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NOTES

ON

EVOLUTION AND CHRISTIANITY

BY

J. F. YORKE

"NATURA NON FACIT SALTUM"

NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1883

PREFACE.

The object of the following simple Notes is to turn a small—but, it is hoped, not inopportune—stream of facts and criticism on to an important question: Is there in the teaching of Christ an originality so wonderful, as to be accounted for only by the assumption of a special Divine Revelation? The facts alluded to, whether historical or scientific, are recorded, for the most part, in writings too elaborate or too learned for the busy majority. Yet the consciousness that new knowledge is threatening with dissolution old views of religion and ethics is wide and deep; and not less so is the desire to get at the gist of the controversy, and to learn what—concerning this question above all others—the new knowledge really has to teach.

These Notes then are an attempt to meet that desire, and to point out the bearing of Evolution upon Religion, and especially upon Christianity. It is well to know in what direction we are moving. It is well that our minds should be accustomed to changes *as they come*, so that the consequent modifi-

cations of the old creeds may be accompanied by as little danger and distress as need be. The reader, however, must not regard this volume as claiming to settle any of the questions raised: its aim is much more modest.

It would seem an almost certain corollary of the general theory of Evolution, that all so-called new ideas are but the natural outcome of previous ideas of the same class; from which it follows that Christ's teaching can be no more than an indispensable link in the moral progress of humanity; that he invented no *new* morality, but that his work was the reformation and more forcible application of the old. This was indeed recognized, in a sense, long ago, when Augustine said: "Christ came in the flesh, and consequently the true religion, already in existence, took the name Christian. This is at the present time the Christian religion: not that it had not a prior existence, but because it afterwards received this title." So, too, Eusebius wrote: "The religion published by Jesus Christ is neither new nor strange."

Not only is this true of the Christian morality, it is equally so of what has become the Christian theology. The doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, of the Miraculous Conception and Divine Incarnation,

are to be found in the ancient religions of Egypt, of India, and of Persia: that of the Messiah is Persian: the Atonement comes to us from Egypt: the belief in Satan from Persia: the Temptation by the devil in the wilderness is a legend of Buddha: the doctrines of a Resurrection, a Judgment, Heaven and Hell, and of a terrible Future Punishment in store for the wicked, are to be found in most of the ancient religions. These are historical facts, not perhaps so generally known as they ought to be, but disputed by no one; orthodox commentators, however, and evolutionists drawing very different deductions from them. The former claim all such anticipations of their own creed as so many Divine foreshadowings, or "types," of what, for them, is "the truth;" and for those who do not object to intrinsic improbability such an explanation is satisfactory enough. To the evolutionist, on the other hand, these facts are tolerably clear indications that the theology, like the ethics, of Christianity is but a natural selection from pre-existing materials; and he respects it, as he respects all necessary stages in man's search after what is good and true, but not otherwise. All minds travel most readily along the line of least resistance; but whilst for some, to imagine a constant, personal interference and detailed guidance on the part of the Deity in every occurrence of the lives of men, involves least effort: others, owing to scien-

tific training and habits of thought, find it easier not to suppose supernatural causes at work, when the ordinary forces of nature can give a satisfactory account of the events in question.

The first chapter of these Notes will be devoted to a very brief sketch of some of the Eastern religions which preceded Christianity, and of which it should be regarded as a natural continuation and expansion. In the second, by far the longest and most important part of the volume, will be discussed the more immediate sources of Christ's moral doctrine: its interpretation, by the light of the practice and belief of his day: and its further development in the Church. The method adopted will be to arrange the teaching of the Rabbis and of Christ consecutively, and under various headings. By this plan the reader will be able the more readily to satisfy himself as to our precise debt to Christ with regard to any particular subject. The third and final chapter will contain a few notes on some of the essential differences between all these purely empirical, pre-scientific systems of ethics, and what may be termed natural, or necessary, morality. The ground to be gone over being so extensive, little more can be attempted than to indicate the main lines of thought along which modern criticism on these questions is moving,

so far as that is possible in a work of this slight and popular character. A list of books, however, will be added in an appendix, for the further assistance of those who may wish to continue this deeply interesting study.

With regard to the first and second chapters, their object being to provide a satisfactory basis for estimating the exact position of the Ethics of Christ in moral history, there should be no doubt as to their substantial accuracy in point of chronology. It may, however, very possibly be the case that some of the passages from the Talmud (notwithstanding the remarks of Professor Deutsch and Dr. Zipser, quoted in the second chapter—see p. 60), and other Rabbinical sayings, are of a later date than the time of Christ. In view of such probable need for corrections, the author humbly begs to borrow a few words from a well-known writer: "I have come to this determination in my own mind,—that a work is as good as *manuscript*, and is invested with all the same privileges—till it appears in a second edition."

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NOTES

ON

EVOLUTION AND CHRISTIANITY.

NOTES ON

EVOLUTION AND CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER I.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW MORALITY.

In the first portion of these Notes a slight sketch will be given of some of the most conspicuous points in that moral evolution of which the doctrines of Christ, rationally viewed, appear to be the natural culmination. The result will be some suggestive and easily appreciable evidence of the satisfactory manner in which the general processes of evolution can account for even the highest religious development—and more than this it would be undesirable to attempt on the present occasion. The reader will moreover doubtless excuse the paucity of the comments on the quotations, since only in this way can the whole ground be gone over within the necessary limits of this small volume. And, after all, the passages quoted, if read fairly, cannot fail to say

for themselves all that they are here intended to show.

