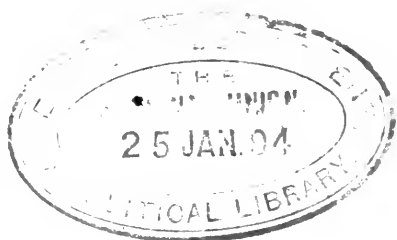


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THE
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THE NEW POLITICUS

A DIALOGUE CONCERNING THE NECESSITY
OF A NATIONAL UNION.
BEING



THE DEVELOPMENT IN A PLATONIC FORM OF A LECTURE
DELIVERED BEFORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL UNION
ON TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 1881

BY

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Of the Inner Temple, Barrister-at-Law
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THE
NEW POLITICUS.



‘Intellectus humanus luminis sicci non est, sed recipit infusionem a voluntate et affectibus.’—BACON, *Nov. Org.* i. 49.

WE have probably all of us heard or read at different times many defences of an Established Church and of Religious Education.

Such defences are common, but they are, for the most part, of one character. They are addressed to a sympathetic audience.

They speak to those who believe in the verities of the Christian Religion and in the necessity of the Establishment, and endeavour to strengthen them in their belief by reminding them of the many blessings and benefits which flow to them from these sources.

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They postulate the truth which they ought to demonstrate, and argue that, as Christianity is the one thing needful, neither State nor Education can be complete without it. Such arguments no doubt have their advantage in the confirming of those who believe. But what of those who disbelieve—who either regard Christianity generally as the relic of a decaying superstition, or do not believe in the efficacy of the particular form of it established in this country? Can such arguments carry conviction to their minds? May not the unbeliever say: ‘All these blessings and advantages that you speak of depend for their certainty upon promises contained in a book, of which we disbelieve the authenticity; written by an author whom we believe to be an impostor. If you are going to argue from statements contained in that book, you must first establish its authority.’ Having thus demolished the ‘*petitio principii*’ of the faithful,

they then proceed by the usual argument from expediency, toleration, and equality, to demolish their conclusions and the Establishment.

Perhaps we are all of us too timid about the grounds of our political and religious belief. We assume that in such matters 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' We fancy that those truths which we most reverence and upon which we acknowledge that our everlasting happiness must depend, inhabit the world of thought, and depend for their reality solely upon the authority of Almighty God Himself. Or, again, we are sometimes apt to resent any attempt to support an institution which we believe to have a divine origin, by arguments drawn from expediency or necessity. We think it beneath the dignity of the cause to seek for such allies. But if we really believe that our religion and Church

are of divine origin and sanction, how can we doubt that by this time so goodly a tree should be known by its fruits? If we really wish to persuade others of the necessity of that which we believe—to convert the unbelieving—must we not be content to use arguments which may carry with them a conviction of the *expediency* of our faith, even to those who cannot believe in its *reality*?

My endeavour, then, in these pages, will be to suggest a line of argument to be addressed to those who do not believe in the divine origin of Christianity. I believe that it can be demonstrated, so far as anything political is capable of demonstration, from the results of the past political experience of mankind as recorded in history;—from the present political experience of each one of us, gathered from our observation of what is every day going on around us;—from the acknowledged psychological influences by which men, and especially

masses of men, are excited or controlled ;—that, whether Christianity itself be true or false, an endowed Christian Church, by law established in any country, is based upon an expediency amounting to necessity. That if such an institution did not already exist, it should be created.

I have said that I shall endeavour to *suggest* a line of argument, because to develop fully such a position would be impossible within reasonable limits ; and a few salient examples are sufficient for my purpose ;—to indicate the direction of the attack, leaving the details to be followed out by the individual commanders.

As regards the form of my argument, I have ventured upon a great experiment, by adopting that of a Platonic Dialogue.

I have done so for this reason. Any argument in support of an Established Church must of necessity rest to some extent upon a

review of the effects of religion upon men's lives and conduct—a subject which is now-a-days regarded as the peculiar province of the preacher. In the time of Plato it was thought to be within the sphere of the philosopher and the politician. I have some hope that the familiar Platonic form may avoid what is one of the chief difficulties in the treatment of this subject—namely, that flavour of the pulpit which is uncongenial to political discussion.

It was about two hours after sunset, on a fine summer evening last year, when our friend the Politician entered our house and sat down amongst us. You know, I believe, the man I mean, though I dare not mention his name, lest some informer should make mischief. He is, as you know, a true Politician. Not one so called, holding some office in the State, who out of a shallow empiricism provides hurried

remedies for temporary grievances. Our Politician is a philosopher. He is not wholly absorbed in the petty facts of his everyday experience, but has ascended the mountain of knowledge, and seen the whole world spread out before him in the light of the sun. He stands and views, as it were, the country from afar off, and surveys the entire political horizon both of the past and present. He is not frightened by old-world tales about religion and the gods, nor does he believe in any particular form of religion, for he is a philosopher. He is swayed by no sectarian or factional bias, but only by an absolute desire to rule the State for the common weal. Being, however, experienced in the events of history, and the causes of the growth and decay of nations; knowing that the only way to make citizens happy and prosperous is to attract them towards that which is good and true, and to repel them from that which is evil and false ;

he is curiously absorbed sometimes in the study of the baits and impulses by which men may be led or driven, and every condition or circumstance of life which may tend to their general happiness or misery. These he endeavours to group, and arrange, and to reduce to general principles. And thus he acquires a power of political foresight which enables him to suggest laws for the government of the citizens in the way that is best for themselves and the whole State. He is generally merry and talkative; but on this night he was so reserved and silent that we all cried out upon him, and asked him if he had seen a ghost. 'I have,' said he, 'and have been taught many things that I never before realised.' Whereupon we all asked what manner of apparition this might be, thinking at first that he was laughing at us. But when we saw that he was serious, we begged him to tell us all that he had seen and heard. 'Well,' said he, 'I will tell you; for of all things

that have ever happened to me this was the most strange. But be sure you do not whisper it in the city, or men will say that I am mad.'

So we all sat still, and promised that, like the Homeric chieftains, we would 'hold great silence.'

I was walking, said he, upon the edge of the cliff which overhangs the city on its southern side, when I was accosted by a stranger, dressed after the fashion of the reign of Elizabeth. He was of noble mien. His lofty brow was furrowed with care and study, and he looked like one who contemplates things present and to come. In his hand he bore some old-fashioned scientific instruments, with which he appeared to have been conducting an experiment. And while I wondered to see such a man walking upon the surface of the earth, he approached me, as though he had expected to see me there, and

he said: 'What is your meditation?' 'I am a politician,' said I, 'and I am meditating upon the art of governing men. I have long been trying to discover what influences can be brought to bear upon their hearts, to make them choose the good and refuse the evil—how you can persuade men to sacrifice their own wishes and control their passions, in order to be virtuous themselves, and to help to make their fellow-citizens virtuous and happy. Such I see is the great end of life, and yet I know of no political power which can be brought to bear upon men's lives, continuously, day by day, so that they may form such habits of virtue and self-sacrifice that the fascinations of the world of sense cannot entice them to evil. What power can order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men?'

'I, too,' said he, 'have been a politician; and I guided my country through perilous times. I have read many laws both good and

bad ; and have heard many precepts of philosophers. I will open you the book and loose the seals thereof.

‘ Know you, then,’ said he, ‘ O Politician, a great truth, one which was for a long time overlaid by the fantastic arguments of the schoolmen, but which I unearthed after much patient toil. This truth I taught to men while I lived, and though I am no longer upon the earth, the scientific study of nature is still conducted according to my method. And yet, strange to say, although in the investigation of things inanimate men proceed in this manner ; when dealing with the souls of men, a far nobler material, they neglect the true method, and argue either from general principles which they have not established, or from dogmas of their own faction, which they have learned by rote, and have not examined. Nevertheless, this truth is far more important in the science of politics than in any other

field of knowledge, in proportion as man is a more noble subject than the beasts or the elements. Learn then this truth, O Politician, and have it written in every school in letters of gold, that the youth of your country may early imbibe the spirit of true philosophy. First hear this :

“Man is but the servant and interpreter of nature. He can do and understand so much only as he may have discovered by experiment or observation in the order of nature ; nor can he know or do anything further.”¹

‘And again :

“There is no other means of entering the kingdom of men, which is founded in philosophy, than there is of entering the kingdom of Heaven, into which, save as a little child, it is not permitted to enter.”²

‘If you, O Politician, are willing humbly to enquire of nature, I will be her interpreter.’

¹ Bacon, *Nor. Org.* i. 1.

² *Ibid.* i. 68.

‘Most willingly,’ I replied, ‘for the true philosopher is ever willing to learn.’

Then he took me up into an exceeding high mountain, from the edge of which we could see across a deep valley to a dark cliff which towered above us upon the farther side. And as I gazed stedfastly across the valley, wondering what might come to pass, a mist hid the face of the cliff, and when it rolled away I saw the forms of men moving on the surface thereof, as it had been colossal pictures upon the living rock. They seemed to be grouped in scenes, which changed continually, like dissolving views upon a canvas screen.

And as I wondered at this strange appearance, and stood like one who dreams waking, the stranger said to me : ‘This, O Politician, is the panorama of the history of the world, and I will be the showman of it. It is in this way that Nature records her experiments upon man, just as your printed books and

diagrams record the experiments of men upon the physical phenomena of the earth.'

'Truly,' I replied, 'it is a wonderful show, and one that all our citizens should be brought to see when children.'

'We will let the scenes change,' said the stranger, 'until one appears which is of great interest. For I have always taught that the minds of men are more easily convinced by a few conspicuous instances than by many of less moment.'

Then I looked, and lo! the images passed in continual procession before me, and the stranger expounded their meaning in order.

First I saw a small Arab tribe crossing the river Jordan, and penetrating into Palestine. They were beset by dangers on every side; surrounded and attacked by many tribes more numerous and more powerful than themselves. Yet they drove all before them, and established themselves as con-

querors where their forefathers had been but sojourners. I saw them through many centuries still maintain their country and independence, though with varying limits of success, until, under the mighty Solomon, they became the most powerful of all Eastern races. I saw them from that time dwindle and decay, until at length they were carried away captive by another people, and were scattered amongst the nations. And again, many, many years afterwards, I saw them reappear in all their pristine vigour and ferocity, to found anew their ancient capital, and to maintain their independence for a time even against the might of Rome. I saw them fall finally only after a struggle which taxed all the energies of their conquerors. This same tribe I further saw, in after years, scattered throughout all nations, and yet united ; persecuted, and yet prosperous ; pervading all countries, and reaping all fruits ;

supplying the world with energy in every department of art and commerce—great painters, great musicians, great merchants. In everything showing a vigour, a self-denial, a patience under adversity, surpassing that of all other nations.

