed.† He elsewhere remarks that it is very clear that religion, except in very advanced races, has no moral aspect or influence.‡ Mr. Lecky even says of the religions of Greece and Rome that their object was chiefly to foretell the future, to explain the universe, to avert calamity, to obtain the assistance of the gods—that to make men virtuous was no more the function of the priest than it was of the physician.§ Indeed of

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\* Vol. II., pp. 640-2.

† *Origin of Civilization*, p. 254.    ‡ *Ibid.* p. 266.

§ *History of European Morals*, vol. ii, p. 2.

the religion of Israel itself, a great scholar, Wellhausen, tells us that it was not so much moral as liturgical acts that seemed to the ordinary man to be truly religious down to the time of the prophets—that it was these prophets who first made an ethical religion.\* The truth is, we are so accustomed to the association of morality with religion in Judaism and Christianity, owing to the happy inspiration of the prophets and Jesus, that we do not realize that there is no necessary connection between the two—that one may be religious without being moral just as one may be moral without being religious, as has happened time and again in the history of the race.

Indeed, religious thinkers themselves, when they have been of a high order, have recognized this separateness of morality from religion. The distinguished Professor Park, of Andover, said: “Although there is no God, yet there is right. There is the love of universal being, and this is right,” and, the venerable man added, one “may cherish the love of universal being and be saved.”† A voice from far-away India declared: “Though there were no heaven, nor any God to rule the world, virtue would be none the less the binding law of life.”‡ Yes, so little has the view of the dependence of morality or religion a truly Christian sanction, that we find one of the New Testament writers arguing, not that a man cannot love his fellow man unless he first loves God, but that he cannot love God unless he first loves his brothers.§

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\* Article “Israel” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

† Boston *Transcript*, March 17, 1888.

‡ *Ramayana*.

§ I John, iv, 20.

There could not, indeed, be a more harmful, a pernicious doctrine (in its practical effects) than this that morals rest on religion for their foundation. The experience of young men who have been taught this way may be easily like that of Benjamin Franklin, who, when he first began to think, found, he tells us, morality giving way with religion, even to common honesty and common decency. It was only after much reflection, he continues, that he began to suspect that wrong was not wrong, because it was forbidden, but had been forbidden because it was wrong.\* I conceive that an Ethical Society has a high and important function to perform in thus bringing home to men, and particularly to young people, what the real basis of morality is. It is a function which apparently the Church does not fulfill, which even a temple of advanced thought like that of Dr. Krauskopf does not apparently fulfill.

### III.

There is another purpose to which an ethical society may well dedicate itself. It is to the building-up in men's minds of a view of life in which ethics plays the determining part. It may seem strange to you, and yet on second thought I do not believe it will, that religion is always in more or less danger of drowning out the moral consciousness. In asserting a God it is very apt to leap to the conclusion that all is well. It finds it easy thus to give the Divine sanction to the order of

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\* I follow here Seeley's language in *Natural Religion*, p. 153, which is, perhaps, too unqualified. Cf. Franklin's "Autobiography," as given in Bigelow's *Life of Franklin*, Vol. I, pp. 178-181, also 155, 159, and Parton's *Life and Times of Franklin* Vol. I, p. 70 (1 ed.).

society about us, just as to the order of nature. Things couldn't be as they are, it is sometimes naively said, were they not for the best. Now such a view as this goes fatally against the moral consciousness. If it is correct, setting up some things as right and judging other things to be wrong is nonsense. The logic of Huxley's exclamation cannot be got round, “Why try to set right what is right already!”\* It is then of the first importance, both for the moral life and progress, and for the moral sanity of men, that a view of life be developed in which not religion, but morality plays the determining part.

How practical the matter is I was led to feel afresh not long since in coming across some lines of Mr. Gilder's (entitled “Reform.”) They begin :

“Oh, how shall I help to right the world that is going wrong !  
 And what can I do to hurry the promised time of peace !  
 The day of work is short, and the night of sleep is long ;  
 And whether to pray or preach, or whether to sing a song,  
 To plow in my neighbor's field, or to seek the golden fleece,  
 Or to sit with my hands in my lap, and to wish that ills would  
 cease.”

The answer out of all these perplexities is :

“I think, sometimes, it were best just to let the Lord alone ;  
 I am sure some people forget He was here before they came ;”

and then he goes on to berate and belittle reformers for their officiousness and noise ; and the paper in which I found the lines calls it “a philosophical conclusion which has proved acceptable to many thinking minds.† But

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\* *Evolution and Ethics*, p. 73.

† *Philadelphia Telegraph*, Jan. 9, 1895.

suppose we all became of the mind that "it were best just to let the Lord alone," that we gave up struggling and contending and planning and fighting, because it looked like a reflection on the "Lord," who was here before us, and, at any rate, was somewhat disturbing to dignified repose and æsthetic calm, what would be the result? I think Huxley would tell us that if we were radical in this attitude the "Lord" would cheerfully let us go to destruction, would in effect say to us, "If you don't care to fight for life and progress you must not think I am going to take the trouble to *keep* you going." It might sound rather grim, but I suspect it would be the truth. Life is effort, struggle, and, if we haven't the heart to make the struggle, life easily falls away. This is true of every kind of life, of moral life as truly as of the physical; if we give up, if we trust to the "Lord" (in the Gilderian and not in the Cromwellian sense) we go back, descend, disintegrate. Social life and progress belong to the same category; if we leave social ills to be cured by Providence, she will as likely end us as mend us. The true trust is the trust of fighting, not of laying down our arms. The true religion would be one that was permeated by the spirit of ethics, that believed that *if we did our duty* all would be well with us—but that otherwise would give no slightest assurance.

#### IV.

There is one other task that is likely to be taken up only by an Ethical Society—it is that of opposing what may be called "religious ethics." There is a natural ethics arising out of the needs of man and of social life,

and which a true religion would simply take up into itself and give to it, if possible, an added sanctity; and then there is an ethics which religions have sometimes created—the observance of certain ceremonies, for instance, the holding to certain beliefs or the keeping of certain days. Now, no one can object to a religion making certain rules and regulations for its followers, so long as they are recognized as of minor importance and are nowise confused with the great and alone really binding rules of natural morality. But when there is this confusion, when a creed or a ritual are made binding requirements, when disregard of them is treated as sin, then we have that peculiar phenomenon called “religious ethics,” against which we have to protest in the name of conscience itself. Paul made a protest of this sort in his day and we have to make another against some so-called “followers” of Paul now.

There are those who think it almost as bad not to go to church, not to pray, not to keep Sunday, or not to believe in God or in Christ as to commit robbery or adultery.\* Spurgeon once said: “The moral who are

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\* Instances from the Jewish religion of a similar confusion of ceremonial observances with real morality are given in a striking lecture by Dr. Krauskopf, entitled “Wherein Israel has Failed.” He says, “Whether or not we may worship with hats off or on, in the Hebrew tongue or any other tongue, accompanied or unaccompanied by a mixed choir and organ; whether or not women may worship in the synagogue alongside the men, whether or not we may keep our Sabbath on one day or another, whether or not we may fry our meat in butter or lard, whether or not we may eat the egg that was laid on a holiday, or carry a handkerchief further than two thousand cubits on a Saturday, or tear a piece of paper, or strike or play an instrument on that day, is of far more importance to by far the greater number of rabbis—though the *Nabis* of old never heard or dreamed of such things—than whether or not Judaism’s glorious teaching of ‘One

not devout, the honest who are not prayerful, the benevolent who are not believing, the amiable who are not converted—these must all have their portion with the openly wicked in the hell which is prepared for the devil and his angels."\* This contempt poured on morality should have the indignant reprobation of every one who cares for the higher interests of mankind. So far as people are affected by it, it tends to darken the very light within them. And I fear there is much of it in the churches, even if not quite so brutal in form. In Chicago, a comparatively liberal city in matters of religion, a secular paper once said that an immoral and lawless man—even a criminal as regards property rights or deeds of violence—if he has a theoretical belief in God, is a good man and a valuable member of society as compared with the infidel, who, however pure his life, denies the existence of Deity, the truth of divine teachings and the gospel that was taught by Jesus Christ.† And if that sentiment, nourished by the churches, could crop out in Chicago, what is likely to be the feeling in our own city? I do not like to think. It is the work of an Ethical Society to spread abroad pure morality and to oppose the counterfeit forms of it that are widely current in the religious world. Away with false horrors of conscience! they are almost as inimical to man's true welfare and progress as the opposite extreme of libertinism. Let us have a rational, natural morality,

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God over all, one Brotherhood of all, Peace and Good-will among all,' shall some day, through the earnest, enthusiastic, unwearying effort of the Israelite, be made the faith and blessing of all" (p. 6).