We shall begin by passing in brief review some of the more noticeable stages of Hebrew ethics, starting with the wandering life of the Twelve Tribes after their exodus from Egypt. They held at that time a very curious—indeed unique—position, as a still barbarous race, which had lived for several centuries surrounded by a civilization many thousand years old; in the midst of which, notwithstanding considerable isolation, a few of their number at all events must have learnt something of the advanced moral ideas the Egyptians had already gained. A good deal of accurate knowledge has lately been acquired, from various inscriptions and papyri, of what the great African kingdom had, long before that time, accomplished in the arts and sciences of civilization. What the moral and religious ideas of this nation were like, which is the only point that concerns us here, will be best shown by a few quotations, dating back to a very remote period indeed—some of the passages given having been written before 3000 B.C., that is to say, many centuries earlier than the supposed date of the Flood described in the Book of Genesis.

The chief theological characteristic of this first of all known civilized religions is the doctrine of the Divine Unity. As M. de. Rougé says, "The Egyp-

tian religion comprehends a quantity of local worships. The Egypt which Menes brought together entire under his sceptre was divided into nomes, each having a capital town; each of these regions has its principal God designed by a special name; but it is always the same doctrine which reappears under different names. One idea predominates—that of a single and primeval God; everywhere and always it is one substance, self-existent, and an unapproachable God."

Nuk-pu-Nuk ("I am He who I am") and Neith ("I came from Myself") are two of the more remarkable descriptive titles given to the Deity; and he is addressed in terms of which the following may be accepted as good examples:—

"Every one glorifies Thy goodness. Mild is Thy love towards us; Thy tenderness surrounds our hearts; great is Thy love in all the souls of men."

"Let not Thy face be turned away from us; the joy of our hearts is to contemplate Thee. Chase all anguish from our hearts. . . . He wipes tears from off all faces."

"Hail to Thee, Ra, Lord of all truth: whose shrine is hidden; Lord of the gods: who listeneth to the poor in his distress; gentle of heart when we cry to Thee. Deliverer of the timid man from the violent; judging the poor—the poor and the oppressed. Lord of mercy most loving; at whose coming men

live; at whose goodness gods and men rejoice. Sovereign of life, health, and strength."

"Speak nothing offensive of the Great Creator, if the words are spoken in secret: the heart of man is no secret to Him that made it. . . . He is present with thee, though thou be alone."

"O my God and Lord, who hast made me, and formed me, give me an eye to see and an ear to hear Thy glories."

The Egyptians frequently spoke of God as their Father, and of themselves as "sons beloved of their Father." He is the "Giver of life"; "Toucher of the hearts, Searcher of the inward parts, is His name." And it was but in natural accompaniment of this belief in a heavenly Father that the duty of honoring earthly parents was strongly insisted on. On several tombs have been found such inscriptions as the following:—"I honored my father and my mother; I loved my brothers. I taught little children. I took care of orphans, as though they had been my own children."

"We are acquainted with several collections of Precepts and Maxims on the conduct of life. Such are the Maxims of Ptahhotep contained in the Prisse Papyrus, the Instructions of Amenemhat, and the Maxims of Ani; and fragments of other important works are preserved in the museums of Paris, Leyden, and St. Petersburg. The most venerable of them is

the work of Ptahhotep, which dates from the age of the Pyramids, and yet appeals to the authority of the ancients. It is undoubtedly, as M. Chabas called it, in the title of the memorable essay in which its contents were first made known, 'the most Ancient Book of the World.' The manuscript at Paris which contains it was written centuries before the Hebrew lawgiver was born, but the author of the work lived as far back as the reign of King Assa Tatkarā of the fifth dynasty. . . . These books are very similar in character and tone to the Book of Proverbs in our Bible. They inculcate the study of wisdom, the duty to parents and superiors, respect for property, the advantages of charitableness, peaceableness and content, of liberality, humility, chastity and sobriety, of truthfulness and justice; and they show the wickedness and folly of disobedience, strife, arrogance and pride, of slothfulness, intemperance, unchastity, and other vices." (Renouf, "Hibbert Lectures," ii. p. 76).

To quote only two examples of the doctrine of this venerable moralist:—"If thou art become great after thou hast been humble, and if thou hast amassed riches after poverty, being because of that the first in thy town; if thou art known for thy wealth, and art become a great lord, let not thy heart become proud because of thy riches, for it is God who is the author of them for thee. Despise not

another who is as thou wert; be towards him as towards thy equal." And again:—"The obedience of a docile son is a blessing. God loves obedience. Disobedience is hated by God. The obedience of a son maketh glad the heart of his father. . . . A son teachable in God's service will be happy in consequence of his obedience; he will grow to be old, he will find favor."

The doctrine of the resurrection was also held, and the Egyptians expected to stand before the divine judge Osiris, and say, "I have not privily done evil to my neighbors. I have not afflicted any, nor caused any to weep. I have not told lies. I have not done what is hateful to the Gods. I have not calumniated the slave to his master. I have not been idle. I have not stolen. I have not committed adultery. I have not committed murder." And so on through a long category of offences; nor could any man hope to pass into the heavenly regions who failed to satisfy even one of these conditions.

A noteworthy anticipation of Christ's thoughtful estimate of the pre-eminent importance of good works is found in their funeral lamentations, where, for example, they chanted, "There is no fault in him. No accuser riseth up against him. In the truth he liveth, with the truth he nourisheth himself. The gods are satisfied with all that he hath done. . . . He succored the afflicted, he gave bread to

the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothes to the naked; he sheltered the outcast, his doors were open to the stranger, he was a father to the fatherless." It may be added that this beautiful morality is from a religious service more than five thousand years old.

"Mind thee of the day when thou too shalt start for the land to which one goeth to return not thence. Good for thee will have been a good life; therefore be just and hate iniquity, for he who loveth what is right shall triumph."

"I have lived in truth and fed on justice. What I have done for humanity was salvation. And how I loved God, God only and my heart know."

The promise to the blessed was that "they shall pluck the sweetest fruits in heaven, for they have given food to the hungry, and water to the thirsty, they clad the naked, and lived in truth, for their heart was with God, and God was with them, and they will enjoy eternal life in His presence."