‘And yet,’ said I to myself in my musing, ‘they were few when they began this conflict; they were few when they were scattered abroad again in after years; they have been Ishmaelites throughout their history, hated of all—whence, then, their extraordinary success?’

‘Their religion was their strength,’ replied the stranger (for he seemed to hear what I said).

‘From the early days when Abraham was called of God, and commanded to leave his home and go, he knew not whither, but went nevertheless, *nothing doubting*, to the Exodus from Egypt; throughout their life as a nation in Palestine, from the days of Joshua

the son of Nun to the Maccabees, they were ever convinced that "the eternal God was with them, and underneath were the everlasting arms." In the midst of the fray they ever saw in fancy the pillar of cloud leading them on to certain victory. They saw His mighty hand and stretched-out arm in the van of the battle, and, confident of success, they conquered. The staying up of the arms of Moses by Aaron and Hur was typical of their entire history. So long as they were fired with the belief that the God of Israel was with them, they were successful; but as their arms grew tired, and their religion faint, the enemy prevailed against them. And what was it in modern days that inspired the despised nation—the dogs of Hebrews—the accursed inhabitants of the Ghetto—to fight their way on through life in spite of every form of persecution, but their religion, their belief in their destiny; that, although a cloud was

now hanging over them, the day would come when the Son of God, the Messiah, should rise upon their darkness, and they should rule the world ; that it had been promised, and would surely come to pass ?’

‘A strange infatuation,’ said I ; ‘but yet it commanded success.’

Then again I looked, and saw a solitary chieftain of another Arab tribe, armed with a new religion, overthrow the prevailing creeds and superstitions of his own nation, and draw after him from the deserts thousands of fierce warriors, bold in the belief of Islam and its promises of Paradise. I saw him spread a religious and dynastic revolution over nearly the whole of the Eastern world.

The scene changed to Europe, and I saw a single monk, with no reward in his hand but the promises of glory after death, summon round the simple standard of the Red Cross the rapacious, selfish, and turbulent knights of

the middle ages. As soldiers of that Cross, they ventured over unknown lands and seas, braving countless dangers, to rescue a Holy Land from an infidel invader.

I saw the simple Swiss peasants kneeling in a body to ask help from God before encountering the overwhelming Burgundian array at the battle of Granson.

I saw the scanty band of Dutch republicans, by endurance and courage such as men had never before witnessed, defeat the great Spanish power, and rescue their freedom, their religion, and their country from the waters in which their heroism had drowned them.

I saw the few but faithful Huguenots following the white plume of Henry of Navarre on the field of Ivry.

I saw Cromwell's 'godly men' praying to God, whilst keeping their powder dry, to smite hip and thigh the riotous crew of Cavaliers. I saw the Covenanting preachers leading their

congregations to battle against overwhelming odds. I saw the Pilgrim Fathers forsaking all in their native country for their religion, and going forth, confident in their future, to found a mighty nation.

But I need not weary you by telling of all the scenes that the stranger showed me. These are only a few amongst many.

After a time I turned to the stranger, and I said to him: 'O Stranger, I have learned a lesson of enthusiasm. I see its power to stir men's souls to valiant deeds. But whence is it? How can so few brave the appearance of so great odds?'

'It is on account of their belief in God,' said he. 'Their might is inspired by a confidence that a power superior to all earthly strength will give them the victory, and deliver them from the peril of the sword.'

'It is a strange power, this belief in God,' said I; 'but yet I know not if it be really a

good thing. It seems to lead men to self-assertion, bloodshed, and slaughter. But my citizens, O Stranger, must be gentle, obedient, and self-sacrificing.'

'Wait a little,' said he, 'until you have seen further. The vision is not ended. There is yet another lesson. You have learned as yet only one thing; that there is no power under Heaven that can so impel multitudes of men to brave danger, pain, and death, as this same religious enthusiasm. Is it so, O Politician, or do you yet require instruction?'

'Not so, O Stranger,' said I, 'for I am convinced already of this first lesson.'

'An apt pupil,' said he; 'you must surely be a philosopher. Now let us learn our second lesson; and before we look any more at my show, let us sit down awhile, for your eyes must be weary with watching, and I will discourse to you a preface.'

Then he sat down, and leaned his brow

upon his hand, and looking blankly into the distance, as one that sees a vision afar off, he continued :

‘ From among the ranks of that same Arab tribe which we saw in our first picture, which fought so good a fight in the might of the Jehovah in whom they trusted, came forth a new religion—a religion which appealed to no selfish wish or passion of man ; to no love of riches, power, or grandeur ; which from its infancy was the butt of persecution ; which had no comeliness that could be desired of men : no learning in which to clothe itself ; a religion of peasants, artisans and slaves ; whose Author had suffered the death of a common felon. And yet the followers of this religion, in the face of bitter persecution, contempt, stripes, imprisonment, and death, achieved a moral and religious victory over the whole world, and revolutionised society. I will show you some scenes from the history of this religion shortly, O Politician,

and do you mark them well. You, being a philosopher, I cannot expect to believe the truth of the facts upon which it is said to be founded ; but being a student of the minds of men, it may interest you to observe its effects thereupon, unreasonable and curious as they may appear. The history past and present of the Hebrews, and the rise of this new religion of which I am now speaking, are perhaps the two most remarkable events in the annals of the world, even apart from their religious aspect, and are well worthy of your consideration.

‘Have you not observed,’ he continued, ‘that the great difficulty of the ruler in dealing with men is to try and induce them to give up what their natural impulses prompt them to seize, for the sake of other people?’

‘No doubt,’ said I, ‘that is the great problem—in cases, that is to say, when you cannot offer any reward in the future, such as riches or honour, in return for the present

sacrifice. And it is in the everyday life of the citizen and in small matters that such habits of self-sacrifice are formed ; and these no political reward or punishment can reach.'

'Most true,' said he ; 'you have well observed. Now, here is the extraordinary power of this religion of which I am now speaking. From the first it has inspired men, contrary to all the strongest appetites and passions of their nature, to deny themselves that which the natural man most desires, and to sacrifice their own dearest wishes for the benefit of others ; to dare that at which their nature trembles, for the benefit of others ; to bear cold, hunger, pain, even death, for the benefit of others ; to live upon earth a life which seems to be bereft of all that could make it pleasant—and all for what ? For the sake of something which their religion promises them in what you would call a vague and doubtful

existence after death. And this not in solitary instances, but by hundreds at a time.'

'Ah, I have seen something of this self-sacrifice,' said I, 'for I have some friends, old-fashioned folk, who still believe in what is called the Christian religion, one form of which is established in this country; and they have often explained to me the peculiar views of their faith. And now I think of it, that must be the new religion of which you speak, although I could not at first guess your riddle.

'I must confess it,' said he, 'since I see it is no good dissembling with you.'

'Well,' said I, 'I have been shown by these friends of mine curious instances of self-sacrifice, which they constantly affirm were produced by the working of this religion; only I thought it was their fancy.'

'Well,' said he, 'we will look at some more pictures, and you will see that, whether

a fancy or whether a fact, this religion has in times past produced, and still does produce, the strangest effects upon the lives and conduct of men.'

'I am ready to be convinced,' said I.

And hereupon we returned to our study of the pictures.

And first I saw the great armies of Friars who went forth in the early middle ages at the call of their religion, to fight with sin and death. Their triple vow alone seemed to be a renunciation for themselves of all that is generally considered to be pleasant in this life. I saw them planting their homes amidst the filthy, fever-stricken quarters of mediæval towns, clothing the naked, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, instructing the ignorant; refusing for themselves all reward or comfort in this life. I then saw thousands of their followers in after years—men and women, without name or number, with no ostentation

or pomp of charity—some of them professed, some secular, but all animated with a common purpose—quietly and steadfastly to sacrifice their own lives and comfort for the moral and physical improvement of their fellow-creatures. I saw them working in convents, hospitals, lazar-houses, penitentiaries, prisons, universities, churches and chapels. Wherever were the ignorant, wicked, sick, and poor, there I saw the charitable forms of these Christians.

Indeed, the stranger told me that the founder of this sect had often pointed out this very self-sacrifice as the badge of his true disciples. And when I said to him, ‘Surely the origin of philanthropy, as we call it now, is earlier than the introduction of this religion.’

‘Not so,’ said he. ‘Doubtless in the history of the Jews and Moslems up to the present day, and even amongst the heathen of old time, there are to be found many isolated instances of self-devotion for the sake of others

of the same family, tribe, or commonwealth. But Christian philanthropy is not content with this. In the first place, it has so far enlarged the sphere of human sympathies as to hold up as objects of the compassion and help of the faithful all suffering humanity of whatever nation or creed under heaven. The good Samaritan knows of no such distinctions. The mere presence of need, whether bodily or mental, suffices: he will not pass it by on the other side. And besides this, Christianity alone can impel to action whole classes of people without discrimination as to age, sex, or station. Bearing in mind these two characteristics of Christian self-sacrifice, it is true to say, O Politician, that philanthropy is of purely Christian origin. The self-sacrifice of heathens, Jews, and Moslems does not amount to philanthropy, as it is limited both in its area of operations and in its instruments. Or, again, if we pass from the origin of philan-

thropy to its development, we can doubtless find solitary instances of marvellous self-devotion amongst other non-Christian men of our own day which are apparently the result of purely humanitarian motives. But of these it may be truly said that, in the first place, such a motive can evidently only appeal to a particular class of mind, from the limited number of such instances. It has no effect whatever upon the mass of mankind. And, secondly, the whole of the humanitarian creed is itself in its origin purely Christian.

‘If you wish, O Politician, for examples of what I am saying, you have only to look at our modern philanthropical institutions—our hospitals, dispensaries, asylums, almshouses, universities, and schools. All of these owe their origin entirely to Christianity, and are for the most part conducted even to this day by Christians. Shall we not say, then, O Politician, that true philanthropy without limit

either as to its objects, or as to the class of persons whom it impels to action, is purely Christian, at all events in its origin?’

‘I must confess it,’ said I.

After this we looked on at the scenes for a while in silence, and then he said:

‘We have seen now many examples of this form of self-sacrifice; let us turn and see the devotion of those who, being convinced of the necessity and truth of this religion, have devoted their whole energies and even their lives to teach others what they themselves believe, or to stand forth as living witnesses of its truth.’