\* *Treasury of David*, vol. I, commentary on Ps., ix., 17.

† *Chicago Journal*, Nov. 12, 1887.



and let the sense of sin all be kept for violations of the law of truth, of love, of justice, written in the hearts of men.

I started out by saying, friends, that we are not a religious society, and I think you all know what I meant. It does not mean, however, that we have not a supreme object of devotion, that we have not in one sense a religion of our own. Down at the bottom of religion, even in the popular sense, is the idea of reverence. And who, when he turns his thoughts on goodness and justice, can fail to have feelings of this description? It may not be a religion to talk about, but it is one to sacredly guard in the heart and to give proof of in one's life. Whether ethical principles can be a real rule of life, whether the thirst for righteousness can become a master passion—this no theory can tell and no definition can settle; it can only be proved by the fact. I am willing to let an Ethical Society be judged by its fruits; it can, in truth, be judged in no other way. You, members of the Ethical Society, and other members elsewhere, are to give the answer, and not I, to Dr. Krauskopf's question, whether ethics can (in this deeper sense) be a religion to us. How far do you try to live according to ethical ideals, how earnest are you with what you see to be your duty from day to day, how much would you give, what would you sacrifice, for a principle's sake, how far could you withstand public opinion, how firm could you be when men cast out your name as evil, have you a rock under your feet in this changing, eddy-

ing world, have you, amid whatever could frighten or distract you, access to what Shakespeare calls :

“ A peace above all earthly dignities,  
A still and quiet conscience ”?\*

’Tis too solemn a thing to argue about. Time alone can tell, and time *will* tell.

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\* King Henry VIII, Act iii., sc. 2.

## THE FOUR TYPES OF SUFFERING.

BY FELIX ADLER.

I ASK you to walk with me to-day on a blasted heath, more dreary than that on which Macbeth walked with Banquo—on the barren, blasted field of human woe. I ask you to come with me into a region of night and storm, to face the four weird sisters that haunt human life; the four weird sisters whose names are Poverty, Sickness, Sorrow and Sin. Poverty is the least of them. I think if any one were compelled to choose among these hags, he would say, "Give me poverty despite her rags." Sickness is next in order. We should all prefer to endure physical pain rather than to lose any of those whom we love. And Sorrow is the next, but not the one most to be dreaded. He who has endured some heavy bereavement is accustomed to look about him and say, "Oh, there is no suffering like my suffering. There is no one who has to bear such a load as mine." He is mistaken—the guilty suffer more than the afflicted. Better a thousand times death than shame. There are depths below depths, abysses below abysses, in human misery.

Now, to this four-fold problem of suffering we invite the attention of religion or philosophy, and ask them to propose such consolations as they may have to offer. Christianity advances first, and denies in effect that there is any problem. To the poor it says: "The Lord is the Lord of the poor. Ye toil, and groan for perhaps seventy years—but ye are laying up treasures in heaven. Sev-

enty years of straitened circumstances on the one hand, an eternity of joy on the other—who would not endure the former for the sake of the latter?” To the sick it bears the same message: “Your sufferings here are temporary, and will be compensated for in the hereafter. By as much as you bear, by so much the greater will be your reward. In the place of your thorny couch of pain, you will recline on flowers of paradise.” To those who have lost their friends, the old religion says: “You have not indeed lost them, they are now living in the everlasting mansions; they are waiting to receive you at the gates. Have patience but a little while, and you will hold them once more in your fond embrace.” And to the sinner it says: “I have a potent charm to cure even your seemingly unappeasable sufferings. Believe in Christ, and he will cause you to partake of his perfection. And when you leave this life, your souls, white once more as the driven snow, will be received into the company of the blessed spirits.” The Christian religion gets rid of this four-fold problem of suffering by denying that there is any problem.

Now, let us hear what the modern evolutionary theory, which, in the minds of many, is taking the place of Christianity, has to say on this subject. Christianity is peculiarly a religion for the unhappy. The evolutionary doctrine, as commonly understood, I fear, is essentially a doctrine for the happy. It appeals to the strong, to the able, to those who survive in the battle of existence. It likens the progress of mankind to the march of a host of mail-clad soldiers through a narrow street. The street is full of people, and some are crowded against the wall and crushed to death, while others are flung

upon the ground and trampled under foot, but the stately procession marches on with bands playing and banners flying, and the cries of the wounded and dying resound unheeded. Now, this may be a very comfortable doctrine for those who are "fit," but how about the great multitude of the unfit, who hear from the evolutionists that their purpose in life is to go to the wall—that their mission is fulfilled in being exterminated—that their business is to be trampled on the ground, and to let the car of progress drive over their prostrate bodies! I doubt whether they will feel very much elated by such a view of existence. And the poor, the sick, the sorrowful, the guilty whose cause we are considering to-day, *do* all belong to the class of the unfit. They all represent failure in one or another of its forms. The poor have failed to secure for themselves material prosperity—they are unfit, so far as pecuniary success is concerned. The sick have failed to secure physical health—they are unfit, so far as soundness of body is taken into account. The sorrowful have failed to win the great desideratum of happiness—their lives are failures so far as joy is concerned. The guilty have failed to secure inward satisfaction and repose—their lives are failures so far as moral healthfulness is concerned. "Failures are ye all, in different ways, ye poor, ye sick, ye mourners, and ye guilty ones," says the evolutionary theory. There is only one consolation to be offered you, namely, you are necessary failures. As it is necessary that millions of seeds should be scattered upon the ground in order that a few may take root and flourish, as it is necessary in a lottery that a whole series of unlucky numbers should be drawn in order that the lucky one may arrive—so is it necessary, the world

being arranged as it is, that there should be a multitude of the unfit, in order that a few fit and efficient ones may be developed, that a multitude should dwell in poverty, in order that a comparative few may be prosperous, that a multitude should be sick, in order that a few may be sound, that a multitude should be unhappy, in order that a few may be glad, that a multitude should fall into moral error, in order that the laws may be discovered by obedience to which the few can save their souls alive. But I doubt whether this is a very cheering or inspiring doctrine to those who happen to be on the wrong side of life's opportunities. I doubt whether the unlucky numbers in a lottery, if they were endowed with consciousness, would feel very much comforted by being told that their existence is necessary in order that the lucky number may arrive. I doubt whether the million seeds that rot uselessly in the soil, if they could take on the consciousness of living souls, would feel very much consoled by being told that their destruction was necessary, in order that a few more fortunate seeds might take root and mature. And I doubt whether the multitude of human beings who are possessed of a living consciousness, do feel very much comforted or elated when they hear the strange gospel of the evolutionary doctrine, that their failure, the shipwreck of their hopes, their sad, blighted lives, their indiscriminate annihilation, is necessary in order that a few favored ones of the human race may reap the full harvest of advantage. I am not now speaking of the evolutionary theory as it might be taught. I am speaking of that doctrine as it is commonly understood, as it is generally interpreted by those who apply the analogies of the animal world, without due discrimi-

nation or allowance for differences, to the world of beating, human hearts—who discern in human life nothing but a reproduction of that struggle for existence which we see exemplified among lions, and tigers, and apes—who recognize no other goal of human endeavor but success—success in adjusting one's self to the conditions of one's environment; and who have but scant pity, and scantier consolation, for those who have indubitably failed—for the poor, the sick, the miserable, and the sinful. These classes—and their numbers count by millions on millions—if they have lost the faith of their childhood, if they look on the evolutionary theory as a substitute for the religion of olden time, will receive but a dull response to their agonized appeals; and in place of the celestial song that once struck with its ravishing music upon their ears, they will hear only a mournful dirge. Your mission is to go to the wall—your highest glory is to accept in mute patience the fact that your lives are failures, and to be consoled by thinking that your defeat will pave the way to others' success.