As M. Chabas says of this refined moral and religious code, "None of the Christian virtues is forgotten in it: piety, charity, gentleness, self-command in word and action, chastity, the protection of the weak, benevolence towards the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its minutest details. . . . all is expressed there, and in extremely clear language."

It seems hardly necessary to add (what even the few quotations here given have indeed shown) that all the ethical laws of the Mosaic decalogue can be traced to an Egyptian origin; and since Moses, at all events, must have been acquainted with their legislation and moral doctrines, we are under no necessity to believe, on evidence that will only stand a very friendly analysis, that the law was supernaturally delivered from Sinai as a divine revelation: the simple explanation that the law-giver and his people had but recently left a civilized country, where not only these commands, but others of a far higher degree of morality, had prevailed for centuries, being perfectly adequate. Indeed, it simply shows in what a backward state the Israelites then were, that only such a rude and barbarous code as they practised was possible for them. For the most brutal tribes of North American Indians—the Apaches, for instance,—the fiercest races of Central Asia —such as the Afghans—could not show a blacker record of determined cruelty, a greater glorification of injustice and crime, than this chosen people of Yahveh after their exodus from Egypt and during their invasion of Canaan. The uncertainty that still exists with regard to the dates to which the composition of the several books of the Pentateuch must be assigned, prevents a too close insistence on special passages as conclusive proof of the moral

condition of the tribes in this their nomadic and free-booting period. The complicated ceremonial institutions (given in Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) are, for example, probably almost entirely the work of a far later age; it is now believed that they were partly composed about 600 B. C., under the superintendence of Jeremiah, and partly some century and a half afterwards under Ezra the scribe. But the historical portions, and the simpler laws and customs strictly in accordance with a wandering life, were in all probability taken from oral traditions, and perhaps from older writings now no longer in existence, and are therefore of considerable value in affording really trustworthy indications of the moral condition and ideas of the Israelites before the period of the Kings. Taking the most likely estimate of their authenticity, we may accept such parts of the Pentateuch as dating from about the time of Samuel, or possibly even earlier.

On examining these histories, it is only very occasionally that we can find anything at all implying advanced moral ideas: the six ethical commands in the Decalogue, for instance, have always been practically in force, except in the case of the very lowest savages; and it should not be forgotten that, with the Israelites, they were merely national in their application. If we study the existing accounts, not by the antiquated methods of a too respectful credulity, but

rather as we do the information we now possess of other Eastern nationalities, it will soon appear what a very favorable view has been taken of the morality and religion of the Twelve Tribes. We find, to make a beginning, that the right of Vendetta, or blood-revenge, was clearly sanctioned :—

"And surely your blood of your lives will I require ; at the hand of every wild beast will I require it, and at the hand of man ; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. ix. 5). And again, concerning accidental homicide :—

" He shall flee unto one of those cities, and live : lest the avenger of the blood pursue the manslayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him ; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past ' (Deut. xix. 6).

It should be noted, however, that this is a mitigated form of the Vendetta ; there is no mention here of a family responsibility—namely, that in the event of the murderer himself escaping, all his relations became responsible for his act, and any one of them was liable to be killed in return. The rationale of this primitive law is plain enough : it is simply the legal utilization of the common desire for revenge, as a means of deterring men from murder. Espec-

ially conducive to this purpose would it be, where it was to the interest of the whole family that none of its members should commit this crime,—or as Mr. Tylor strikingly puts the point: "Among all savages and barbarians, the avenger of blood, little as he thinks it himself in his wild fury, is doing his part towards saving his people from perishing by deeds of blood."

A corresponding piece of justice, desirable from a like savage point of view, is to be found in the *lex talionis*, or law of similar retaliation, which is no less distinctly laid down:—

"If a man cause a blemish in his neighbor; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; hurt for hurt, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again" (Lev. xxiv. 19; compare Exod. xxi. 24, 25).

"Thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot" (Deut. xix. 21).

In both the above customs we should not fail to observe that no question of abstract principle is raised: their morality is apparently that of mere expediency: if men kill or maim members of the same tribe or federation, such acts diminish the strength of the community, and must therefore be repressed under stern penalties. Even the Decalogue command, "Thou shalt not kill," cannot be understood

as condemning manslaughter in the abstract; it was perfectly allowable, even admirable, to kill men by way of punishment, sacrifice, revenge, or (in the case of foreigners) whenever no treaty had been made: but absolutely indiscriminate murder is of necessity forbidden, or no society at all could exist under the general lawlessness that would ensue. So long, however, as pitiless warfare with the neighboring tribes was an essential part of the national existence, the sacredness of human life could not be insisted on as a general principle: their own safety demanded a certain recklessness inconsistent with any such doctrine. The punishment of persistent filial disobedience by the cruel death of stoning (Deut. xxi. 18–21) is another example of a law tending to increased tribal unity and strength; obedience being a valuable military virtue, and the early inculcation of it therefore necessary. And to a similar motive (that, namely, of getting rid of a source of weakness) we may ascribe the law respecting the mutilated being cut off from the congregation (Deut. xxiii. 1): a fair parallel to the summary disposal of weakly children by exposure, so common in the early days of Sparta, Rome, and other warlike states. Here, again, no question of principle is raised: what we see is simply a merciless process of selection at work. Moreover, it being in strict accordance with this savage patriotism, we really need not be surprised to find, nor at any pains

to explain, in the often-quoted case of Jael and Sisera, a gross instance of treachery and disregard for the sacred laws of hospitality meeting with unbounded praise, solely because the murder was so greatly to the national advantage.