Then I looked and saw hundreds of men, women, and even children, pass across the scene, who had devoted their whole lives to preaching, teaching, and bearing witness to the Gospel of their Christianity, in their own lands, or in foreign countries. And this in spite of every form of torture and death, foul

climates, savage enemies, hunger, thirst, and nakedness. Many of them I had heard of before, but the significance of their lives had escaped my notice: Paul, Peter, Augustine, the nameless monks who converted the heathen in Europe, Savonarola, Wickliffe, Huss, Jerome of Prague, Thomas More, Las Casas, the two St. Francis, Dominic, Ignatius, and their many devoted followers in Europe and among the heathen in the East and West; and even in quite recent times, Wesley, Whitfield, Gardiner, and Patteson. And many hundreds of men and women I saw engaged in works of love and charity, whose names I could not discover, for the stranger told me that with their vow of self-sacrifice they had put off all connection with the pleasant world of sense, and even their names, and were known only as Brother or Sister.

Here we interrupted the Politician, for up

to this time we had been entranced by his story, and had sat drinking in his words with eyes and ears; and one of us said, being urged on by the others:

‘O Politician, we think that there is no need of further instances, for we all know many of these Christians, and have seen with our own eyes many marvellous examples of this self-sacrifice.’

‘Very well,’ said the Politician, ‘I am not loth to be interrupted, and, like a pedlar, to be able to pack up my wares, now that you have taken your samples. But one thing further struck me as most remarkable in these men when first I observed them; and that was that the reason for which they underwent this self-sacrifice seemed to be so inadequate. For all that they hoped for was that *after their death* they would be happy. And when they were asked upon what ground they based their belief, they smiled, and said that it had been promised by the founder of their faith,

and that they were convinced of it, though they gave no reason for their conviction.

‘And yet another thing I noticed throughout the whole series of scenes that I saw, which was that the citizens of the States where this Christian religion prevailed were also more vigorous and enterprising in every way than other nations; and that the periods in the world’s history which have been most conspicuous for religious enthusiasm have also been most remarkable for enterprise and discovery in literature, art, science, and commerce.

‘And, moreover, I noticed that those who were most deeply imbued with this faith were also contented and happy, obedient to command, and loving to others, notwithstanding persecution, adversity, and death. And why again? Why for this same promise. Because they say that in another world, hereafter, the inequalities that exist here, and which are incurable now, will be redressed; and therefore

it matters not what they suffer here, 'for that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in them.'

After I had seen all these pictures, and had heard the interpretation thereof, a great light appeared to fall upon me from heaven, and I seemed to have found the very political power that I was seeking when the stranger first accosted me.

And I said to him, 'O Stranger, it has happened with me, as it often happens with us in this life, that I have been seeking afar off for a remedy which was lying close under my eyes the whole time. I wanted to discover a power which could either excite men to action or control them; which could reach their daily lives, and provide a continual motive for virtue and self-sacrifice, without earthly reward or punishment. And here have I found what I wanted. I see that almost all the great

national commotions which have sprung from small beginnings, and have revolutionised society, have been inspired by this religious enthusiasm in some form. Men under its influence will triumph over the most alarming odds, and court the most fearful perils. One might almost say that the result of our show has been to prove that a nation which is fired by this enthusiasm will invariably outstrip one which is not, in every sphere of life. Is it not so, O Stranger ?'

'Certainly,' said he, 'when the enthusiasm is disciplined and orderly.'

'And moreover,' I said, 'and this is the magician's rod that I was seeking, this Christian religion is the only power which has ever urged men and women, in any considerable number, to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others in works of love, peace, and goodwill.'

'Yes,' said he, 'there will always be many impostors, who think to get praise for

themselves by pretending to be followers of this sect, when their heart is far from it. But, speaking of the real Christians, I think you may say that we can prove from history that they alone have, in any considerable number, realised this peaceful habit of self-sacrifice.'

'What manner of power is this,' said I, 'that even those passions of man obey it which no earthly reward or punishment can affect?'

When I said this, the Stranger smiled and said, 'O Politician, you have not yet truly analysed the causes which impel men to action or restrain them. Does it even now seem strange to you that men who thoroughly believe that an Omnipotent Being, who holds all the destinies of the world in His hand, vouchsafes them His protection, should be more courageous than those who think that they have no defence but in their own arm? Is it strange that men who prostrate them-

selves before that Being who they believe will some day judge them for their deeds committed upon this earth, and mete out fearful punishments or ineffable rewards, should hesitate before asking His sanction and help for a cause which they feel to be unjust or ignoble? Is it strange that men who thus by prayer are continually referring their actions and thoughts to the highest of all imaginable standards, should act more nobly, uprightly, and kindly than those who apply no test to them but that of their own wishes? Or, when men believe that they and the whole world were in danger of everlasting punishment, and that that same Being, of no necessity, but out of sheer kindness, gave up the position of God in Heaven to come down upon earth and undergo ignominious persecution and death simply to save them from that fate; that He has said that the only return which men can make to Him for all this kindness

is to try and imitate Him—is it strange that, penetrated with a belief in this debt, and this only price that can be offered in repayment, they should be willing to sacrifice what, to them, must appear of little worth in comparison? Is it strange that one writhing in mortal pain should be comforted by the thought of endless rest and peace after death? Or can the undoubted ills of this world be alleviated by any other antidote? Is it strange that men who read in a book (which they believe to be immediately dictated by God Himself) that they must submit themselves to the rulers that be, and love their neighbours as themselves, should be better citizens than those who have no guide but the natural appetite of man? Is it strange that a religion which promises to those who obey it everlasting happiness, such as the imagination of man cannot picture, should offer to us in this chequered existence a mo-

tive for good stronger than any mundane or utilitarian ideal? Is it not manifest that it must be so from the constitution of the human mind? Is it not manifest that it is so from the facts of experience? And yet would some banish this same religion from the State, O Politician, saying that it is an effete institution, and one which no longer has power over men.'

'And yet I do not understand,' said I, 'the origin or nature of this power, though I cannot fail to appreciate its results. Perhaps it is a mere phantasy, that will wear out as the world rolls on, and as pure reason gains greater sway. Perhaps it has done its work in the world, and it is no longer necessary either to keep it established as a general example to the nation, or to teach it to the young in our schools. It is so unreasonable and seemingly so capricious.'

'Not so, O Politician,' said the stranger.

‘As long as the nature of man remains the same as it now is, so long will enthusiasm, and not the logical faculty, be the chief motive to action, and the power by which great bodies of men are swayed. So long will any idea which can engage the enthusiasm of men on its side be triumphant over the cold unsympathetic dictates of pure reason. This, as we have seen, is the lesson of history, but it has been also the conclusion of philosophy.

‘Let me repeat to you an old-world story, drawn from some oracle of ancient Greece, I know not whence, but one which is still fresh, though it was long buried beneath the earth.

‘It is said that when man was first brought into the world, the Creator was at a loss to know how to compound his soul, and eventually He compounded it of triple materials, in equal proportions.¹ He made it one-third of the soul of God, one-third of the soul of

¹ Plato, *Rep.* ix. 588, 589.’

a lion, and one-third of the soul of a serpent. Now, it has been said by a great philosopher of old time that all this is an allegory which aptly describes the existing nature of man's soul. That it is made up of three parts: the intelligence, which is the God-like element; the enthusiasm, which is the lion-like element; and the passions, which are the snake-like element. Of these, two, the God-like and the snake-like, are deadly enemies, and are always trying the one to vanquish the other, so as to make the man whose soul they inhabit their servant. But without the assistance of the lion-like element all their efforts are of no avail, because, being equally matched, the one influence exactly counterbalances the other, and consequently produces no action. Hence the constant struggle of each is to enlist the third or lion-like element on its side. This element is originally neutral, but can be persuaded, by much importunity, to ally itself

with one or the other, and the side which receives its support invariably prevails, and impels the man whom they inhabit either to noble and self-sacrificing or to base and selfish actions accordingly.

‘Consequently, that philosopher affirmed that the one great end of both legislation and education is to try and work upon the enthusiastic side of man’s nature, so as to enlist it on the side of the good instincts rather than the bad. That by this means alone could the generality of men be brought to seek that which is good, and avoid that which is evil, even at the expense of their own pleasure and comfort. Now, O Politician, though we may laugh nowadays at the idea of man’s soul being tripartite in origin ; though we may imagine it to be composed originally of precisely the same material throughout ; still this ancient fable is no bad description of the modes under which the minds of men

present themselves for our observation. Whether originally homogeneous or no, it is certain that now (whether from long transmitted habits or not, we know not) the minds of men *do* present for our observation three distinct characters: the intelligence, the enthusiasm, and the passions. Whether these are mere bundles of motives, differing only in order or arrangement, or actual distinctions in kind in man's mind, again it matters not, for the duty of the politician is not to inquire into the origin of his material, but to deal with it as he finds it. Now, the intelligence of man points out to him that such or such an action is for the good of his fellow-creatures, and that their general good is ultimately his good; but the passions say, "Never mind the ultimate good, never mind the good of others: it is disagreeable; choose rather present enjoyment, and let the future and the good of others take care of themselves. Let

us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Now, here is the task of the moralist and politician: to endeavour to find some power which can work upon the enthusiasm of men, so as to enlist it on the side of the intelligence and against the passions. And have we not found, O Politician, that very power, whether we consider it to be merely "a noble lie"¹ or a stupendous truth?'

'Certainly we have found it,' said I, 'and I agree with you that the Politician must be content to use his material as he finds it. He has to deal with the results, and not with the causes.'

'There is a wonderful agreement between us,' said the stranger, 'in all this inquiry. Now hear this saying of another great philosopher of old time:—"Pure intelligence by itself can move nothing."'²

¹ Γενναῖον ψεῦδος: Plato, *Rep.* i. 414.

² Ar. *Eth. Nic.* vi. 2, 5: δίανοια αὐτῇ οὐθὲν κινεῖ.

‘Certainly,’ said I, ‘I cannot resist arguments of such authority.’

‘No,’ said he, ‘you cannot ; because they are not mere speculations, but results of the observation of men’s minds which are borne out both by our own experience, and that of all time.’

‘It is most strange,’ said I, ‘but it is doubtless true.’

‘Ah! my friend,’ said the stranger, ‘have you never been accosted by a beggar in the street, whose wretched appearance and tale of misery have cajoled alms from you, although your reason told you all the time that he was an impostor?’

‘I must confess,’ said I, ‘that some such thing has happened to me ere now.’