But even the doctrine of perfection as the aim of life, which we teach, and which is the central principle of ethical religion, seems at first glance to open up but a dismal outlook to those who most need to be encouraged. This principle was expressed last Sunday by Mr. Sheldon, in substantially this language: As we can imagine an incipient crystal seeking to shape itself into as perfect a crystal as possible, as we can imagine an acorn seeking to grow into the stately proportions of a perfect oak tree, so we can realize the impulse of a human soul that seeks to shape itself into as perfect a specimen of humanity as possible. But how will this message of perfection

as the goal of life, fit the case of the classes whom we are considering? And we are bound to consider this question with entire frankness—we are bound to put ourselves into the place of the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, the sinful. Let the poor stand for the moment as the type of all the rest. I believe that there are a great many persons in prosperous circumstances who never stop to reflect how the abjectly poor feel—who never stop to think how they would look on life if they were in the poor man's situation. I want to ask this very question now—how we would feel if we were on the under side of life? If we were deep, deep down in the scale of existence? How that religion, of which we think so highly now, would then content us? And to bring out the point as clearly as possible, to ward off the objection that the poor are fortunately prevented by dull habit from realizing their condition—that they do not know what they lack, and thus do not feel their situation as keenly as we might suppose, I shall assume the case of one who received a good education early in life, and who once lived in affluence, but who has been reduced by a series of adversities to the lowest level of want. Such cases do occur. I am not offering a figment of the brain in place of reality. We all know of such cases. And now, I ask, would our religion fit the circumstances of such a one? Would he derive a genuine comfort from it? Would he, supposing him to have lost the faith of his childhood, find a new stay and support in it? For it must fit the circumstances of such persons, or else it is only a fair-weather religion; and we might as well give it up at once, if in the hour of direst need it is likely to fail us. I meet, then, with such a person as I have



described, and he says to me: "Oh, you are teaching an ethical religion, I understand; you speak of perfection as the aim of life. Well, there are various elements, I suppose, that make up the perfect. You want us to aim at physical development, in the first instance. But, in that point, your religion does not fit our case at all. You must know that I, and the class for whom I am speaking, are compelled to live in tenement houses, the condition of which is notoriously unsanitary. Our children are decimated by the thousands. We, ourselves, are weakened by fevers, and our blood is poisoned by the foul exhalations that pervade the crowded quarters in which we are confined. Moreover, you must be well aware that there are certain diseases which are directly traceable to our occupations in factories and mines. We are not responsible for this state of things; we cannot change our occupations, if we desire to earn a living. But a perfect physical development is out of the question for men subjected to such conditions. I confess that I should have no objection whatever to joining an athletic club, to playing tennis on the lawn, or boating on the river. But, unfortunately, I have neither the time nor the means to devote to such methods of physical culture. You say that we should aim to perfect our intellects; that the more a man knows the more human he is. There, indeed, you speak truly. When I was young, I, too, knew the pleasures of the intellect. I went from book to book as a bee goes from flower to flower; and my thirst for knowledge was insatiable. But now I am compelled to work ten hours a day in a factory, and at night I am thoroughly tired. For months I have not opened the cover of a book; and my children, whom I

had hoped to place in the best schools, I have been compelled to take, at a tender age, and put into the treadmill of labor, so that with their little fingers they may help to eke out the subsistence of us miserable ones. Why do you hold out an ideal of development to us who are unable to realize it—who see the beautiful phantom fleeing before them, but who are tied to one spot by weights too heavy to shake off; who feel themselves growing blunter and coarser day by day? You say that men should cultivate the love of the beautiful. Ah, sir, there you are cruelly jesting with us. The love of the beautiful, if we were mad enough to encourage it in ourselves, would make our habitual surroundings ten-fold more revolting than they already are. The æsthetic sense is a curse to those who have not the means of satisfying it, but who are exposed, day by day, to a disgusting contact with all that is unæsthetic. No, your religion of culture may be a very fair religion for rich people, and fine people, or, at least, well-to-do people; but, for us poor folks, I do not see how it will meet our needs at all, how it will help us, how it will console us, how it will do anything but make us feel doubly the unfortunate lot to which we are condemned.”

And this conclusion would follow inexorably if one element of culture had not been thus far left out of sight, and that the principal one of all, of which the poor can acquire full possession as well as the rich—nay, better than the rich; the sick, better than the sound. If we regard the human soul as a golden casket, and every faculty with which our nature is adorned as a gem, then the most precious of all these gems is the moral faculty; so precious that it is worth

more than all the others—that if it remains we can consider ourselves compensated for the loss of all the others. And this gem shines never so radiant as when thick darkness is round about us. It gleams on the forehead of the poor more brilliantly than on the brow of the wealthy. If this be true, then there is always one direction in which we can attain to an exalted humanity, no matter how debasing, and limiting, and circumscribing our external circumstances may be. We may be cut off from the better physical culture, we may be shut out from the higher mental culture for which we thirst, we may be debarred from æsthetic enjoyments. External circumstances have power over us in all these respects, but from ethical culture external circumstances cannot shut us out. On the contrary, those very conditions, which seem most unfavorable to our complete development in other respects, are our strongest allies in helping us to a finer and loftier moral culture. Poverty, sickness, sorrow and the experience of sin, are the great instrumentalities for ethicising our natures. They are dark gateways through which we pass into the very temple of light—into the innermost sanctuary of a noble life. And I make bold to say that no man of all that have lived has become a really great man in the highest sense, unless he has passed through one of these gateways. No matter how gifted he may be in mind or how refined in manner, his character lacks the exalted strain unless he has passed through poverty, or sickness, or sorrow, or sin. At first sight, indeed, the opposite would seem to be true. Poverty is full of perils to the moral nature. It surrounds its victims with evil examples; it encompasses them with narrow conditions as with walls.

To mention two temptations instead of many, it excites the angry passions so that they pass like tempestuous clouds across the reason, obscuring its light, and it tempts to selfish gratification at the expense of others. The workman who comes home late in the evening overpowered with fatigue, and finds a miserable room, a scanty meal, a wife as tired perhaps as he, and fretful in consequence of her work, a crowd of noisy children, is tempted to indulge in outbursts of violent rage, and to vent his irritation on those who have no protection against his moods. The same man, finding life a scene of cares, and home unattractive, no outlook ahead, is tempted to drown his cares in liquor, and to purchase a temporary forgetfulness of trouble at the expense of his manhood and to ruin his family. But, remember that the fiercer the temptations which beset him, the nobler the moral effort that is called forth in resisting them. Moral, like muscular energy, grows with the obstacles against which it is pitted, and the putting forth of moral energy is the highest manifestation of the power of the soul. It is the warrior who, surrounded by enemies, single-handed maintains his own and conquers his foes, whom we call a hero, and whose prowess we celebrate. It is the rider who sits a fiery and vicious steed, curbing his dangerous swiftness, guiding him at his will, whom we call a master horseman. And so we call him a hero who conquers the foes within his own breast—and that soul we admire and revere which can ride its own passions and curb them into obedience to the dictates of reason. The laborer whose every nerve tingles with irritation, and who yet controls himself sufficiently to practice gentleness toward his wife and children, has

accomplished a feat of moral heroism. His soul takes on wings in so doing. He has achieved a great moral success. Call such a life as his a failure? No. In the scroll where moral triumphs are registered, such an act as that ranks him above many who, as the world goes, are considered infinitely his superiors. And if this is so in regard to self-control, the same is true in regard to the virtue of self-sacrifice. If the margin of enjoyment for the poor is narrow, all the greater the merit of those who, having little for themselves, give up that little for the benefit of others. I want to remind you here again of the case, reported to us by one of our district nurses, of a young man of some twenty-six years, who was the only child of an old, bed-ridden, half demented mother, and who passed his whole life in waiting upon that poor creature. He never left her except to procure such work as he might do in her room. He was young and active. He never allowed himself any pleasures, never sought the society of persons of his own age, never had any companions. His sole companion was the old mother who depended upon him and who clung to him with her blind maternal instinct. Since he could not go out to work, but must labor in his room, he often hungered and starved for her sake. One cold, frosty day in the midst of a severe winter, he came to the dispensary to obtain some food, furnished at the diet kitchen, for his invalid mother. He was pale, and shivering with the cold. He wore an old coat which he tried to draw as tightly as possible over his naked chest. The ladies gave him a warm flannel shirt so that he might have some protection against the bitter winter weather. He took it and was very, very grateful in-

deed. A few days after the nurse visited his room and found him again cold and shivering, and when she went to the bed she saw that the warm flannel had been carefully put on the old mother to keep her warmer. Who will say that moral heroism is not possible to the poor? It was precisely poverty that called forth this act of extreme self-denial. And the value of this young man's conduct, who denied himself food, comfort, clothing, companionship, all that young blood craves for, in order to devote himself to the poor bed-ridden mother, is greater than that of many an action which the world blazons forth with its praises. He sacrificed more than many a philanthropist who gives hundreds of thousands from his abundance. His act was grander because the difficulties under which he accomplished it were so much greater. We think too much of the outward results of actions, and too little of the inward struggle out of which they arise, and whose relative difficulty determines all their moral value.