As for the regulations with regard to injuries done by cattle, and their compensation (see Exod. xxi. 28–36), as has been forcibly said, "they remind us more of the ingenuity of a Kaffir chief than of a divine lawgiver." We are here clearly in the age of what may be roughly classed as the *property* stage in moral progress: all the belongings—wives, children, cattle, and so on—of other members of the same federation must be respected, and every infringement of individual rights in these matters be duly compensated. In certain extreme cases, rather capriciously selected however, death or other severe punishment was inflicted; but a payment in money or cattle would meet most contingencies.

Some of their slavery laws are no less instructive: we learn, in Exod. xxi. 20, *et seq.*, that the fact of a slave's surviving his or her master's cruel treatment was accepted as proof that actual murder was not intended: mere torture or maiming went for nothing: and if the slave died afterwards, the pecuniary loss was considered a sufficient punishment. It may be noticed also (see Exod. xxi. 2–6) that an Israelite slave, married in slavery, could claim his own liberty

after six years of service; but the law ordained that his wife and children should still remain slaves, with the obvious purpose of inducing the unhappy wretch to renounce his freedom, in order to remain with those he loved. From the many laws directed against all manner of unnatural crimes, we may draw further conclusions as to certain prevailing habits and customs; and the frequent statement that the Tribes easily lapsed into worship of "the other Elohim of the Elohim of the people that were round about them" (Judg. ii. 12, 17, 19; iii. 6, 7; vi. 10, 25–32) implies a natural readiness to adopt the various bloody and lascivious rites that accompanied the Baal worship prevalent in those districts. In the customs of concubinage and polygamy we find other indications of their moral state; nor can any one fail to appreciate the motives which prompted them on occasions (see Num. xxxi. 17, 18, 40, and Deut. xxi. 10–14), after a wholesale butchery of a Canaanite tribe, to keep alive the young virgins, handing over a small percentage to the priests as their just perquisites.

Human sacrifices were common enough even at a much later period: witness David's giving up Saul's seven sons to the Gibeonites, that they might be impaled on Gibeah before Yahveh (2 Sam. xxi. 1–9), which was done to remove a famine from the land. The practice of burning children to death in honor of various deities is also frequently men-

tioned, either as actually occurring, or as a possible contingency, later still (see 2 Kings xvi. 3; xxi. 6; xvii. 17; Jer. vii. 31; xix. 5; Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.; xxiii. 39; Ps. cvi. 37, 38; Mic. vi. 7). But such customs, of course, would naturally be more prevalent at an earlier date, especially if it was from the Canaanites, as is very possible, that the Israelites first learnt them. Moreover, whenever related, these acts are usually told in terms of grave respect, and even admiration; as when Jephthah fulfilled his rash vow by making a burnt offering of his unfortunate daughter; or when the narrator of the legends respecting the supposed tribal ancestor Abraham speaks of the sacrifice of Isaac as suggested by his Elohim, and accepted by the patriarch as a pious duty, a proof of trust and obedience. The orthodox defence of the morality of this story may be quoted as an instance of almost inconceivable, unless politic, dulness in missing the chief point at issue: it is said the whole thing was really done by God to try Abraham; and this is supposed to close all further discussion, by throwing an entirely satisfactory light on the matter. But what was the result of this supposed test, if not to show that the patriarch thought such an act right and dutiful, and what the Elohim could very reasonably demand of his servant?

It would seem in a high degree probable that the

original barbarous law of the Tribes (at all events after their arrival in Canaan) was that all first-borns, human as well as animal, were to be sacrificed to Yahveh. "The first-born of thine offspring shalt thou give unto me. Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, and with thy sheep; seven days it shall be with its dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it to me" (Exod. xxii. 29). Afterwards certain kinds, "the firstling of an ass," for instance (Exod. xxxiv. 20; Num. xviii. 15, 16), might be redeemed; and, naturally, children would be considered redeemable as well. Probably the rite of circumcision, also practised on the eighth day after birth, was connected with the custom (see particularly Exod. iv. 24–26; where, too, the idea of propitiation is distinctly marked), the substitution of a part for a whole in an offering being very common in ancient times. (See Spencer's "Ceremonial Institutions," chap. iii. Mutilations, esp. pp. 66, 67; also Tylor's "Primitive Culture," vol. ii. p. 363, *et seq.*)

But it is in their treatment of the unhappy races whom they conquered that we get our plainest glimpses into the character of these brave, unscrupulous, fanatical barbarians. Look at those short accounts of wholesale murder in Num. xxxi. 9, 10, 17, 18; Josh. vi. 21; viii. 24; x. 30, &c.: "And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, both young and old, and ox, and sheep,

and ass, with the edge of the sword." The business-like brevity of such reports prevents our inexperienced minds from realizing the awful horrors, the agony and sufferings that they imply; we pass lightly over them under the softening influences of the lapse of so many centuries, and fail to see that these few words really describe scenes of devilish butchery as horrible as anything the world's history has to show. It is not a pleasant picture for the imagination to dwell upon, the thought of those frenzied, brutal warriors stabbing and slashing to death men, women, and children, by thousands—and then, when the last Syrian baby lies dead, dropping their axes and swords to sing the praises of Yahveh, God of Battles, for whose glory, and at whose bidding, the ghastly work has been done.

It has been necessary to draw up this indictment against the early Israelites at some length, and with several disagreeable details; for, partly owing to a thoughtless familiarity with the Old Testament writings, but still more to the general inaccuracy of orthodoxy, we are too apt to regard these Tribes as moral and religious prodigies; and hence, from not fairly appreciating their historical starting-point, we lose sight of the true nature and causes of the progress they afterwards made. As yet we are still in the period when—to sum up in the words of Mr. Spencer—"The sentiments of right and duty, so far

as they have become developed, refer mainly if not wholly to divine commands and interdicts, and have little reference to the natures of the acts commanded or interdicted. In the intended offering up of Isaac, in the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, and in the hewing to pieces of Agag, as much as in the countless atrocities committed from religious motives by early historic races in general, we see that the morality and immorality of actions, as we understand them, are at first unrecognized, and that the feelings, chiefly of dread, which serve in place of them, are feelings felt towards the unseen beings supposed to issue commands and interdicts" ("Psychology," vol. ii. p. 601.)