‘That is only a small instance,’ said he, ‘of this law, which is the first principle to be learned by one who wishes to govern men—namely, that the emotions of man, his pity,

his love, his admiration, his natural sympathy with distress, the lust of the eyes, the magnificence of appearances, the pomp of tradition—these are the things which kindle man's enthusiasm, not his intelligence or dialectical faculty, O Politician, and urge him to action regardless of consequences, and often in the very teeth of his reason.'

'Certainly,' said I, 'that has been abundantly proved.'

'And we have also seen,' said the stranger, 'that beyond all comparison, the greatest power that the world has ever seen to excite men to love and good works is this *Christian religion*.'

'Yes,' said I.

'Again,' said the stranger, 'are we not taught by the experience of the world that all legislation which attempts to interfere directly with the daily lives and conduct of citizens, and to regulate their actions in detail,

has failed, because it is impossible to enforce it?’

‘Certainly,’ said I.

‘Must we not, then, at once conclude a truce with this noble ally—this Christianity,’ said he, ‘instead of quarrelling with it and driving it out of our camp?’

‘I am certain of it,’ said I; ‘for thus shall we obtain a friend who can pass unharmed through the enemy’s lines, and persuade his men voluntarily to come over to our side. The world will wonder then at the virtue and sobriety of our citizens, and go into raptures over the wisdom of our legislators. And all the time we shall have shown no invention whatever, but have merely made use of a famous political engine, which we found ready forged to our hands.’

‘Just so,’ said he, ‘we shall obtain credit under false pretences; for we have seen—have we not?—that this Christianity is, above all, an

influence which pervades the whole life of the man who believes in it, and causes him to form habits of virtue and self-sacrifice, which ultimately become secondary instincts, and make him act from the same motives in the small affairs of daily life as on important occasions.'

'Yes,' said I.

'And, as we have seen,' said he, 'this same Christian motive seems to appeal equally to all classes of minds, gentle and simple, ignorant and refined. In all it produces the same results.'

'Undoubtedly,' said I.

'And this is the influence that we most particularly wanted to discover,' said he.

'It was,' said I.

'And further,' said he, 'being enforced by no external earthly sanction, but only by a man's own conscience, it is a political possibility.'

‘Most assuredly so,’ said I.

‘And yet again,’ said the stranger, ‘even the bitterest enemies of Christianity admit that our citizens need some influence equivalent to a religion. For those very men who would abolish a religion, so called, which depends for its reality upon the existence of a God, when they come themselves to construct a science of morals or legislation, re-introduce into their own system a very similar principle under the name of philanthropy, humanitarianism, love of nature, love of your fellow-men, or such like appellations.’

‘I have often noticed that,’ said I.

‘But in doing so,’ said he, ‘they are throwing away a weapon of approved temper for an unreal verbal phantom.’

‘So we should say,’ I replied; ‘but that is not at all their opinion. On the contrary, they are very proud of their systems, and say that they are superior to Christianity, in that

they provide a motive for good which is unselfish, while that provided by Christianity is purely selfish. For, say they, the reason why we affirm that men should be moral and righteous is because by so doing they promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of their fellow-men. You, on the contrary, dangle before the eyes of your followers a purely selfish prospect of eternal happiness in return for a temporary self-control. And thus, they say, virtue proceeding from humanitarian motives is meritorious, while Christian virtue is merely mercenary.'

'I admit,' said the stranger, 'that their statements appear at first sight to be plausible: but they are in reality fallacious. They proceed from a false analysis of the real nature of the motives which produce human action. I think we might truly assert, in answer to them, that all motives which produce action in

man are, in their ultimate analysis, at least self-regarding if not selfish; that no system of morality can be complete which does not supply such motives; that they can only be supplied by the inducement of a pleasure or the deterrence of a pain, in some form or another, either here or hereafter; and that Christianity, in its highest development, supplies a motive which is not more, but, if anything, less selfish than that supplied by any mere system of morality.'

'You are prepared to open fire from a formidable battery,' said I.

'I am,' said he; 'but yet I think that one or two broadsides will suffice; for, after all, this is but a feint on the part of our adversary. The real position that we have to hold is one of fact. Does Christianity, as a matter of fact, produce certain results? How they are produced is another question. It is only worth our while just to indicate the manner

in which this objection of the humanitarians is to be combated—for this reason. Some men might say that the means by which these results are produced are evil, and that the harm done to the human race by the means is greater than the good produced by the result.’

‘That is possible,’ I replied.

‘Well, then,’ said he, ‘we will just sketch in outline the answer to these objections—for, indeed, to exhaust the discussion of the subject would be to institute a complete science of morals.’

‘It would,’ I said.

‘Let us, then, take my four assertions and develop them briefly,’ said the stranger. ‘The first scarcely needs any support in these days, since it is now a commonplace of psychology. So long as man is absolutely content, he is quiescent. In order to impel him to action he must be uneasy; and this uneasiness is

produced either by the desire of a pleasure which he has not, or the wish to escape from a pain or discomfort which he has.'

'Certainly,' I said; 'that is as old as Aristotle.'

'And the second is like unto it,' said he. 'As all human action arises from self-regarding or selfish motives—namely, the desire to obtain a pleasure or to avoid a pain—so it is by means only of a judicious application of such motives that a scientific system of morals becomes possible. Just consider for a moment. The science of morals is that which inquires into and establishes a *summum bonum*, or ideal end of human action and standard of human conduct. But it does not rest there. A mere ideal of conduct would be useless, if men could not be induced to pursue it. Consequently it is essential for a system of morality—if it would provide a practical impetus and guide to moral action—that either its ideal

should be in itself one which incites men to action, or else that some external sanction should be applied to enforce the rules of conduct which it dictates. This sanction is supplied, so far as the fundamental laws of society are concerned, by the penal law of the community, the mere existence of which argues its need. But what of the minor rules which should govern the everyday life of the citizen? If he does not outrage the cardinal laws of the State or society by flagrant sin, how is he to be persuaded to sacrifice his own natural inclinations in the small affairs of daily life, for the benefit of others? For that is the object of our search, O Politician!

‘It is,’ said I; ‘but it is also the philosopher’s stone for which these very humanitarians are seeking.’

‘Shall we, then, ask them how they surmount the difficulty?’ said the stranger.

‘I know what their answer will be,’ I

replied. 'They will say that a man should be virtuous in even the smallest matters, because by so doing he will promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number of mankind.'

'That, I know, is their hackneyed ideal,' said the stranger, 'but how is it to be attained? Is it in itself so attractive as to draw men towards it as a magnet draws iron? And even if it could do so, would it be by means of a wholly unselfish motive? Is our psychological axiom as to the origin of human action at fault?'

'Certainly not,' I replied; 'for even if it is the inherent nobility and beauty of such an ideal that attracts man towards the path of virtue, it is by reason only of the very law which we have seen to underlie all moral action. It may be that, in some few cases, the pleasure to be derived from doing good to others is so keen that it overbalances the lesser pleasure of immediate personal gratification.'

‘Then even in such a case the motive to action is a self-regarding motive,’ said the stranger; ‘although the mere fact that such a motive should have so powerful an effect upon a man’s mind argues the nobility of his nature.’

‘It does,’ said I.

‘Even then in the case of virtuous action proceeding from a purely humanitarian motive,’ said he. ‘We must amend the usual formula and say: “Such or such a course of conduct tends to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of mankind; and *that is really your own greatest happiness.*”’

‘Yes,’ I replied, ‘we might remind them of the old myth of the choice of Hercules, which is an excellent illustration of this conflict of rival pleasures, the noble and ignoble, which is ever going on in man’s mind.’

‘We will admit, then,’ said the stranger, ‘as, indeed, we have admitted before, that in some rare instances virtuous action may pro-

ceed from a purely humanitarian motive, and that that is as near an approach to an absolutely unselfish motive as is possible to man; but it is not a wholly unselfish motive.'

'We will make that admission,' I said.

'But,' said the stranger, 'a science of morals must not content itself with providing a motive to action which is suitable only to a few conspicuous men under particular conditions of nature and education. It must, if it is to be of any real value, provide a motive for virtuous action which appeals to all men alike, whether good or bad, gentle or simple, learned or ignorant.'

'And thus we are brought to the very point at which mere systems of morality fail and Christianity triumphs. The utilitarian ideal is too vague and faint to overcome by its distant aroma of heavenly pleasure the coarser scent of present personal enjoyment. And thus, whatever may be its worth as a

test of the value of moral action, it is useless as a practical guide or incentive to human conduct. It really holds out no inducement for its pursuit. It is only attractive in itself to a very limited class of mind; and it can suggest no external sanction whereby to coerce the moral activity of the less refined and sensitive.

‘Now Christianity, on the other hand, appeals to all grades of intelligence and refinement, by providing what we might call progressive motives, which in their highest development are at least as unselfish as that supplied by the humanitarian system.

‘In the first place, it holds up an ideal, the same ideal as that of the humanitarian; and then it provides inducements for the pursuit of the ideal graduated according to the class of person to be impelled to action. When dealing with the lowest classes of mankind, who are incapable of action, as a rule,

from a chivalrous motive, it doubtless applies a bald system of rewards and punishments. It says to them as a parent says to a young child: "If you do such or such an action, you will be rewarded: if another, you will be punished." Is it not so?'

'It is,' said I, 'and rightly, for such men do not understand the reason of things, and are, morally speaking, children, and can only be impelled to virtue and deterred from vice by some tangible reward and punishment.'

'That is so,' said he; 'but as we mount the moral scale and deal with the higher order of intelligence, Christianity supplies quite a different motive. It impresses its votary with an overwhelming sense of the debt which he owes to God for his redemption, and thus causes him to pour out all the richest treasures of self-sacrifice without counting either the punishment or the reward, simply out of a chivalrous feeling of generosity

and gratitude. Has not a saint of the Church well expressed this when he says—

My God, I love Thee—not because
I hope for Heaven thereby,
Nor yet because who love Thee not
Must burn eternally?’

‘I have often admired those lines,’ said I, ‘but their true meaning had escaped my notice.’

‘Well then,’ said he, ‘not to waste time—for it is getting late—let us dogmatise the result of this digression. And let us say that moral action can only be produced by self-regarding motives, and consequently that no system of morals can be of any service to mankind in general which does not ultimately rest upon some system of rewards and punishments; that although such rewards and punishments must be brought prominently before the notice of the more degraded of mankind, who cannot be attracted into the

path of virtue by the mere beauty of an ideal, they gradually fade into the background when we come to deal with a higher order of intelligence and a more sensitive and refined nature; that Christianity in its highest development is as unselfish as humanitarianism, while it acts as a practical moral guide and stimulus to multitudes of human beings, upon whom humanitarianism cannot possibly produce the smallest effect.'