And the same view holds good of the sick. It is precisely because they suffer pain themselves that they are tempted to brood over their own sufferings, and become exacting and impatient, and it is precisely because these temptations are so great that we praise all the more those sick persons who have enough will-power to disguise their pains when they know that relief is impossible, and who, in the midst of their sufferings, still consider how they may save the sufferings of others—sparing the slumbers of their attendants, and studying how they may give as little trouble as possible. Oh, these are angelic natures, these patients. The fire of their sickness purges their character of its last alloy;

and their sweet faces beam upon us with a celestial purity. They lie upon their couch of pain as on a cross. They are moral saviours in our households. Who shall say that these sick persons have no benefit from their sufferings? Outwardly they create no results to which we can point; but their souls grow by means of their sickness. Their sick room is a training room for moral culture; and, if we consider their condition in this light, we shall see what are the uses of adversity. What we *are* is the main thing, not what we *do*. What we do is valuable only in so far as it is a sign of what we are, and we grow to be more through the efficacy of poverty and sickness. The same gain is true of sorrow. Take the instance of a wife who has lost her husband, and who has children dependent upon her for their education. The burden upon such a sad, widowed heart is very heavy, even if she has not to contend against poverty. She feels that her happiness is cancelled. She recurs ever and again to the brighter past, compares it with the empty, dreary present. Even in the education of her children, whenever a difficult question arises, she thinks how different it would have been if the father were living. And so she is tempted to repine, to brood over her losses, and to become selfish in so doing. Grief makes many people selfish. But how does such a woman's soul rise to eminence if, instead of weakly repining, she accepts the situation as it is; if she stanches the flowing wound in her breast; if she turns the key upon her grief, keeping it as a thing of utmost privacy in the inmost chamber of her heart; if she tries to replace her husband for her children and always acts in his spirit; tries to be both father and mother to her

little ones? When we meet such a woman we turn to one another and say, "Here walketh a saint upon earth."

And, lastly, the same is true of sin. I cannot begin to set forth properly what I have in mind on this awful subject. Only this I would say, that the weight of guilt is the heaviest of all to bear; that the effort of one who has had a deep fall, to gather himself together and, step by step, to climb again to the level from which he has plunged, the leaden consciousness of crime hanging to his heels all the while; I say, that effort is the most stupendous of all, and argues the greatest moral energy in him who can make it. For the guilty also there is redemption. "Come ye that are heavy laden unto me, no matter how heavily laden with sin," says every religion, "and I will give you rest." They that have transgressed the moral law realize more than all others the stern, sublime majesty of the power which they have offended. And in a sense greater than words can convey, those who have had the deepest experience of guilt are more capable of a divine transfiguration of their natures. And so the result of all this may be expressed in the words, that proportionate to the difficulties by which a moral effort is attended, is the equivalent moral gain. And if the perfecting of the soul life be our aim and task on earth, then the life of the "unfit" need not be a failure, but may be, in the highest sense, successful. I do not say that poverty, and the other types of suffering, always exalt men's characters. On the contrary, perhaps the majority sink under their burdens, and are degraded by them. But what I do say is, that it is in our power to have it otherwise; that if we only have the will we can convert these shafts, which fortune aims



against us, into rounds of a ladder on which to mount to humanity's grandest heights—that we can “rise on stepping stones of our dead selves to loftier things.”

The greatest of the virtues is *renunciation*. The highest type of morality is achieved by him who renounces in spirit the opportunities which he lacks, and who, under the most trying circumstances, does not remit his efforts, no matter how insignificant their result, to further the kingdom of the good. So long as we still hanker after the opportunities that life denies us, we are their slaves; but when we give them up inwardly, when we manfully determine, under limiting conditions, to make what little effort remains to us, then we have reached the highest type of moral development. The highest type of morality is displayed by aged men, who, with weakened frames and energies impaired, are yet resolved to die in harness. The highest type of morality is displayed by those who, cut off from mind culture, from art culture, from most of the pleasures and comforts of existence, yet keep their morality intact and vigorous, yet nourish, under the ashes of disappointed hopes, the feeblest spark of the spiritual life, because they know that it is a spark from the imperishable fire, from that undying flame which burns at the centre of things, and which is destined to grow brighter and brighter as the ages roll on. Let me endeavor to explain my meaning to you in a parable. There was once a teacher, who was master of a large household and had many pupils. Some of these pupils he placed in his garden, and bade them till the soil and cultivate flowers; and he said: “Fail not to bring your fairest flowers to me.” But they were so much delighted with their occupation, and so much absorbed in the work on which they

were engaged, that they soon forgot entirely about the master who had placed them there. Others of his pupils he sent into his library, and gave them access to many volumes rich in curious learning and garnered wisdom, and bade them ponder deeply over these stores of knowledge, and bring the fruit of their reflections to him. But they soon became engrossed in their studies, and never thought of the master who had given them these opportunities. And, again, a third company of his pupils he sent into his parlors, and said: "Be ye dispensers of the hospitalities of my household. Preside over the feasts, and entertain the guests as they arrive—but forget not to bring the worthiest guests to me." But these, too, became so much interested in their pleasures, that they forgot the master and his charge. But there were others of his pupils who, for an inscrutable reason, the master appointed to the hardest kind of service. He made them doorkeepers to let others into the festive halls, while they themselves were compelled to remain without in the cold. He compelled them to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, and to carry heavy burdens all day long. But lo, and behold! these poor drudges constantly thought of their master. The very repulsiveness of their tasks made them think of him. It was only loyalty to their master, and the thought that there must be some wise purpose underlying all his acts, that kept them faithful to their tasks. And so those who seemed at the greatest distance from him were really nearest to him in their thoughts. Day by day they came to their master, and as they could bring him neither flower or book, they told him of the heavy loads they had borne, of the hard labor they had performed *in the service of his entire household*, out of

implicit respect and obedience to his will. My friends, the power that works for righteousness in the world — that power which no personal attributes can describe—the power whose wisdom is written in the stars of the firmament, whose laws are revealed in the tides of the ocean, in every little flower that blows, and in the conscience of the human soul—the master divinity of the world has assigned some of us to happy lives, to pleasing occupations—has placed some of us in the gardens of life, some in the libraries of life, and has permitted some of us to see the fruits of our labors. And those who are engrossed in their pleasant occupations, are apt to forget the larger connections in which they stand. But some of us have been appointed to do the most menial service, and to bear the heavy loads. Oh, what heavy loads some of us men and women have to bear ! But precisely these that seem the least can be the greatest, if they will render their little service for the sake of the great household of the universe—if they will adopt the world-will into their will—if they will accept the infinite purpose as their purpose.

The standards of success must be reversed. They are all wrong. Men call successful the bold speculator who reaps his millions, the ambitious politician who lays his hand on great office, the clergyman of a leading city church, the pet of society, whom men flatter and women worship. Look into the hearts of these people and you will find them often filled with crude egotism, sensual instincts, absurd conceits. These men are not successful, as you suppose. Measured by the higher standard, their lives are failures, miserable failures. If you want to see the successful man, go down into the haunts of misery. Find me the son whose conduct towards his mother I

have described to-day, and you will behold in him a successful man. Only he is successful who attains a high degree of unselfish morality, who turns his character into gold. And the evils of life which we dread are the very stepping stones which lead to such true success.

In the great academies of the middle ages there were four faculties, from one of which a student must have graduated before he could claim the title of "Learned One." So, too, in the moral academy of life there are four faculties. The name of one professor is Poverty; of another, Sickness; of another, Sorrow; of the last, Sin. Into one of these class-rooms we must enter, the searching examination of one of these professors we must have passed, before we can obtain our degree as Learned in the Art of Life.