Naturally, however, when the tribes became a nation with an established monarchy, and as they passed from a life of continual conflict to one more settled and peaceful, a gradual improvement took place in their moral ideas. The following sketch of a perfectly upright man, according to the best principles of the early regal period, will serve as a sufficient indication of this advance; it is found in the 15th Psalm:—

"Yahveh, who may sojourn in thy tabernacle?
Who may dwell on thy holy mountain?
He that walketh perfectly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh truth in his heart;
That hath not slandered with his tongue,
Hath done no evil to his friend,

Nor taken up a reproach against his neighbor;
In whose eyes a vile person is contemned,
But he honoreth them that fear Yahveh;
Who sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
Who hath not put out his money to usury,
Nor taken a reward against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved."

What is most apparent in this description is the brave manliness of the character depicted: he despises all fraud, falsehood, and meanness—even the taking interest for his loans; he practises a rough, negative sort of humanity, so far as his own tribe is concerned, and his esteem is strictly kept for the faithful worshippers of his country's God. It is the picture of an ancient knight, "sans peur et sans reproche," a suitable ideal for the warrior king who probably wrote the poem. The teaching of the Book of Proverbs also seldom rises above a purely prudential morality; to get wisdom and understanding, to be temperate and industrious—that practically is the sum of its advice. Take, for instance, the famous definition of a "virtuous woman" in the last chapter; is she not just a hard-working, kindly housewife, and nothing more?

But it is when we turn to the Sayings of the Prophets, of those especially who lived some few centuries after David's time—or (say) between 800 and 500 B.C.—that we come upon the real foundation of

Israel's pre-eminence in religious and moral thought. These men were the great poets, patriots, and philosophers of their country. Under their passionate teaching the old savage notions of a tribal God of Battles gave place to gentler and more liberal ideas of the Deity, who is no longer represented as ready to be bribed into favor by sacrifices and offerings, but as one who loves mercy, justice, charity, and humility, and will only accept the righteousness of the heart, hating mere lip-service and formalism. We have, unfortunately, been too much in the habit of regarding the prophets chiefly as "foretellers"; whereas there is no single instance of any of the Hebrew names for this class conveying the slightest reference to prediction. "One who pours forth" (literally, "bubbles up") and "One who sees" are two of the most usual terms applied to them. They are spoken of by Jerome as the originators of the monastic system; he makes mention, for instance, of "our founder Elias, our Elisha, and our leaders the sons of the prophets"; and again says, "The sons of the prophets whom we read of as monks in the Old Testament built themselves cells by the Jordan, away from the crowds of cities, and lived upon barley bread and herbs, having neither wives nor worldly riches." But this, though reasonable enough in the mouth of Jerome, is not strictly accurate; for the first home of the Religion of Solitude was India,

where, as early as 2000 B. C., the lonely life of asceticism and meditation was an established custom. Its leading ideas may be found both in the Vedas and in the Laws of Menu, where he who desired to purify himself and become a saint was bidden to "seclude himself from the world, and gain the favor of the gods by fasting, subduing the lusts of the flesh, and mortifying the senses." It is, of course, quite conceivable that the Syrian development of the same ideas was an independent one; indeed, it is easy enough to believe that it was so, when we consider that the external signs of this type of fanaticism, the seeing of visions and hearing of spirit voices—communion, to use the common term—are very ordinary indications of an unhealthy, deranged mental state; such, too, as are necessarily produced by influences like continued solitude, abstinence from proper food, indulgence in gloomy forebodings, and an abnormal sense of sinfulness. The effects may be traced to purely physical causes, and could be created at will in any favorable environment. Thus the climate of Syria, Egypt, and many parts of India was singularly adapted to an ascetic, homeless life in the desert or the jungle, and these three countries have consequently been the scenes of the most remarkable results of religious and moral monomania the world has ever witnessed.

But to return to the Hebrew Prophets. These

first sprang into importance about the time of Samuel, when a deep spiritual and moral decline had come over the priestly order. Samuel himself endeavored to utilize and introduce some method into this wild and fanatical power by founding colleges of the prophets (see 1 Sam. xix. 19; and cf. 2 Kings ii. 3, 5; ix. 38; vi. 1); and very probably many of those with whose lives or writings we are acquainted belonged to some such schools; Amos, however (see vii. 14), and Elisha (see 1 Kings xix. 19) are examples to the contrary.

These men, then, were political, moral, and religious teachers, regarding themselves as the divinely chosen spokesmen of the invisible Yahveh by whom their utterances were inspired. Their position, from a psychological point of view, is not difficult to comprehend: they were, many of them, possessed of real genius, of lofty energy and enthusiasm, but with minds in abnormal tension, owing to the strange, ascetic lives they led, full of this mystic communion and meditation. Hence they came to believe in themselves as the recipients of divine messages—solemn warnings from Yahveh to their loved but erring country; and their reason for such belief was simply the overpowering strength of their convictions. As Maimonides (the great Spanish Jew and scholar of the twelfth century, known amongst his countrymen as "the Second Moses") somewhat

naïvely remarks, "All prophecy makes itself known to the prophet that it is prophecy indeed by the strength and vigor of the perception, so that his mind is freed from all scruple about it." (The reader will do well also to consult Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," vol. i. chap. iii. p. 188, *et seq.*, on this subject.) By their fellow-countrymen "all the prophets were, in theory, regarded as divinely commissioned; but they were, in practice, obeyed only by those who agreed with them in tendency." For opposition to their teaching "was far from being rare. Though they were reverenced, none of them were implicitly obeyed; they were freely judged, were sometimes withstood to the face, and even subjected to ill-treatment. The contradiction which they experienced was inevitable, for the opposition between different members of their body continued at least from the eighth century B.C. downwards. The people could not simply obey, even if they had so wished. They had to make a choice—to accept the one prophet and reject the other." (See Kuenen, "The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel"; Introduction by Dr. Muir, xiii.)