'Those may be regarded as axioms,' said I, 'and indeed, if we had only thought of it, we might almost have spared ourselves the trouble of discussing this point. For, if you remember, the very Philosopher whom you are so fond of quoting undertook in his greatest work to establish a system of morals which should be entirely independent of rewards and punishments. And he promised to show that even if the truly good man received nothing but evil and contumely in this

world and in the next, in return for his virtue, still it would be better for him to be good. But he failed egregiously to maintain this position, and was even driven himself, at the end of this very work to which I refer, to draw a picture of judgment after death, in which those who had been virtuous upon earth were rewarded, and the evil punished.'

'True,' said the stranger, 'I had forgotten that.'

'And he was dealing with the highest order of intelligence only,' said I, 'so that we can well imagine that he would have agreed cordially with us if he had been constructing a system to be applied to all mankind.'

'So far, then, so good,' said the stranger. 'We have surmounted the greatest of our difficulties; for we have shown that unless a politician ignores some of the most obvious characteristics of human nature, he cannot afford not to recognise Christianity as an all-impor-

tant factor in the well-ordering of his citizens. This is really the corner-stone of our building. If this is once established, the minor difficulties connected with the subject are easily disposed of.

‘You may have heard many discussions, O Politician, as to the form of Christian religion which is now established in this country.’

‘I have,’ said I, ‘for many men wish to deprive the existing Church of its pre-eminence as the National Church, and to take away its funded endowments. And I must confess to you, O Stranger, that hitherto I have been rather of their opinion. For it seems to me that to give one form of belief a preference over the others may make some of our citizens jealous and mutinous. And we wish them all to have the same likes and dislikes.’

‘Come and let us reason with such men,’ said he, ‘and show them that it is in the in-

terest of the community that the existing form of Christianity should remain established. And let us beg of them, for that reason, to put aside their jealousies as unworthy of so great a cause.'

'Let us do so,' said I; 'if reason leads the way, they will all follow.'

'Then first,' said he, 'let us speak to those who say that the Church is too rich, and that her endowments would do more good if they were otherwise applied. And let us say to them: My good sirs, is this nation so poor that it cannot afford such endowments? For if it can afford them, is it possible that money can be better applied than in endowing an institution the sole object of which is to make our citizens virtuous and happy? If you want to take away her endowments, you must show that the nation cannot afford them; that the ostensible object to which they are applied is a bad one; or that the Church fails to attain

to it. Is not this a sufficient answer for these parsimonious gentlemen, O Politician ?'

'Certainly,' said I. 'It would be a sufficient answer to them even if the nation were taxed in order to provide these endowments ; and it is overwhelming when we reflect that as a matter of fact no one is taxed one farthing in order to provide the Church's revenues, but they are entirely the result of the voluntary offerings of pious men given for the glory of God at various ages from the earliest days of the Church more than a thousand years ago down to the present time.'

'And now let us turn to those others,' said the stranger, 'who think that, although such money is well spent in the interest of the State, it ought to be provided by the voluntary offerings of the congregations for the time being, and not by the accumulation of past endowments. These are generous men. Let us deal gently with them, and only shoot at

them two light shafts, and say : " Do not men complain in all other communions that the ministers are not independent of their congregations? That having to look to them for their very bread, they often speak and teach what they know will please, and secure large audiences, rather than that which they believe to be true ?"'

'Certainly ; I have often heard that complaint,' said I.

'Then cannot we loose another little arrow, and say : " Do not all men, and not only Christians, nowadays complain that all the educated men in the community are attracted by the hope of wealth and advancement into the large towns, so that the country districts have no high-class resident influence? Do you not often hear it said that this over-centralisation is destroying the old country-gentleman and yeoman class of the country which used to be its backbone ?"'

‘Certainly I do,’ said I.

‘Then let us turn to our friends and say :
“ Are not the ministers of the State religion the only antidote now to this evil influence by providing a body of well-born, highly-educated men, to disseminate good influences throughout the country? And, moreover, is it not notorious that the districts where there is no resident minister of this Church are inferior in morality, education, and order, to the others? ”’

‘I have often heard this,’ said I.

‘Then,’ added the stranger, ‘by taking away the existing endowments of the Church, you would at once put an end to this body of men ; for few of the country districts are rich enough to support a minister of this class by voluntary offerings.’

‘Well,’ said I, ‘I think you may consider that you have disposed of this point, and have shown that it is better that the ministers

should not be dependent upon their congregations for their maintenance. But you have yet to show that it is a good thing that a Church should be established as part of the visible constitution of the country, or that it should be in any way under the control of the State. For one party in our country quarrel with the first of these conditions in the existing Church ; and another and opposite party, with the second.'

'I have not forgotten these two sets of quarrelsome people,' said he. 'Let us first deal with those who object to the State Establishment of Christianity altogether. And let us speak familiarly to them, and recall to their minds some lessons of their schooldays, which they seem to have forgotten, and let us say, "Have you never observed that if you place a shell in a vessel which is used to boil water, all the calcareous and liny particles contained in the water, and which were pre-

viously invisible, are precipitated, and settle on the shell, gradually forming a thick coating all over it, for no apparent reason, unless it were from the mere presence of some definite substance in the water to which the sediment could cling?"'

'Certainly,' said I, 'I have observed it.'

'Well,' said he, 'it is the same with the emotional and sentimental side of man's nature. It floats unobserved on the flood of life until it finds some definite nucleus upon which to settle. And this is one reason why it is so often ignored. It is, to use the hard words of our modern philosophers, a power only energised in reference to some concrete object. Man's love and veneration must have some definite object, embodied in some visible form, round which to cling, or they remain mere abstract feelings, colourless and impalpable. This may be unreasonable, but man is not always a truly reasonable creature; and his

unreason is very often more impressionable and more powerful than his reason. Nevertheless, the politician (dealing as he must with the average of mankind and not with the few philosophers) cannot refuse to take into account the power of reverence and enthusiasm, even if associated with mere outward appearances or words.'

'That will be a good argument,' said I; 'but I do not yet see whither you are tending.'

'Why,' said the stranger, 'this truth is quite as important in religion as in any other sphere. Let me again explain my meaning by an example. In a celebrated picture-gallery on the Continent are three pictures which all endeavour to represent Almighty God. One is by a German artist, and that portrays Him as an Emperor; one is by a French artist, and that makes Him a King; and the third is by an Italian artist, and there He is represented as a Pope. Each of these

artists, in thus realising in a concrete form his abstract idea of God, dresses his skeleton thought in those attributes which to his mind, limited by personal and national barriers, are the outward and visible sign of the greatest magnificence and power. Does not this, O Politician, well illustrate how the constitution of the human mind necessitates the casting of all our abstractions in a concrete mould, the configuration of which is determined by the idiosyncrasies of each individual ?'

'Certainly,' I said, 'that is a well-known truth.'

'Well,' said he, 'almost all religious ideas are abstractions ; and as such abstractions they cannot be realised by a finite human intelligence. They must have some concrete embodiment. And this is the first function of a National Church and creed, that it provides for the nation such a nucleus. It is by means of such a Church enthroned with some

pomp of outward display, that religion is represented in a concrete and intelligible form to the minds of the nation. Just as to the individual man the idea of Christianity in the abstract is vague and unimpassioned, whereas the idea of Protestantism or Roman Catholicism is definite, sensible, and enthusiastic; just as the idea of charity is naturally associated in our minds with some object of pity, of prayer with some place of worship--so, too, the national Christian thought finds a definite expression in our National Church. For the national Christianity is something different from the mere sum of the thoughts and opinions of the individuals composing the nation. It is the residuum of common Christian sentiment existing in men of all denominations, too much diluted to produce by itself any perceptible action in the individual apart from sectarian influences; but when combined with like fragments of sentiment in many

others it forms in the aggregate a power in the State, which has its outward expression in the National Church. For should a Roman Catholic or a Nonconformist be asked at this day whether our nation was a Christian nation, would he not naturally point to the existing National Church as the best answer to the question ?

‘Certainly he would,’ said I.

‘Our National Church, then, is to all Christians of whatever denomination a perpetual emblem of national faith, and is thus the rallying-point for all the common Christian sentiment of the nation, and the best evidence of its reality.’

‘It is,’ said I.

‘And not only of its reality, but also of its importance,’ he continued. ‘It is a continual visible example to men, and especially to the less educated amongst them, who are most easily affected by appearances, and are also those who most need the moral influence

of religion, that that religion is a real practical thing which ought to enter into and sanctify every act of life. Cannot you imagine that the average citizen would at once conclude, if the nation, as such, no longer professed any ostensible belief in Christianity, that Christianity was not so valuable a thing as he had imagined? If the dignitaries of the Church no longer had the high civil position that they now occupy; if the legislators, the judges, and the magistrates of the land conducted their deliberations without, ostensibly at all events, asking for strength and guidance from God in their labours; if the Christian religion were no longer put forward as the figure-head, so to speak, of the constitution, guiding and sanctifying our rulers, do you imagine that the average citizen would regard it with so much reverence? And you must always remember,' he said, 'that I am now considering, not its truth or falsehood, but its effect upon men.'

‘Certainly,’ said I; ‘that I perfectly understand.’

‘And then, again,’ said he, ‘it is by means of an Established Church alone that in these days national worship is possible, and such worship is of the utmost importance. It is in times of great national contrition or rejoicing, when the whole people join together in common humiliation before God, or in common adoration and thanksgiving: when thousands unite in uttering the same litany of penitence or hymn of praise, then it is that religion obtains the most general hold upon the minds of the citizens. They are impressed with the grandeur of the ceremonial, with the responses, like the sound of many waters; with the sympathetic influence of fellow-worship; and they go home and con-
over the scene afterwards in their own minds. The catholicity of the service and the universality of the belief in God amongst their fellow-citizens deepens their personal religious con-

victions for all time. Even reading a description of such ceremonies produces a similar effect upon men who were not themselves present. Men are much like sheep in these matters. The mere herding together of thousands for a common object produces a depth of conviction unattainable in a solitary chamber. And how could this result be obtained in these days, if there were not one Church and one form of worship singled out by the State as the representative Church and the representative ritual of the nation? Amongst the many sects of Christianity, who would all clamour for the first place, no common national worship would be possible.'