This is the thought of which I have long intended to speak, which is necessary to supplement our other teachings, without which our principles are apt to be misunderstood and misapplied. When I meditated the subject of this address, some time ago, I went into our beautiful Central Park. I heard the birds sing about me, I saw the golden sunlight on the grass, I saw the tender green piercing the rind of every tree and bush, I felt around me the great uprising of nature in the spring. And I said to myself, "The message of any religion to mankind must accord with this gladness of the universal life. It must show the darkest evils in such a manner that the light shall stream even through them." And I have endeavored to bring you such a message to-day—the message of the higher life—of the highest life which is possible even to those who are on the lowest levels of life.

# MEMORIAL EXERCISES\*

IN HONOR OF THE LATE

OCTAVIUS B. FROTHINGHAM.

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ADDRESS BY MR. EDMUND C. STEDMAN.

WHEN the death of Mr. Frothingham was announced, ten days ago, and the papers recalled the events of his eminent career, I am sure that the emotion which many in this great audience must have felt was, like my own, of a somewhat peculiar nature. Of course, there was the pang which we felt in realizing that the final hour had come; that we should never read or listen to his words again; that there was no hope of a possible return to his embassy here; but mingled with that was the reflection that for many of us the bitterness of death in his case was long since past; that sixteen years ago he disappeared from our sight almost like an ancient prophet that had been translated, or like some old philosopher that left his disciples and the world when his work was done.

Every man has two earthly lives—the one in which we see him live and move and have his being; then he

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\* Under the auspices of the Society for Ethical Culture, of New York, at Carnegie Music Hall, Sunday, December 8th, 1895.

passes to the shrouded portal, enters, and what lies beyond as yet we do not know. But the second life is that which lives in the memory of those who knew him. His image lingers in every mind, his words we still seem to hear. One by one, we gradually also withdraw, and with each withdrawal the memories which constitute the second life grow less and less. Now, I do not remember another modern instance of a leader who so suddenly and unexpectedly and apparently at the crowning period of his work, felt himself forced to give it up, withdrew himself, and was seen no more. Indeed, it almost did seem as if, save for an occasional word which came from his elegant pen, he was disembodied, and remained only in the memory of those who sat under his teaching, and shared his aspirations, and were somewhat sustained by his own great hopes.

As one of those, I never saw his image more visibly, never had closer recollections of him than I have at this moment, before this audience, so much larger than that which used to gather in Masonic Hall. As a member of that congregation, I feel that what I can say about him must be limited to those five or six years in which I knew him, and I was admitted to his friendship, saw him in his own house, went every Sunday to his church, and realized the strength of both his public and his private nature. Those who come after me will have much to say, undoubtedly, of his career, of his advance in freedom of opinion, of his beautiful characteristics, of his love and comprehension of children—with whom he was at his best. But I will speak of the impression formed upon my mind by attendance upon his church and personal acquaintance with him.

I have heard Masonic Hall called the "Cave of Adullam." Well, that was in those old times which were, after all, so very recent. To say nothing of the advance in Unitarianism since that time—it was before we heard much of the later criticism; certainly it was before the sermons delivered in the Old South Church in Boston, that old, historic church, by one of Boston's famous Congregational ministers. If the people that gathered in Masonic Hall were those who went to the "Cave of Adullam," they were not the city's outlaws. They were among the strongest, the most refined, the most moral, cultivated and aspiring minds we had in New York—they and their households. They went there for liberty, for spiritual and intellectual liberty. You have all heard of a book called "The Greatest Thing in the World," in which that greatest thing is pronounced to be love, but for many free and independent minds there can be no lasting love without liberty, and it is a fact that until the formation of this Society, until the coming together of you whom I see before me, for many years in New York there was not a place of worship, well-known, where men could come together and think and feel exactly as they chose, where there was absolute freedom of opinion, where no question was asked as to creed or dogma. Creed and dogma—if a man went there with them—after a while became less and less under Mr. Frothingham's teaching. Morality, hope, enthusiasm, love for humanity, the desire to do right because it was right,—these were all in all.

That audience,—smaller than this, but one which grew to be large and powerful, Jew and Gentile side by side, people originally starting from every creed and denomi-

nation, and the stranger within our gates,—was held together by the personality, power, enthusiasm and beautiful character of Octavius Brooks Frothingham.

We remember him as he stood there in that Hall, Sunday after Sunday, a New Englander of the New Englanders, but an Athenian of ancient Athens as well as of the modern. It was wonderful to see him; his strong but graceful figure wearing the scholar's outward grace, to watch his features, of the classical Down-East Brahmin type, and his blue-gray eyes, always penetrating, finally inspired; to listen to his voice, at first somewhat stifled, muffled, but gradually becoming sonorous and musical, and rising to eloquence. There he stood, Sunday after Sunday, pouring forth those marvelous discourses, every sentence containing an epigram, an image, a thought or a noble sentiment. They were closely knit together, compact, sounding like Emerson's Essays, except that they were infused with eloquence, and had an architecture that Emerson never attained. In fact, it could be said of him more than of Emerson, as Lowell said, that he had "a Greek head on right Yankee shoulders;" for, in the first place, he had that love for beauty which is characteristic of the poet. He was an aristocrat, as has been said, but it has also been rightly said that he was a democrat in his passion for humanity, in his conviction; and wherever taste and conviction came in conflict, taste was given the go-by.

Mr. Frothingham came to New York because his field was the world. He did not come as a good many clergymen have been called here, to find wealth, power and a large emolument awaiting him. He came to create his own audience, to make his own power. We have seen



hundreds of enterprises started here, thousands of people coming here and beating like waves against the great rock of this town and then falling back. Mr. Frothingham essayed at first the outposts of Jersey City ; but he finally came here, and little by little, against every impediment, found his way to what he desired,—a hearing, and a band of loyal devotees and adherents. He was eminently the Puritan. I have often thought that if he had lived one hundred and fifty years ago, with his force, his unflinching honesty and his logic, he would have been a Jonathan Edwards ; just as I think that if Jonathan Edwards had lived in our time, with his ardor and honesty, and a different set of premises,—with our knowledge of literature and modern science, he would have been something like Octavius Frothingham.

Well, as I have said, the time came when, at what seemed to us the very best moment of his work, he threw it up. His greatest success in life was when it seemed as if he had made a failure, for he demonstrated the real power of what he had done. He knew better than we did that his work was ended. His twenty years of work here had wrought out its own salvation. He also knew, which we did not know, that his physical strength had been exhausted in the effort, and that his mental force and power depended somewhat on it ; and, beyond that, he was no longer a voice crying alone in the wilderness. Other voices were heard in answer to it. He saw that the time had come, not merely for the pure mathematics of his religion, but for the applied mathematics which we have before us to-day ; for which his age, his strength, and his own temperament, perhaps, rendered him no longer fit.

I have said that every man has two earthly lives. To this I can add that he also seems to have a third, if a true man, which is greater than either of them. That is the spiritual force of the vibrations which he sets in play. Those sent forth by Mr. Frothingham were never more powerful for the present, nor more potential for the future, than they are to-day. They will last long after the very names of all of us here have passed away, although people may not be able to trace them.

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ADDRESS BY MR. GEORGE HAVEN PUTNAM.

It is sixteen years since the man whose work we are here to-day to commemorate preached his last sermon and finished his active service as a teacher in this community. The congregation to which he spoke is scattered. The preacher had founded no sect and had left behind him no persisting organization. In the shifting interests of a great city like this, words spoken half a generation ago are easily forgotten, and it is possible that, to many of the younger members at least of this congregation, the name of Octavius Frothingham is hardly known. By them the question may naturally be asked, What was it that this man did which, at the time of his death, calls for appreciative commemoration? That question Dr. Adler and some others of the friends of Mr. Frothingham are here to-day to answer.

Our friend, our teacher, who has gone before, was not only a man of rare qualities, a man whose character and

personal influence counted for much with a large circle of friends, but he was an intellectual and a moral force, the influence of which force abides in the community. The thought of the man, the beliefs of the preacher, are to-day influencing the thoughts and beliefs of many preachers who never heard his word, and will help to shape the convictions of thousands of hearers to whom his name has never been known.