Such predictions as they uttered fall naturally under the headings of (1) warnings of sufferings to come, if the people persevered in immorality and infidelity to Yahveh; and (2) indefinite promises of future happiness and a divine reign, if they would

only repent of their evil ways. Both these characteristics may be found in Isaiah i. 19:—

> "If ye be willing and obedient,
> Ye shall consume the good of the land.
> But if ye refuse and be rebellious,
> The sword shall consume you;
> For the mouth of Yahveh hath said it."

As indicating the perfectly natural, comprehensible character of these warnings, it should be noticed that they invariably referred simply to the national conduct and condition at the time being; also that their authors believed in an immediate divine retribution, and that the neighboring warlike nations—the Assyrians, Babylonians, Moabites, Egyptians, etc.—would be employed by the Deity for the infliction of his vengeance. This being their unvarying creed, its practical application was a comparatively easy matter; and the political horizon of the moment supplied the requisite alarming details, which would thus appeal with all the force of extreme probability to the people. So, for example, Assyria is the object of dread held up to the hearers of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah; and the Chaldeans to the later generations addressed by Jeremiah or Ezekiel.

But it is not in these—generally unfulfilled—political forebodings (see Kuenen, Introduction, xv.–xxi., and chapters v.–vii.), nor in futile rhapsodies about an impossible millennium, nor in vague apo-

calypses of unearthly regions and personalities, that the true beauty and value of these writings consist; the great merit of their authors lies in their "heart-felt trust in God and moral earnestness," inspired by which they succeeded in placing the leading ethical and religious ideas of Israel on a far higher level than had been hitherto occupied, as the following typical extracts from their works will show quite sufficiently for our present purpose. (Cf. Kuenen, Introduction, xxxvii.–xl.)

"I hate, I despise your feasts;
I have no delight in your solemn assemblies.
When ye offer me burnt offerings and flower offerings,
I will not accept them. . . .
Let justice flow forth as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream."

Amos v. 21, 22, 24; *circ.* 800 B.C.

"Cease to do evil,
Learn to do well;
Seek justice; relieve the oppressed;
Defend the fatherless; plead for the widow."

Isa. i. 17; *circ.* 760 B. C

"Then shall justice dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness in the fruitful field;
And the effect of righteousness shall be peace,
And the fruit of righteousness quiet and security for ever."

Isa. xxxii. 16, 17.

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good;
What doth Yahveh require of thee,
But to do justly, and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly before thy God?"

Micah vi. 8; *circ.* 720 B.C.

"Rend your hearts and not your garment,
And turn to Yahveh your God,
For he is gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger and of great kindness."

Joel ii. 13; *circ.* 600 B.C.

"If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,
And shed not innocent blood in this place,
And go not after other Gods to your own hurt,
Then will I cause you to dwell in this place,
In the land which I gave to your fathers,
For ever and ever."

Jer. vii. 6, 7; *circ.* 600 B.C.

"I am Yahveh, who exercise loving-kindness,
Justice and righteousness upon the earth;
For in these do I delight, saith Yahveh."

Jer. ix. 24.

"Thus saith Yahveh:
Do justice and righteousness;
Deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor;
To the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow
Do no wrong, do no violence,
And shed no innocent blood in this place."

Jer. xxii. 3.

"Yahveh is good to them that trust in him, to the soul that seeketh him.
It is good that a man hope, and quietly wait for salvation from Yahveh.
It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth;
That he sit alone and keep silence, since he layeth it upon him;
That he put his mouth in the dust, saying, Perhaps there may be hope!
That he offer his cheek to the smiter; that he be filled with reproach."

Lam. iii. 25–30.

"Is this the fast that I approve,
A day for a man to afflict his soul?
Is it that he should bow down his head like a bulrush,
And lie down in sack-cloth and ashes?
Wilt thou call this a fast,
And a day acceptable to Yahveh?
Is not this the fast that I approve,
To loose the band of wickedness,
To undo the heavy burdens,
To let the oppressed go free,
And to break in pieces every yoke?
Is it not to break thy bread to the hungry,
And to bring the poor, that are cast out, to thy house?
When thou seest the naked that thou clothe him,
And that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?
Then shall thy light break forth like the morning,
And thy health shall spring forth speedily;
Thy salvation shall go before thee,
And the glory of Yahveh shall bring up thy rear."

The Second Isaiah, lviii. 5–8; *circ.* 540 B.C.

The object of thus briefly noting the moral progress of Israel—marking its gradual, natural rate—is to assist the reader in getting rid of the misleading conceptions which have been introduced into this question by the assumption of a non-natural revelation, distinguishing the development of the Hebrew religion from that of all others in the world. To which assumption the most satisfactory answer is contained in the historical fact that similar claims were made for several other ancient religions, and with much the same justification, if we may judge by results—the morality developed by each of them

being equally admirable, and even, as a rule, identical. This point we will now consider at some length, having arrived at the period of the Captivity in Babylon, which brought the Jews into contact (and kept them so for several generations) with another of the great religions of Asia—namely, Mithraism or Mazdeism.

The founder—or rather, we should say, the reformer and part-founder—of this religion was Zarathustra (less correctly known as Zoroaster), who flourished early in the sixth century B.C. The leading idea of his moral doctrine was the virtue of *Purity*—in thought, word, and deed. The body, he taught, was the source of all impurity and degradation to the soul; hence the necessity for a new birth, to be gained by mortification of the flesh, by self-abnegation, by acts of charity, by prayer and meditation. Zarathustra found his countrymen worshippers of the Devas, or Luminous Ones—practically a nature-worship of the sun, fire, and air; and his great purpose was to restore in Irān the worship of the one God, which he believed to have been the religion of his forefathers; whilst the Devas, he taught, were to be looked upon as demons.