'But,' said I, 'surely, O Stranger, in the days before our Church assumed its present form, under the supremacy of a secular sovereign, such national worship was even more common than it now is. How do you account for that?'

‘Very simply,’ said he. ‘In those days there was practically only one form of religious belief or ritual tolerated throughout Europe. Consequently, on any public occasion, there was no possibility of dispute as to the form the proceedings should take. Now that the Christian sects are so many, matters are quite different.’

‘I agree,’ said I; ‘that had escaped my notice.’

‘Well, then,’ said he, ‘are not these very obvious advantages of an Established Church? It is to a nation what the colours are to a regiment. It serves as a rallying-point and centre for the religious enthusiasm of the entire community. It keeps continually before their eyes a standard, as it were, of possible uniformity—a model of public devotion. Believe me, O Politician, the Christianity of individuals is much more fervent from the mere fact of the example produced by occasional national wor-

ship. And the ideas which underlie the Christian religion—charity, peace, and self-sacrifice—are far more easily kept in mind by ordinary men, from the fact that there is always a visible embodiment of that religion before their eyes. And then,’ continued he, ‘all these reasons apply with double force to our own National Church, from the very fact that it has been long established.’

‘That I do not quite follow,’ said I.

‘It is easy of explanation,’ said he. ‘Let us go back once more to our schoolroom tale. Do you not remember noticing, O Politician, that the deposit upon the shell could not be produced by any artificial means ; but was the result only of long and gradual natural infiltration?’

‘Certainly,’ said I.

‘Well, then,’ said he, ‘let us translate this observation into the world of politics, and say to our opponents : “ Have you never observed

that it is only by the long lapse of years and by the natural association of kindred ideas that particular institutions and offices of the State, particular robes of office, particular melodies, and even particular words, gather round them this deposit, as it were, of reverence, love, and admiration? So that men will sacrifice their fortunes, and even their lives, for the sake of something which, if you resolve it into its elements, is little more valuable, at first sight, than an oyster-shell? Have you never been surprised to hear of men dying by hundreds in defence of the ideas represented by the words 'chivalry,' 'loyalty,' 'honour,' 'liberty,' or 'patriotism;' and that often in causes which in their sober moments they would unhesitatingly condemn? Have you ever considered whence these phantoms obtained their dignity? Have you never tried to analyse the 'divinity that doth hedge a king;' the awe which protects a judge; the emotion produced by a

National Anthem? Have you ever considered how much of all these ideas which have played so great a part in the world's history are like a brilliant scene upon the stage, a glamour cast over very ordinary mortals by the rosy medium of distant ages through which we are compelled to view them?"'

'They probably have never analysed these ideas,' said I.

'Well,' said he, 'it is the same with all ancient institutions. By dint of long years it is that they have gradually collected a crust of ideas and associations which, like the tabard of a herald, are handed down to each successive representative, giving him a character quite distinct from, and independent of, his own personality. The wisdom or unwisdom of many generations of citizens has slowly woven a garment, without seam from top to bottom; and in this they clothe the temporary representative of their institutions, and then do him

reverence. The objects of human veneration are not like Nebuchadnezzar's golden image, O Politician. No man can suddenly create a political or social idol, of whatever costly substance, and then bid the peoples, nations, and languages fall down and worship it. "No," say they, "it is only an idol, the work of men's hands." But allow the slow current of national feeling to bring down with it gradually, generation after generation, deposits of sentiment and veneration; and, after a while, an island emerges from the flood, and they say it is a sacred land, the gift of God; and whosoever inhabits it, is holy and entitled to our worship. So do we nowadays take a man; he may be a good man or a bad man, or a very ordinary person. By himself he is like an unwedded queen ant. His working ants pay no attention to him. But we clothe him with a royal robe and crown: we put upon him our seamless coat, a coat of many colours;

and instantly, like the ants when their queen is wedded, the multitude unites to do him reverence, and would even die in his defence. But let a man seize perforce such a position, and they say, "Down with him! He is a usurper!" In short, O Politician, we might say that in all ages and in all countries the people themselves have unwittingly, and perhaps unreasonably, created their own most cherished idols. And it is notorious, O Politician, to anyone who has studied our show, that these idols are of natural growth, and of slow growth, and that it is impossible to create them artificially, or to recreate them if once entirely destroyed.'

'There,' said I, 'I entirely agree with you. Indeed, this fact should be a commonplace of politics, only one is apt in the heat of discussion, and under the influence of party bias, to overlook elementary principles.'

'Now, then,' said the stranger, 'let us apply the results of our lesson to our National

Church. It is an ancient institution, more than a thousand years old. It has undeniably become encrusted with the sentiment and veneration of many generations, and now, by the association of ideas, commands the entire veneration and devotion of many thousands of our most orderly and well-conducted citizens. It is now the recognised, enthroned embodiment of our national religion; and as such is also the living standard and witness of the religion and morality of each individual who believes in Christianity, and in a degree, though perhaps unconsciously, to those who have discarded that belief.

‘Should anyone doubt its living power, let the munificent gifts of recent benefactors bear witness to the contrary.

‘Shall we, then, cast down from its niche an object of veneration of multitudes of people, in all probability shattering it into a thousand fragments? Shall we destroy irre-

parably the living witness of the greatest moral and political influence that exists amongst us, without overwhelming reasons? For remember, O Politician, that when once destroyed it can never be replaced.

And after all, my friend,' he continued, 'what are the reasons which are offered for this act of Vandalism by its promoters?'

'So far as I have heard,' said I, 'their chief arguments are these: that the existing Church cannot properly be called a National Church, because it is not the Church of the entire nation, or even of a substantial majority of the nation; and that it is unfair to the ministers of other denominations that those belonging to the State Church should monopolise all social and political pre-eminence.'

'We can reply to such arguments, or rather assertions,' said the stranger, 'first by an argument, and secondly by a rebuke. And

first let us ask such antagonists what proof they offer of their assertions.

‘Can there be a surer sign, we may ask, that the Church does represent the nation than the fact that it exists? Could not the nation at any time destroy it if it were so willed? Would it not die of inanition? Surely, it is for our opponents, in the face of the fact of its establishment, to show that nevertheless it is not national and representative.’

‘Certainly,’ said I.

‘But yet we need not insist upon our strict rights in such a cause,’ said he, ‘and we will undertake, if they will explain what they mean by representative or national, to show that our existing Church is both.’

‘It is best to be scrupulous in an affair of such dignity,’ said I.

‘Well then,’ said he, ‘what do they mean by a Church being national or representative?’

Surely they cannot mean that it must be an institution which everyone in the country approves of. There never has been or will be such a thing in this world. No one would dream of saying that the Government from time to time in office in this country was not both national and representative, although it is only approved of by a majority, and that perhaps a small majority of the people. Must they not mean by national—that which is approved of by the majority of the nation?’

‘Certainly they must,’ said I. ‘But how are you to discover what proportion of the nation are adherents of any particular form of religious belief? For the opponents of the State Church have always stoutly refused to permit a religious census to be taken, and that would be the only reliable test.’

‘I know,’ said the stranger, ‘that they show a little nervousness in this matter; and the absence of such a census does make the

inquiry difficult. But so far as there are any statistics to be obtained upon this question at all, they all go to support what we should have imagined *à priori* from the mere fact of the existence of the Church—namely, that the majority of the nation, and a large majority, are the adherents of this form of Christianity. If we look at the returns¹ from the schools, the cemeteries, the registers of marriages, the army and navy, and the workhouses in this country, where alone we have at the present time an opportunity of obtaining statistics upon this point, it is found that more than 72 per cent. of the total number of individuals are members of the Established Church. And when we consider that these statistics are compiled for the most part from the lowest stratum of society only, and the one in which

¹ See Report of *Education Dept.* 1871, c. 406; *Buria's*, Session 1860, Parl. Paper, 560; *Reg.-General's Report*, 1873; *Army*, Parl. Paper, No. 170, Session 1871; *Navy*, do. No. 132, 1876; *Union Workhouses*, Paper No. 157, Session 1876.

the National Church has undeniably the fewest adherents, we must be convinced, from this calculation alone, that a large majority of the nation approve of the Established Church.

‘Thus, so far as we have any facts to guide us, they disprove the assertions of our antagonists. But may we not further say to them this? If it is once admitted that it is a good thing that some Christian Church should be established in the country, it is obvious that we must select one of the forms of Christianity already existing for the purpose. In these days of multiplicity of sects, it is impossible to find a Church which shall represent all shades of religious belief. A really Catholic religion is impossible, and so we must be content with that which most nearly approaches to it. Now, it could not be pretended for a moment that any other sect or form of Christianity now existing in this country could by itself command a title of

the adherents which are numbered by our existing Church.'

'Certainly not,' said I.

'And, moreover,' said he, 'there is no other form of Christian worship which is so representative in the sense of containing within its walls so great a variety of religious opinion. The extreme members of our Church differ very little in their opinions from Presbyterians at the one end, and from Roman Catholics at the other.'

'There is no other existing Church or sect which is nearly so Catholic,' said I, 'in this sense.'

'Then our existing Church is both national and representative,' said he, 'in that it is approved by the nation at large, and that it represents the greatest variety of Christian belief.'

'It is,' said I.

'And, indeed,' said he, 'we might even carry the argument further and say that our

existing Church is national in another sense, as being the direct lineal representative—the self-successor, as the Latins would call it—of the original Church first established in this country.'

'Certainly,' said I.

'And, as such, is the natural heir and representative of the Christianity of the nation.'

'Most assuredly,' I replied. 'There has been no breach in the continuity of its succession from the Saxon days.'

'So much, then, for our argument, O Politician,' said he. 'Now for our rebuke. May we not say to those who complain that it is unfair upon ministers of other denominations that any particular form of Christianity should be established as the State Church, "What is your grievance? Do the ministers of the State religion command a monopoly of doing good? Do they prevent you from preaching and teaching, or making others virtuous and happy?"

And if not, what do you complain of? Must they not answer that their real grievance is a jealousy of the social advantages of their brethren of the English Church?’

‘They must,’ said I.

‘Then should we not reason sharply with such men,’ said he, ‘and say to them: Is not your aim professedly one with that of the National Church—to promote the general good of the citizens? And have we not shown that that good is best promoted by the maintenance of the existing Church? Put away from you, then, a contemptible jealousy of the worldly advantages of others. Are you not all casting out devils in the same name? Be assured that, if you succeed in destroying this Church, you will never be able to establish another. And so the nation will be losers and you no gainers. Will not this be a fitting reprimand to men who profess to be anxious for the welfare of the State, and yet postpone

its interests to their own love of dignity and reward ?’