In 1847, when Mr. Frothingham began his work as a preacher, the difficulties in the way of freedom of thought and freedom of expression, from the pulpit, were many and serious. The work of one who undertook to come before the public as a religious teacher, without basing his teaching upon one of the hereditary creeds, was a difficult task. It is not easy for you younger people to realize to-day how exceptional a courage was required at that time to stand before the community and, discarding the doctrinal foundations and the denominational associations, to preach the responsibility of the individual and the power of a faith which was apart from creeds. That courage Mr. Frothingham possessed in a rare degree ; but he possessed much more. In the readiness to withstand the opinions and to incur the criticisms of an orthodox community, he was not entirely alone. During these earlier years of his work Theodore Parker was already preaching in Boston, and Samuel Johnson had begun his work as a teacher. But Mr. Frothingham brought to his teaching not merely the courage, the incisive force, the pureness of purpose, the absolute intellectual integrity, which were characteristic also of men like these ; he brought further a certain distinctive method that was very much his own. He gave to the consid-

eration of the problems of eternity—those problems which, like the poor, we have always with us—an intellectual perception, a historic sense, which seem to me to constitute a distinctive contribution to controversial method, to doctrinal analysis. He insisted that the honest and intelligent holding of a conviction required a thorough understanding of the convictions to which it was opposed. He possessed what is so rare a quality in a reformer, not merely adequate knowledge of what has gone before and of the creeds he was controverting, but a keen and full appreciation of the men who had held these creeds.

Reformer and radical as he was, in certain methods of thought he was essentially a conservative. This believer, this teacher of men, was prepared to give full weight to the faith of earlier believers, to the opinions of the teachers of past generations. He had the historic sense. He felt the everlasting purpose that runs through the life of humanity. In that cordial appreciation, in that thorough historic sense, he stood almost alone among his colleagues of that day. That keenness of insight, that fairness of appreciation, is something that has grown largely through his influence. Parker was described by Lowell as an Orson among parsons, and by Wasson as a Hercules coming to the task of cleansing an Augean stable; Mr. Frothingham was no Hercules. His arguments did not remind one of clubs. Invective was for him impossible.

In this contest carried on by Protestants against Protestantism, if we may refer to Parker as filling the rôle of a Luther, it may not be unfitting to compare the work of Frothingham to that done by Erasmus. Froth-

ingham possessed, however, the power unknown to Erasmus, as to most controversialists—that of opposing without bitterness and without antagonizing. One might think of him standing like the prophet of old listening for the divine voice, and for him, as for the prophet, the Lord did not come in the whirlwind, but in the still, small voice of reason. Reason was his guide ; reasonableness was the thing essential.

Earnest in his convictions concerning human freedom, Frothingham early took a strong part in the Massachusetts community in the fight against the slavery policy of the nation, and, in fact, it was partly his connection with the anti-slavery movement that caused the breach in his relations with his rather conservative church community in Salem. With all other interests that he took upon himself, he continued always devoted to the anti-slavery cause. He worked faithfully for years as Secretary of the National Freedmen's Association in this city, an association organized during the war by men like Francis Shaw and Charles Collins, to do what could be done for the refugee contrabands ; and which, later, after the war was over, was of continued service in finding for these contrabands work, homes and education.

The refined courtesy of Mr. Frothingham's manner was with him, as with his old friend, George William Curtis, simply an outside indication of his nature—an evidence of the consideration for the thought, the feelings, and the convictions of others—which influenced and controlled every action and every utterance. Mr. Frothingham had a great abhorrence for a kind of blatant freedom of thought and freedom of speech which characterizes too many so-called liberals in our community,

men who think they hold advanced views, and who call themselves liberals because they have learned to scoff at the creeds of others. He emphasized the absurdity of a belief in individualism which denied to others the right of holding individual convictions upon the old-time creeds. He was accustomed, however, to use the term "creed" to describe a group of convictions which had become fixed, crystalized and rigid, while the term "belief" stood for something vital, organized, developing from generation to generation into fresh aspiration.

He accepted for religion, as for the world of nature, the doctrine of evolution. Creeds were to him, of necessity, evolutions from all that had gone before. I recall how, in one of his sermons on the Radical's Root, he emphasized the necessity for the radical to have his faith firmly rooted in the belief from which it sprang. If a radical faith was a real growth, it must have for its foundation the historic faiths. He defined a radical as a man who went to the root of essential things, as opposed to the superficial man, who accepted creeds and beliefs merely by tradition. "Accept nothing by tradition," he would say, "as certainly true for yourself, but study what history has given to you; learn to appreciate at its full value what your fathers have believed and what they have done." With that idea, he frankly accepted for the truths that were in them the great creeds of the world.

Puritan of the Puritans, he realized what Puritanism had done for character. In a sermon on the Cardinal's Beretta he described, in like manner, the enormous service rendered to humanity by the magnificently organized Roman Catholic Church; and while empha-

sizing the impossibility of accepting to-day the claims and contentions of Rome, he spoke of the church in a manner that could hardly have offended the most devoted Romanist. In a sermon on Buddha he described eloquently what the Oriental mind had been able to contribute to the thought and aspirations of humanity. I recall another sermon on the Belief of the Unbelievers, in which he emphasized the fact that intelligent unbelief required a very large measure of faith. He cited the names of men who for centuries had been stigmatized by the orthodox as enemies of mankind—men like Voltaire, Rousseau, Paine and Spinoza—and he emphasized what they had contributed to the positive faith and to the enlightenment of mankind. In another sermon on Duties and Dreams, a sermon preached on the day on which this Society began its work, he spoke with the most cordial hopefulness of the power that lay with this new organization, and of the work to be done by its leader, work the full extent of which he himself at that time could, of course, not have foreseen.

This is, to my mind, the distinctive contribution of Octavius Frothingham to the religious, the moral, the intellectual thought of his generation—the full appreciation of all that had gone before, the insistence that what there was to-day was the natural development of all that had honestly been held by previous generations.

I remember, in his sermon on the Puritan Spirit, his emphasizing the sadness that comes on one generation after another when the sons must break away from the faith of the fathers ; when, like the sons of Zebedee, they find themselves obliged to follow a new teacher.

But, accepting the inevitable sadness, he pointed out the lesson that there was, in that very relation, in the fact that we are all sons not merely of physical, but of spiritual, fathers; that we have all this debt of obligation to acknowledge to them. The breaking away from their faith should not mean a lack of affectionate regard on our part for them, but a cordial, sympathetic appreciation of all that they have believed. It was that delicacy of perception, that keenness of sympathy, that realization of the mental attitudes of other people, which was so rare in a reformer and which in Mr. Frothingham was a natural and an essential part of his work as it was an essential part of his character.

Mr. Stedman associates him with Emerson. But there was something in him stronger and more direct in his influence than anything I can recall in Emerson's teaching. He had an appreciation of the fact that humanity was waiting for guidance, waiting for suggestions for definite work, and he did what was in his power to shape such suggestions. Another recollection I have of him is closely associated with his old-time friend, Mr. George William Curtis. Both men possessed that charm of manner which rests upon a sympathetic appreciation of the ideas of other men, and which made it possible for those who disagreed entirely with either Frothingham or Curtis to listen to the words spoken by them without a feeling of annoyance, and with hardly a feeling of antagonism. And it is important, not merely for the present generation, but for generations to come, to bear in mind that it is impossible to exercise a wholesome or elevating influence over the mental attitudes of others without a realizing sense of



what those attitudes actually stand for, and how they have come into being.

Frothingham's work as a preacher was completed sixteen years ago. The influence of his thought has affected not merely those who are more or less in sympathy with his work, not merely men like the leader of this Society, and his old friend Chadwick, of Brooklyn, and others who have taken up the liberal work; it has modified the teachings from hundreds of so-called orthodox pulpits; and it is to be borne in mind, in estimating the influence of radical teaching, that it is not to be measured by the size of the congregation, even when a teacher has before him a congregation like this. It is a certainty that because of the work and the courage, the intellectual integrity and the capacity of men like Parker, Frothingham, and of such associates and successors as Chadwick, Adler, Savage and others, there are to-day being preached in Presbyterian pulpits, in Episcopal pulpits, and in Methodist pulpits, doctrines which, a quarter of a century ago, would have been considered impossible heresies. Theirs is the influence which is accountable for much of the intellectual civilizing of the generation, and while it is difficult to measure the full extent of such influence, we may have some conception of its range and power. Frothingham worked and lived his life unselfishly, with the sole purpose of doing his part in behalf of the community in which he was placed. He was entirely free from self-seeking. As he stood on his platform and spoke to those who were before him it was evident that he had forgotten himself. He was thinking, not of the impression that he was to make, but of the thought and

purpose of his message. Absolutely regardless of the mannerisms of oratory, never thinking of himself as an orator, he arose at times, through absorption in his subject and devotion to his ideal, to a very high grade of eloquence; and it is difficult in reading the printed words to-day (beautiful and finished as these are) to gather the full effect of the spoken words upon those who listened to him.