This doctrine was spread over Media and Persia by the Aryan tribes after their conquest under Cyrus of the Medo-Babylonian monarchy, about 560 B.C., and became the State religion of the new Persian

empire. It was some five-and-twenty years later that the decree was passed in favor of the Jews' return to their own country; but not until nearly a century after this did they cease to be subject to the Persians, or, indeed, finally leave Babylon. For a discussion of the indebtedness of the Ezraic Reformation to the teaching of Zarathustra we must refer our readers to Dr. Kuenen's "Religion of Israel," vol. iii. ch. ix. pp. 31–40. Here it must be sufficient to notice that it was from this source that later Judaism in all probability derived its ideas on such points as the immortality of the soul, the nature of good and evil, the antagonism between matter and spirit, the need of a second birth, and some of the higher ethical duties. The doctrine of the Sosiosh, or Messiah, is also essentially Mithraic; he is to awaken the dead, to restore life, and to hold the last judgment. Mithra is the name of this mediator between God and man, and he is the third person in the Persian Trinity—Zervana (the Eternal) and Ahuramazda (the Creator) completing the Godhead.

The account of Zarathustra's mission is contained in the Five Gāthās, a part of the Avesta (Word) or sacred Canon of the Persians; the following sketch of it being adapted chiefly from an article in the "Nineteenth Century" by Dr. Monier Williams.

The Reformer began his work by assembling his

countrymen before the sacred fire—given to him by God Himself—and addressing them in a remarkable speech, of which the commencement may be summarized, briefly, thus:—

"I will now tell you, who are assembled here, the wise sayings of Mazda, the praises of Ahura, the sublime truth which I see arising out of these sacred flames.

"Contemplate the beams of fire with a pious mind. Every one, both men and women, ought to-day to choose between the Deva and the Ahura religion.

"In the beginning there was a pair of twins, two spirits, each active: these are the good and the base in thought, word, and deed. Choose one of these spirits! Be good, not base!

"And these two spirits created, one the reality, the other the non-reality. To the liar existence will become bad, whilst the believer in the true God enjoys prosperity.

"Of these two spirits you must choose one: you cannot belong to both of them.

"Thus let us be such as help the life of the future. The wise living spirits are the greatest supporters of it. The prudent man wishes only to be there where Wisdom is at home."

The principal doctrines of Mithraism may be thus summed up:

1. Ahuramazda created all things.

2. He only is to be worshipped as the sole source of life, light, goodness, and wisdom.

3. The arch-fiend (the original of the Jewish Satan, by the way) is to be execrated and fought against, never to be worshipped or propitiated.

4. The souls of the pure will hereafter enjoy everlasting life: those of the wicked will undergo everlasting punishment. The bodies of men will also rise again, and be reunited to their souls.

5. The whole of morality is comprised in six words: good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

6. A man's only hope of salvation lies in his own deeds. His future rewards will not be according to mere belief, but to the perfection of his thoughts, words, and deeds.

7. Man possesses free will: he can choose whether he will be good or evil.

8. He will be judged according to his own works: the soul that sinned will die, and no sacrifice or substitute will be accepted. Nor is salvation or religious merit to be won by self-mortification. (Compare Ezek. xviii.)

9. God always hears the prayers of the good.

10. There is a dualism everywhere in the world—good and evil, light and darkness: two spirits at work—the one making life, the other destroying it.

Of which dualistic theory there is a striking denial,

well worth noting, by the Second Isaiah (see xlv. 6, 7) :—

> "I am Yahveh, and none else.
> I form the light, and create darkness ;
> I make peace, and create evil ;
> I, Yahveh, do all these things."

At the present time there are very few Parsis—the modern followers of this ancient religion—to be found in Persia, whence they have been driven by Mahommedanism ; the great bulk of them—only, however, about seventy thousand—now living in India. As the popular belief (a fallacy, like most popular notions about the religions of other people) is that the Parsis are fire-worshippers, the following quotation from a school catechism, written half a century ago in Gujarāti, may serve to correct, as well as to account for, the idea :—" We believe in the One God who created the heavens and earth, the angels, sun, moon, and stars, fire, water, and all things. Him we worship, invoke, and adore. Our God has neither face, nor form, nor fixed place. There is no other like Him. We cannot describe His glory, nor can our minds comprehend Him. He is said to have one thousand and one names, but His principal name is Hormazd. " The All-wise Spirit." He is also called Pāk, " Holy"; Dādār, " Distributor of Justice"; Parwadagār, " Provider." In worshipping the Holy Hormazd we should turn towards some of His creations

of life and glory, such as the sun, fire, water, and the moon. Our prophet Zarathustra has taught us to know God as One, and Zarathustra as His prophet; to believe in the Avesta; to believe in the goodness of God; to submit to His will and obey His commands; to do good deeds, speak good words, and have pure thoughts; to pray five times a day; to believe in the reckoning of justice on the fourth morning after death; to hope for heaven and fear hell; to believe in a day of resurrection."

It is desirable, for reasons that will appear afterwards, briefly to draw attention to the main sanction of Mithraism; the argument here, as in all the higher religions, being that in the future life the wicked will undergo a most fearful punishment, while virtue will be rewarded with eternal happiness—in other words, an appeal is made to a refined and far-seeing egoism; but, as we shall notice farther on, these ancient teachers were right in thus regarding the moral life, not as an end in itself, but as a means to something better; and politic in making its object a personal rather than a general advantage.