‘Certainly, O Stranger,’ I said.

‘Shall we say, then,’ said he, ‘that we have established this: that it is essential for the permanent development of religion in the State that some representative Church should be recognised and established by law as the embodiment of national religious feeling, and as the means by which that feeling obtains utterance ?’

‘That we have proved,’ said I.

‘And this would be a good thing even if it had to be created ?’

‘Yes, O Stranger,’ said I.

‘And that still more is it true in a case where an ancient, national and representative Church already exists, carrying with it, by force of long association, the reverence and affection of many thousands of the citizens ?’

‘It would be madness to destroy it,’ said I.

When I had said this the stranger paused awhile, as if to recover his breath, like an athlete after a course—for, indeed, he had become quite excited as his argument proceeded. So I chimed in, to give him a little breathing time, and said :

‘ O Stranger, I find it very difficult myself to suggest any answer to this part of your argument, and so I must call in some enthusiastic allies to help me. You know that we have some near neighbours and fellow-subjects called the Irish, very warm-hearted people. I believe that they gave the Government of this country no little trouble in your day—if I might guess at your date by your appearance.’

‘ I know them only too well,’ said he.

‘ Well,’ said I, ‘ I will summon them to my aid, and they will come in a compact body, I promise you, and will assert, as with one voice, that there was once a State Church established in Ireland, a fairly old institution, which never-

theless did not command the reverence and affection of the Irish people ; but was hated by all but a small minority of them with a deadly hatred ; and that eventually this Church was disestablished, and deprived of its pre-eminence. And they will say, further, that since this has taken place, not only the mass of the people are more contented, owing to the removal of a grievance, but that the adherents of the Church that was formerly established are far more active and enthusiastic in the cause of religion than they were before. What answer can you find to give to this formidable crew, O Stranger ?’

‘I am glad,’ said he, smiling, ‘that you allowed me a little rest before encountering these fresh enemies. For, from what I hear, I shall require all my powers of “staying,” as I believe you now say on the race-course, if I am to avert defeat at their hands. However, I am not unprepared for them, for I

have—though, as you might say, “at a distance”—followed this controversy as to the Irish Church with great interest. So far, O Politician, from the history of the Irish Protestant Church being an argument against the position that I have maintained, it is in reality a strong illustration of the truth of it. Have we not, above all things, laid stress upon the necessity of such an institution as a Church being the natural outgrowth of national feeling, because it is impossible to create national sentiment artificially?’

‘We have,’ said I.

‘And we adduced it as a strong argument in favour of our existing English Church that it was a truly national Church in this sense: that the reverence which attached to it was the result of the spontaneous sentiment of generations of the citizens.’

‘We did,’ said I.

‘Well,’ said he, ‘in the case of the Irish

Church, matters were quite different. It was never a National Church in any sense of the term, but was an exotic introduced with a complete hierarchical organisation against the will of the people, who were almost entirely devoted to another and hostile form of Christianity, and it was regarded by them as a badge of conquest, a yoke of servitude. Or we might go back to an illustration that we have used before, and say that the English Church is the natural heir of the Church originally established in the country when it first became Christian; that, although it differs now to a considerable extent in doctrine and practice from its original form, nevertheless the change has been a natural one, prepared for, long before it actually took place, by a quiet revolution in the religious opinions of the people. But the Irish Church, on the other hand, was an intruder and usurper, artificially thrust into a seat of honour from which the

rightful owner had been dispossessed. The natural result of this is much the same as when a man, instead of leaving his property to his son, leaves it all to a stranger. When the latter comes to take possession he finds that his neighbours look very coldly upon him.'

'I quite understand your meaning,' I replied.

'Well, then,' said he, 'is it not true that the Irish Church, so far from being an instance against our position, is a strong illustration of its truth? Does it not exhibit unmistakeably the fact that national sentiment cannot be artificially created; and that, therefore, when you find an institution which is regarded by many with sentimental reverence, it is much too precious to be destroyed?'

'It does,' said I, 'most clearly.'

'And as for their second point,' said he, 'that the adherents of the Irish Protestant Church have been much more active and en-

thusiastic since it was disestablished, may we not say that that also does not in any way affect our argument? In the old days the ministers of the State Church in Ireland were scattered throughout the country, without any regard to the religious opinions of the population to which they were sent; and, consequently, in the majority of instances, they were like small garrisons in a hostile country, surrounded by deadly enemies, without either means of attack or prospect of relief. No wonder that when they were so scattered and outnumbered they were disheartened. But now that the Protestants have called in all their outlying garrisons and have limited the sphere of their operations to a district which it is possible for them to defend properly with their existing resources, they naturally have taken heart from mere sympathy and companionship, and are prepared to begin a new campaign with fresh vigour.'

‘That is so,’ I replied.

‘In fact,’ said he, ‘in Ireland Protestants are only a sect, who were at one time artificially thrust into the position of a State Church, contrary to the will of the people, and have now returned to their natural position.’

‘Undoubtedly,’ said I.

‘But their failure does not affect our Protestant Church in England,’ said he, ‘which is natural and not artificial, supported by the nation and not detested, and is by far the most numerous and powerful of all the Christian communions in the country.’

‘Now let us turn to our other opponents, O Politician,’ said the stranger, ‘those, I mean, who think that religion is a good thing, and that in some way an Established Church is a good thing, but who object to having, as they say, to submit their consciences and faith to secular control. And first let us say to them: Are you not mistaken, most worthy

gentlemen, in saying this? Surely the State does not either prescribe or control the doctrines and practices of individuals. It defines and explains the doctrines and practices of the national Church, and it controls the persons who administer them. Let me illustrate my meaning familiarly, and do not laugh at me if I show a surprising ignorance of business ways, for in my day philosophers did not venture much into the city. But I fancy I was once told by some plump and substantial shades, who had lately left that great centre of commerce to join us in the other world, that in these days there are numerous associations for the sake of trade called Joint-stock Companies. That they are compelled by law to draw up and publish statutes which they call Articles of Association, by which the rights and liabilities of their members and officers are defined and controlled; so that, for instance, anyone by study-

ing the articles of a company can inform himself at once of the exact limits of the directors' authority.

'Is that so, or were those business-like shades making fun of me?'

'You are correct,' said I.

'And further,' said he, 'that if any director exceeds the limits of his authority, he is liable for it to the uttermost farthing, and may be ejected from his office, and even imprisoned.'

'Certainly,' said I.

'And yet it is no hardship upon him,' continued the stranger, 'because he knew when he took upon himself the office of director exactly what his rights and liabilities would be, and he need not have accepted the post if he did not like the terms upon which it was held. But on the other hand it is essential to the security of the public that they should know the precise power and

authority of anyone holding himself out as a director of a company.'

'You are quite an authority upon company law,' said I.

'Well then,' said he, smiling, 'if it is not impious to argue from the affairs of Mammon to those of God, may we not say that it is just the same with reference to the control that the State exercises over our national Church? It has certain formulæ drawn up by the Church and sanctioned by the State, which prescribe the doctrines and the practices which are to be observed and performed by those who hold themselves out to the public as the ministers of the State religion. They need not enter the orders of that Church unless they please, but if they do, and by so doing make themselves directors, so to speak, of the national Church, they must not exceed their power, or they will have to be ejected from the Church or other-

wise punished. And there is no hardship in this, for they knew at the time when they took orders, both what doctrines and practices they would have to conform to, and what would be the consequence of nonconformity.'

'They did it with their eyes open,' said I.

'And, moreover,' said the stranger, 'it is very important that the public should be able to rely upon the ostensible ministers of the national Church remaining within the bounds to which they have agreed to conform.'

'They have a right to expect it,' said I.

'The State then only steps in,' said he, 'in the interests of the public, to prevent the agents of the Church from exceeding their authority; but it compels no person either to profess the doctrines of the Church or to remain within its walls against his will.'

'You have explained this very clearly,' said I; 'it is almost a pity that you are not a lawyer.'

‘Oh,’ said the stranger, laughing, ‘I have had some little practice in that direction. But for these men who object to the State control of the Church: having hinted to them that their legal and logical ideas are not exact, let us apologise to them if we have wounded their feelings by such commonplace illustrations as we have used, and make a very humble petition to them and say, as we said to our other opponents: The interests of the State demand such a control. Will you not, then, either sacrifice your scruples to that interest or else leave our national Church altogether?’

‘We must refer them back again to our show, and they will see there many scenes in which the absence of a State control over the Church has endangered the existence of the State. We will show them a time when the ministers of the Church professed obedience only to an authority resident in a foreign land. When that authority, having

absolute dominion over the convictions and consciences of men, taught the citizens of this land that their first duty was, not to the country in which they lived, or to its Government and laws, but to the irresponsible commands of a foreign ecclesiastic. Nay, that authority even ventured, on more than one occasion, to proclaim to the citizens of this country that their sovereign was a usurper; that it was lawful for subjects to depose and even kill their rulers for religious reasons—and that even in the case of one of our most wise and virtuous sovereigns. Can we permit an irresponsible power independent of the State Government, to wield so tremendous an influence over our citizens, and that ostensibly in the guise of ministers or bishops of our national Church?’

‘Certainly not,’ said I. ‘If this Church is to be a national Church we cannot allow her to turn traitor.’

‘And we might also say, might we not?’ said he, ‘that this is a reason, why, if possible, a national Church should be a Protestant Church. Because a Roman Catholic Church can never be independent of foreign control, and consequently its interests must often conflict with those of our country. In short, it can never be truly national.’

‘It cannot,’ said I. ‘We have only to look at the history of Europe to see that.’

‘And as for those,’ said he, ‘who because of this State control or for other conscientious reasons cannot bring themselves to believe the doctrines of our Church as declared by the State authority: we would not have them voluntarily to act a lie, by pretending to conform to that which they do not believe, but we will only implore them, even if they cannot believe themselves, at all events not to prevent others from believing. I think they cannot fail to be convinced that both Chris-

tianity and the establishment of a national Christian Church is a good thing for the nation at large. And as they are for the most part philanthropical people, we will beg them not to destroy an institution which, whatever may be the theoretical premises upon which it depends, is of obvious practical benefit to mankind. For, indeed, even our bitterest opponents cannot say that its doctrines may not *possibly* be true, or that it is *impossible* their own theories may be false.'

'Certainly not,' said I.

'Then,' he continued, 'with such men the certainty of practical result should outweigh the doubtful issue of theoretical problems.'

I assented.