The thought of the generation for which he worked has been advanced by his thought, and the community in which he lived is the richer, the wider, the better, for his life.

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ADDRESS BY JUSTICE GEORGE C. BARRETT.

OTHERS have spoken of Mr. Frothingham's life work. The few words I have to contribute will be more personal. I shall speak as his parishioner and friend.

I first heard Mr. Frothingham when he was preaching in the old church in Fortieth street. Myself the son of an Episcopal clergyman, you may imagine what a revelation he was to me. Accustomed to the formalism of the Church, to the antiquated religious fugue issuing from a poor little spinnet, I found myself listening to a magnificent tone-poem executed upon a modern grand. There was freshness of thought, keen analysis, cogent logic, pure diction — all presented with an ineffable charm of manner. What especially appealed to the judicial mind was his controversial fairness. He invariably understated the facts upon which his own position rested, while he gave full and adequate expression to the adver-

sary's argument. Having fairly stated the case upon each side, he drew the just conclusion—drew it with unerring logic and splendid mental force. I felt at once the spell of his magnetic mind and the fascination of his personality—a spell and fascination which lasted until the end of his career. Well do I remember the glow of anticipation with which I looked forward each Saturday to the intellectual treat of the morrow ; and well do I remember the sense of renewed strength with which each Monday morning I went to my work, and the determination to do that work in a manner worthy of the inspiration.

We became fast friends. As a friend I can bear witness to what has occasionally been doubted — namely, the warmth of his heart. To the casual observer, even to the unobservant friend, he presented at times a cold exterior. But he was not cold ; his heart was warm. He loved humanity in the concrete as well as in the abstract. I venture respectfully to differ with the first speaker in his characterization of Mr. Frothingham as an aristocrat. I should use a different word. I should say that he was essentially a patrician, but not an aristocrat. One is hardly an aristocrat whose heart is democratic. He may not have been so closely in material touch with suffering humanity as others gifted with different natures, but he sympathized with and aided them in their special work. He was, in fact, a leader in all good work, and an inspirer of all noble actions. The leader and the inspirer have their great places in the world as well as the inspired ; whether it be the inspiration of literary genius or the leadership of the man of action, the inspiration of the poet or the example of the philanthropist.

You remember Theodore de Banville's beautiful little prose poem called "Gringoire" — Gringoire, the poor, ragged, wretched poet. You remember the sweet story — the apotheosis of the poet; how the woman he loved reproached him that he was not a soldier and that he did not fight for his country; how, because of this, she taunted him with cowardice. Poor Gringoire — until then timid, hesitating, speechless. The taunt arouses the poet's soul. The divine afflatus sweeps over him. The worm becomes exalted as he replies: "No, mademoiselle, not *lache*. True, I am a poet. Would you know what that is? I am not a soldier, but I breathe life and heroism into the soldier's soul. My words touch the hearts of kings. My verses soften their purposes, and change their cruelty into mercy. My burning thoughts uplift the lowly; and inspire the poor, the downtrodden and the wretched with courage and with hope. And it is to the music of my songs that the soldiers of our country sweep on to battle. Every heart beats with higher patriotism, with greater courage, with purer love, with deeper loyalty, because of the poor poet's muse." Who shall say that Gringoire was not worthy of his Loyse? And who shall say that he was not worth a *corps d'armee* to his country?

The great leader who wields the *baton* over a hundred executants, is he not the incarnation of the symphony? Mr. Frothingham wielded the leader's *baton*. He was the incarnation of the symphony of human endeavor and human love; and when at last he laid the *baton* down, it was sadly and reluctantly.

Well I remember the latter incident. I asked him if the rumor were true that he was about to resign. He

said "Yes." With profound regret I expressed my wonder that one in the zenith of his fame and seemingly in the plenitude of his power should suddenly abandon the field, and I asked him why he did so. The answer was characteristic. He said: "My friend, I am the final attenuation of the old school. Professor Adler is the commencement of the new." It was all in those few words. He realized that his school was the school of criticism; that it was not directly constructive; and that the new school was founded upon an organization—an organization which it was hoped would live after the builder had passed away. His own Society he felt was the outcome of his personality, and he feared that it would pass away when the inspirer was gone. He outlined this idea in his last address in Masonic Temple. The occasion was pathetic. He implored his people not, when he had departed, to dissolve into thin air. He begged them to try to find some resting place for their feet. With a flash of the old satire—gentle, playful, never bitter—he exclaimed, "For heaven's sake do not become spiritual tramps!" Have we heeded the admonition? Some of us have gone back to the orthodox Unitarian fold. Others have joined the new school. But some, I fear, may be found loitering on the country roads, and approaching the rear entrance of the farm houses.

Well, he has gone, but he has left much behind. Not an institution, not an organization; he was right about that. There remains, however, his imperishable thought and his lofty example. It is the example of a noble life, of an indefatigable worker for the good; the example of a true gentleman and a loyal and devoted friend. And the great, the essential thought which permeates his ser-

mons, his addresses, all his works—the brotherhood of man and the immortal hope. Some of us have faith in the immortal life ; some of us doubt ; but all, I think, have hope ; in that hope we join the chorus this morning that echoes the poet's hymn as our love applies this great hope to our friend :

“ Brother, God grant when this life is o'er  
In the world to come that we meet once more.”

Yes, brother—and more than brother—teacher, inspirer ! Reverently, gratefully, lovingly, I drop my little flower upon thy bier and place my wreath upon thy tomb.

It is a wreath of immortelles.

ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR FELIX ADLER.

MEMORIAL exercises are held in honor of the dead, and for the advantage of the living. Very often we have but an inadequate comprehension of the companions, even the dearest, that walk at our side, until they leave the high road of life and turn into the fields of peace. Then, we are apt to see their receding forms in their true proportion, and then the impulse asserts itself in the hearts of many to render some last service to the dead, to do something to please them, an impulse which shows itself in the lavish care spent on obsequies, in flowers and eulogies. But the dead are past our praising and our pleasing and the function of memorial exercises is, as I have said, a nobler one. They are intended to help us focal-

ize the rays of mental recollection on the picture of the departed, to fix that picture in our minds, to make us realize more clearly, perhaps, than ever before, the nature of the influence which they shed upon our lives, and thus to make that influence deeper and more permanent, a ceaseless benefit, an unwithering possession.

The air we breathe consists of four-fifths of nitrogen and of only one-fifth of oxygen ; yet it is upon the presence of the oxygen that we depend for life and health. So likewise in the mental atmosphere ; the greater part of our thoughts are workaday thoughts ; the greater part of the feelings that pass over the surface of our souls are, I fear, mere egoistic reactions ; the greater part of our volitions are directed to proximate ends. These are the nitrogenous element in our mental atmosphere, and it is upon the higher thoughts, the nobler feelings, the deeds that look toward universal ends, that we depend for our true life.

The merit of Mr. Frothingham has been that he increased the amount of mental oxygen in the atmosphere of this city. The city of New York is a more wholesome, a purer, a healthier place to live in because of the twenty years during which he labored in this community.

Mr. Frothingham says in a certain passage of his works, in that half satirical vein to which allusion has already been made, that it is easier to speak of the dead than of the living because they cannot protest against the handsome things that are said about them, and also because they cannot remonstrate against the unhand-some things that are said about them. And he himself, in speaking of the dead, has freely used the privilege of

criticism. Nothing is more interesting than to pass through that beautiful gallery of portraits which he has hung up for us in his various writings, especially in his "Recollections and Impressions," where we see the pen portraits of his friend Bellows, and of Osgood, of Weiss, and of Emerson, and the picture of his father and mother; and where, moreover, we are haunted throughout by the pictured presence of the author himself, a presence never obtruded but always real. In all of these portraits you will find the shadows put in with the same fidelity as the lights, the excellencies carefully finished off on a never-absent background of corresponding defects.

I do not here intend to offer a character study of Mr. Frothingham, and it will not be necessary to adopt his method in its completeness, but I shall try to be specific in delineating those excellencies of character upon which it is my wish to comment. I wish to consider, in particular, what we owe him; what services he has rendered to the liberal cause, especially in the city of New York. And, in order to answer this question, it will be well briefly to review his career.