'And, indeed,' said the stranger, 'we might further remind those who cannot bring their consciences to believe in the doctrines of our national Church, that at least the establishment of such a Church is a great bulwark against

intolerance and bigotry, both within and without its walls.

‘For, O Politician, if a man can regard a great number of others, whose religious views differ very much from his own, as, nevertheless, members of the same Church as himself, and brethren with him in faith, must not that fact alone tend to make him more tolerant and larger hearted than if he were merely a member of a small isolated sect? Besides, the fact that men differing widely in their interpretation of ceremonies and articles of faith can yet administer the same sacraments and use the same services, is in itself a Catholic element in our existing Church, which must produce greater tolerance amongst its members than can be found in any religious body whose doctrines and practices are rigid and uniform.

‘Do you not think that if our existing national Church were disestablished and, thus

losing its bond of cohesion, were broken up, as it infallibly would be, into a number of petty sects, religious strife, bigotry and intolerance would be far more general and bitter than they now are? And that to the incalculable harm and loss of the nation; for while the sheep-dogs are quarrelling the flock perish.'

'I am afraid that such would be the case,' said I.

'Most men,' continued the stranger, 'are naturally intolerant, and that very often in proportion to the strength of their convictions. But yet words have a great power over them, and they will tolerate the views of others who professedly belong to their own communion, although they would reprobate them in strangers.

'And, again, there are some kind and loving souls who long for peace, and who delight in the idea that in our Church men of very different opinions can with one voice give

glory to God. Are we, then, to give a spur to intolerance while we check the curb of love?’

‘Not if we are skilful drivers,’ said I.

‘And, remember,’ he continued, ‘that the same bigotry which will be exhibited between the rival sects of Christianity will also be rife between those who are Christians and those who are not.’

‘The garment of our Church may be made of various threads, but it is without seam—let us not rend it.’

‘It will be useless in pieces,’ said I; ‘and we have no similar material wherewith to patch the rent.’

‘Well, then,’ added the stranger, ‘what more remains? What further objections can anyone offer to our national Church? Have we not disposed of all our adversaries?’

‘Not quite,’ said I, ‘for there yet remain some persons, very precise gentlemen, who will

say that you are, upon your own confession, instructing the whole nation in a lie; and that you must not do evil that good may come.'

'Oh,' said he, laughingly, 'I will put these puritanical gentlemen in a dilemma. Either Christianity is true, and therefore manifestly good: or it is false, and yet it is good.'

'But let us first admit candidly,' said he, 'that if the rulers of the State were to undertake themselves to teach the citizens, as a vital and essential truth, a religious creed which they did not believe, they would in all probability fail. Because it is notorious that a man to be a successful teacher must himself believe in the principles which he teaches; for otherwise he is half-hearted, and his disciples readily perceive it. But we do not suggest that the rulers should themselves inculcate these truths, but that they should merely give free scope to the exertions of those who believe them.'

There are plenty of willing labourers for the harvest, and all that they ask is that they may not be impeded in their work. Leave us only our existing appliances, say they, and we will ask no more. Surely these are earnest men who believe in what they teach, and will convert the ignorant. Do not they deserve encouragement ?'

'I think they do,' said I. 'In fact, they merely put in a plea for toleration.'

'Just so,' said he. 'And then, again, we must remind these opponents that, although we have been treating of this Christianity as though it were a "noble lie," still neither they nor anyone else has ever proved that it is so. Those philosophers who have most keenly criticised this religion can say no more than this: "It is not proved; therefore, we believe it to be false; but it may possibly be true."

'And, indeed, were it necessary for us to do

so, I would remind those who say that the Divine origin of Christianity is not proved of a very old story :

‘Once, in the first beginnings of this faith, there was a solemn council held by its enemies to deliberate as to how they might put an end to it. And one of the council, a doctor learned in the law, rose up, and advised the council not to interfere with it. “For,” said he, “all such devices, if they do not come from God, will come to nought of themselves ; and if this one does not come to nought of itself, mayhap you may fight against God in trying to suppress it.”

‘Nay, even one of their own modern philosophers¹ has said, not once, but many times (for he is fond of repetition), that the only way of knowing what is the will of God is by considering what conduces to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of mankind.

¹ Austin, *Jurisprudence*.

‘Now, if we accept either of these tests, should we not have to admit that the strong probability seems to be that this religion comes of God?’

‘It would seem so,’ said I.

‘But even if it is not true,’ he continued, ‘it is nevertheless good, in that it makes our citizens good.’

‘Do you ever remember to have heard the account of the death of a celebrated philosopher amongst the Greeks, who was condemned to death by his countrymen for teaching blasphemy about the gods?’

‘I think I know the man you mean,’ said I. ‘It was Socrates the son of Sophroniscus.’

‘Just so,’ said he. ‘Perhaps you may remember that when he addressed his fellow-citizens for the last time after they had condemned him to death,¹ he said that he forgave them their share in his death; for, indeed, it

¹ Plato, *Ap. Soc.* 40, 41.

would be more grievous to them than to him ; that he had endeavoured all his life to be a good man, and that it mattered not to a good man what kind of existence he happened upon after death. For that, in any case, his journey to the next world would be no ill-faring. Whether he should go to join the ghosts of the departed in Hades, as their religion taught, or whether death was but “a sleep and a forgetting,” a man who had lived a life of self-denial and virtue upon earth would fare well all the same. For if the account given by their religion were true, the spirit of the good man would fly off to join the ranks of the heroes of old time, there to share in their ineffable converse. Whereas, if death was but a sleep, should we “dream perchance,” the dreams of the good man would be sweet and his rest sound. So that, in any case, whatever might be true of the life after death, it must be all the better with a man hereafter for his

having been good and self-sacrificing in this life. That no real evil can happen to a good man in this life or in the next.

‘ Now let us apply this tale to our own case, O Politician ; and say to our opponents that our citizens will not know whether our Christianity is true or false, until after their death. So that, at all events, they will not be acting a conscious lie while they live. If Christianity turns out to be true after all, then their everlasting happiness will be secured if they have obeyed its precepts in this life ; but even if it turns out to be false, and life after death is something else from that which Christianity teaches, still, having been true followers of it during this life, and having been good and self-sacrificing, they will be a blessing to the State while they live, and when they die, whatever may be the condition in which they may find themselves, they may be confident that in no case can it be otherwise than well

with them. And, after all, the great object of the politician is to find some power which will make the citizens virtuous and self-sacrificing in this life.'

'Certainly,' said I.

'May we, then, conclude,' said he, 'that the object of our vision is accomplished? That you have found the power for which you have sought so long? And that the arguments of its adversaries have not prevailed against it?'

'We have,' said I; 'and I am entirely satisfied with our conclusions.'

When I said this, the stranger smiled cheerfully, and stretched out his hand as if to bid me farewell. But when his hand touched mine, a sudden darkness and heaviness overcame me, and I sank upon the ground in a deep sleep. And when I awoke I found myself in the place where I was when the stranger first accosted me; and he and all his show had vanished away.

At first I could scarcely remember what had happened to me ; but as my faculties returned all that I had seen and heard rushed vividly upon my recollection. Though, even now, I seem to doubt whether I saw and heard in truth, or did but dream. But whether it was a waking or a sleeping vision, its lessons remain the same.

‘And now,’ said the politician to us all, ‘I have detained you too long already ; and I, for one, shall be scolded if I remain away from home any longer.’

So saying, he bade us good-night, and departed ; and we shortly dispersed to our several homes, pondering deeply upon all these things.

Thus ends my tale. Let me briefly recapitulate the argument that I have outlined :—

(A.) That it is manifest from historical experience—

1. That disciplined religious enthusiasm is the great motive power which makes a nation successful ;

2. That the Christian religion is the great motive power that causes men to sacrifice themselves for the good of others, and thus makes a nation virtuous and happy.

(B.) That if this was not manifest from history, we should have expected it to be the case, *à priori*, from the known constitution of the human mind.

(C.) That, therefore, religion and, more especially, Christianity, is an important factor in politics, and at any rate cannot be ignored.

(D.) That the influence of Christianity is uniformly good, and that in the most important national and individual interests.

(E.) That it produces an effect for good which no legislation can produce, and that nothing but itself has ever been known to produce.

(F.) That, whether true or false, Christianity must do good and cannot do harm to anyone either in this world or the next.

(G.) That, therefore, the politician's duty, *whether he believes it to be true or false*, is to develop and utilise it.

(H.) That, assuming Christianity to be good for a nation, it is essential that it should be embodied in some definite national Church—

1. As a visible rallying-point and example for the national faith ;
2. As a means of national devotion ;
3. As a means of national control over a very formidable political power ;
4. As a bulwark against intolerance and bigotry.

(I.) That, this being so, if we did not find a Church established, it would be wise and statesmanlike, if possible, to create one.

(J.) That, *à fortiori*, it would be madness to destroy a Church already created, and which

has been invested by the veneration of ages with a sentimental power over men's minds, which can never be replaced if once destroyed.

I have also endeavoured to suggest an answer to the various objections that are urged against the existing endowment and establishment of the Church.

They most of them stand or fall with the original position—namely, that the object at which the Church aims is one which is all-important for the welfare of the citizens.

If this is established, the argument drawn from the jealousies of other denominations is hardly deserving of a serious answer.

I have purposely avoided suggesting (except in one place, which does not affect the general argument) the truth of the doctrines upon which Christianity is based. But I hope I have, at all events, sufficiently indicated the effects of Christianity upon men's lives and conduct, as historical and psychological, and

not as theological, phenomena, to convince any reasonable person that, whether it be true or whether it be false, our national Church can be shown to be based, as I said at the outset, upon a political expediency amounting to a necessity.

The showman of my dialogue has probably been recognised by his well-known aphorisms as Francis Bacon.

I chose him for the character because I believe that the bitterness of the controversy between religion and secularism is chiefly owing to two causes:—

1. Want of definition of the object of the inquiry ;

2. The neglect of historical investigation.

To call men's attention to these two preliminaries of philosophical discussion was Bacon's greatest achievement.

To anyone who looks back over the field of time, and sees that almost all the most

vivid and dramatic incidents in the world's history, even in classical times, from the days of Polycrates of Samos, or Decius Mus and Curtius, down to our own, have been in some way connected with religious emotions, it may seem strange that in these days it should be the habit of a large class of controversialists to ignore religion as a political power altogether. Francis Bacon would have taught them better. He would have led them to look at the world's history, and from that record learn for themselves the lesson which he deduced, and which I have taken for my motto.

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