His life may appropriately be divided into three periods. The first the Unitarian period, the second the Transcendentalist, and the last the Scientific, though that name is somewhat misleading.

During the early decades of the present century there occurred a moment of halcyon calm in the life of the American people. Liberty had been recently won, was still keenly appreciated as a new-found gain, and felt as a tonic. On the other hand, the age of railroads had not yet opened; the gigantic industrial development of the



latter part of the century had not yet begun ; the labor question was still a mere speck on the horizon which did not cloud its serenity. Out of that peace came the first fruits of American literature and culture ; and in the sunshine of that culture Mr. Frothingham's nature mellowed. That sunshine he absorbed ; it became a part of his being ; it remained characteristic of him always. He passed through Harvard College ; he was graduated from the Divinity School ; he assumed charge of his first congregation at Salem ; and still the surface of his life remained unruffled. At one time, he distinctly felt himself standing at the cross-roads, liberalism on the one hand, conservatism on the other, and he tells us that he deliberately turned in the conservative direction. Mr. Frothingham was always a conservative, not only, as has been said, in his appreciation of the religions of the past, but, as it appears to me, in his very spirit ; and it was this conservatism that explains the peculiar form of his liberalism, as I shall presently endeavor to explain. He was a conservative in temper, a radical in intellect, a poet in imagination, a Puritan in conscience.

The second period of his career is that in which the Transcendentalist philosophy gained the ascendancy over him. But here, again, we see the influence of moral considerations in his development, the effect of conscience in leading him on. As it was his reaction against the fugitive slave law and the approbation of it by members of his congregation that caused the breach in his relations with the Salem people, so it was a new moral influence that turned him toward the Transcendentalist philosophy. He went one day to see Theodore Parker on an errand

of charity ; he remained for years under Parker's influence. And what was it that influenced him in Parker ? The sturdy character of the man, his strong personality. He adopted Parker's philosophy because he believed in the man Parker. He accepted the doctrine because of his admiration for the person who lived it. It has been said that Frothingham was a champion of the intellect. Many have taken that view. It has been said that he addressed himself chiefly to the mind ; and, doubtless, he was a student and a scholar who weighed in fine, golden scales the delicate issues of thought. But the intellectual element was, after all, subordinated in his case, I am persuaded, to the religious, to the moral needs. He saw that a deluge had swept over the earth and was blotting out everywhere the landmarks of the old faith. He felt himself floating on this waste of waters and he sent forth ever and again his intellect as a bird, now in this direction, now in that, to search for the dry land whereon he might rest his ark in safety.

The third period of his career he has described as the scientific. He was, indeed, fully in sympathy with the new age and the new ideas. He believed in man. He believed in the progress of mankind. He was an optimist in his humanitarian enthusiasm. He sought to wed the spiritual and the natural life, not to place them in jealous antithesis, the one against the other. He sought to make men free and self-reliant, to place them on their feet. He disdained sentimentalism. He rebuked morbid, self-torturing, self-abasement. He believed that men should save themselves through their own efforts, and that if they must lean they should lean on one another. He touched a far-reaching truth when, in one of his sermons,

he said that it is "the social spirit and not the theological spirit on which spiritual force depends for its fullness"—the more sociality, the more spirituality—when he declared that in very literal truth, and not figuratively, "we can only be saved if we become members of one another." Yet he was not a scientific man, in the sense that he adopted the results of science as they are stated by many of its professors. He did, indeed, accept the doctrine of evolution in its general sense, but he distinctly did not believe that the higher can be explained as a product of the lower. He did go with the scientists in emphasizing facts and in the desire to be a humble learner from the facts; but he set the facts of the inner life, of the moral life, over against the outer facts, and believed that no method could be just or adequate which omitted or understated these inner facts. At the last he came to rest more and more in moral considerations, and expressly declared that ethical law is the foundation upon which alone the religious superstructure can be raised.

And yet by all this his genius has not been described, the subtle something that marked the idiosyncrasy of his teaching, has not been seized. And we must try to catch the spirit of the man if we would understand him. He was an inveterate doubter who never doubted. He was a liberal, expanding into larger and larger freedom, who always remained a conservative. The sign of the conservative temper is to be found in its unrelaxing adherence to ideas received. Mr. Frothingham, in his youth, had received certain spiritual ideas, such as the belief in the existence of God, in the immortality of the soul. He always retained these ideas; or, rather, let me say, he retained the confidence that he could not lose what

was essential in these ideas. He was always sure of the essential counterpart corresponding to these primary spiritual beliefs. He was never sure about the form in which they should be embodied, about the formulas in which they should be expressed, about the proofs upon which they could be rested. He was all his life a pilgrim moving from station to station. And because he was such an inexorable doubter as to the proofs, as to the arguments; and because, on the other hand, he had a clairvoyant apprehension as to the truth itself, he was ever serene. His doubts and misgivings gave him no pain and caused him no agonizing struggles. But as to the proofs and the arguments he was indeed an inexorable critic. He examined them one by one. He examined the traditional arguments and put them aside. He examined the transcendentalist arguments and discarded them. He examined the scientific arguments and rejected or amended them. He was like an architect who has in mind the idea of an edifice which he wishes to erect, and is extremely critical as to the material in which his idea shall be carried out, and insists on testing every stone as to its soundness before it shall be permitted to enter into his structure. Or, better still, he was like a man who sees a certain goal, who knows that it is his goal but does not know the way to it, and yet is certain that there is a way, and who seems to say to his fellows, "Oh, my brothers, be of good cheer; we shall arrive!"

And because of this blending of doubt with conviction he was peculiarly fitted to be a helper and a guide to many who were passing through the transition stage that leads from the old into the new. He could share

the doubts of such persons ; he could express them because he himself doubted, and yet he communicated a flavor of underlying certainty to all his teachings.

In his youth he walked with a glad and pleasant company, in the sunshine, on the plain. In middle life he walked alone. He threaded the precipitous mountain paths ; he climbed on many a dizzy crag ; at last he stood on a pinnacle from which he could see the eternal mountains of the moral world in their majesty and beheld as from afar " a city that hath foundations."

This is one great service, in my estimation, which Mr. Frothingham rendered to the liberal cause. But there was another equally great, perhaps greater, which he rendered, not by what he did, but by what he was. Of the plant called free thought there are many species. There is the wild species, that has crude common sense for its root, and often develops into the sour crab-apple of aggressive radicalism. There is the poisonous species, that grows out of sheer lawlessness and the rebellious spirit—out of that titanic spirit that aims merely to overturn the throne of Jove on high Olympus. There is also the insipid variety, which grows out of that devitalized thing called indifference. In Mr. Frothingham, on the other hand, we see culture and character blooming into freedom, and free thought retained in him the beauty and the sweetness that belong to culture. And here let me express my profound sense of the immeasurable good that has come to the liberal movement in this city because of the fact that a man of his stature was its first sponsor ; a man so lofty and pure, a man whom nothing base could approach, in whose presence nothing mean could live, who was so full of charity,

courtesy, geniality and sturdy dignity. So that it has come about that free thought, which elsewhere is too often associated with crude thinking, and intemperate speech, and even with questionable morals, has become connected through him with all that is great and fine and high.

Seneca, where he speaks of gratitude, says that two different attitudes are becoming, one to the benefactor and the other to the beneficiary. "Let the benefactor," he says, "forget the benefits he has conferred as quickly as possible. Let the beneficiary never forget the benefits he has received." As to the former of these injunctions, Mr. Frothingham carried it out only too literally. In the self-deprecating spirit of his later years he sometimes questioned whether he had been of any appreciable use, whether anything he had done would be felt to have added to the sum of the world's good. And yet, what greater benefit can there be than to assist others in their spiritual growth, to open their eyes to aspects of truth not seen before, to make the thorny way of life easier, and to teach men to hear above the discords of this world, however far off, the reconciling harmonies?

Let, then, those to whom he has been in a special sense a guide,—yes, let all of us who belong to the liberal movement fulfill on our part the second of Seneca's directions. Let us never forget the benefits which we have received at his hands. And in the name of all who value the cause of religious progress, in the name of this Ethical Society in particular, let us place on his tomb, in silent reverence, our wreath inscribed with the words, "In heartfelt, loving, and lasting remembrance of Octavius Frothingham."







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