With regard to Buddhism, the other great religion of the East with which we are concerned, it is probable that the Jews only became directly acquainted with it some time after the conquests of Alexander

the Great had led to a general intercourse and commerce over the western portions of Asia and Egypt. This was the first important missionary religion of the world; and after the Council of Pataliputra (held 242 B.C., for the purpose of fixing the scriptural canon), missions were sent out far and wide, not only over India, but beyond its borders; and signs of Buddhist influence are not wanting in the later moral ideas of both Syria and Egypt. The following account of Buddha's life and doctrines will not only help to show this, but should also be carefully studied as a development of ethics superior to anything the Jews had as yet reached, and entirely independent of them. It is fortunately now no longer reasonable for the believers in any one creed to regard all other schemes of doctrine than their own as false, and unphilosophically dismiss them as mere heathenism. The Buddhists believe of Gautama precisely what the Christians do of Jesus, and on fairly similar evidence: that he was miraculously born; that he lived, taught, and suffered to redeem the world from sin and sorrow; that his life was not only one of willing self-sacrifice, but also of perfect purity and sinlessness; that though he might have been, had he chosen, the Greatest King on earth, yet he elected

"To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,"

leading a life of lowly suffering, and thus winning

for himself "the majesty of faithful service," and the undying love and gratitude of his fellow-men. Hence he is now worshipped as divine, and looked on as the Refuge and Saviour of mankind. More than three hundred millions believe this to be true of the Jewish Prophet; a far larger number of the Indian Prince.

And this is his story, very briefly told. About the year 550 B.C., was born in the city of Kapilavasta, in Northern India, a young prince who was named Sramana Gautama. When yet a mere child he was made extremely miserable by some few sights of sorrow and suffering that, notwithstanding all the king his father's care, came across his path; but he continued to lead his royal life in obedience to his father's commands until he reached the age of twenty-eight. And then his great pity for the world grew too strong for him. He left all his grandeur, he left even his wife and child whom he dearly loved, to lead a mendicant's life, in the hope of discovering, through prayer, asceticism, and meditation, the means of obtaining spiritual freedom and peace for himself, and for the world deliverance from evil and misery. But he found no help in the extreme asceticism practised by the Brahminist monks—a truth he afterwards thus taught in his first sermon: "There are two extremes which the man who has devoted himself to the higher life ought not to follow—the

habitual practice, on the one hand, of those things whose attractions depend upon the passions, and especially of sensuality, a low and pagan way of seeking gratification, unworthy, unprofitable, and fit only for the worldly minded; and the habitual practice, on the other hand, of asceticism, which is not only painful, but as unworthy and unprofitable as the other."

After six years spent in retreat and meditation, Gautama felt that his knowledge of truth was won; and he began his long mission, teaching, and himself practicing with perfect fidelity all the duties he taught. Amongst his earliest converts were his wife and father. He continued his work for over forty years, dying at length in the arms of his disciples, and comforting them, in their distress, with calm, wise words of faith and hope, such as can only come from the lips of one who has lived a pure life, and dies in the quiet confidence of having discovered its great truths. Some of the stories related of him are very beautiful, and may be given as interesting parallels to much that was afterwards told of Christ.

"As the Grand Being went forth by night from his father's palace to become a devotee, Mara, the Prince of Evil, trembled, and determined to prevent him. Descending from his abode, he cried, Lord, that art capable of such vast endurance, go not forth

to adopt a religious life, but return to thy kingdom, and in seven days thou shalt become an emperor of the world, riding over the four great continents. Take heed, O Mara, replied the Great Being, I also know that in seven days I might gain universal empire, but I desire not such possessions. I know that the pursuit of religion is better than the empire of the world. You, thinking only of evil lusts, would force me to leave all beings without guide in your power. Avaunt! Get thou away from me!"

"One day, seeing a farmer at work, Gautama said, I, too, plough and sow, and from my ploughing and sowing I reap immortal fruit. My field is religion; the weeds I pluck up are the passions of cleaving to existence; my plough is wisdom, my seed purity."

"When a merchant who had joined the band of disciples was desirous of returning to his own home, to preach to his relations, he came to the Buddha to ask leave to depart. The people of Sunaparanta, said the teacher, are exceedingly violent; if they revile you, what will you do? I will make no reply, said the disciple. And if they strike you? I will not strike in return. And if they try to kill you? Death, said the disciple, repeating the lessons of the master, is no evil in itself. Many even desire it, to escape from the vanities of this life: but I shall take no steps either to hasten or delay the time of my

departure. Buddha was satisfied, and the merchant departed."

"When one asked him, What must I do to lay up in store future blessedness? he replied:—

"Ministering to the worthy, doing harm to none,
Always ready to render reverence to whom it is due;
Loving righteousness and righteous conversation,
Ever willing to listen to that which may profit another;
Rejoicing to meditate on the true Law,
And to reflect on the words of Divine Wisdom;
Practising every kind of self-discipline and pure life,
Always doing good to those around you."

"One day, King Prasenagit, the protector of Buddha, called on him to perform miracles, in order to silence his adversaries the Brahmans. Buddha consented. He performed the required miracles; but he exclaimed, Great King, I do not teach the law to my disciples, telling them, Go, ye saints, and before the eyes of the Brahmans and householders perform, by means of your supernatural powers, miracles greater than any man can perform. I tell them, when I teach them the law, Live ye saints, hiding your good works, and showing your sins."

His parting words of comfort to his disciples were:—"It may be, Ananda, that some of you may think—the word of the Teacher is ended—we have no Teacher more:—but you must not look upon it thus. The faith and the discipline preached and

enacted for you by me, let these be your Teacher when I am gone."

Those whom Gautama sent forth to preach his new gospel seem to have been worthy of it and of their Master: when threatened with punishment one of them calmly replied, "If the whole world, including the Deva heavens, were to come and terrify me, they would not be able to create in me fear and terror." And then he dismissed the people with these words:—"Do not hereafter give way to anger: do not destroy the crops, for all men love happiness. Show mercy to all living beings, and let men dwell in peace." Just as in the case of the Christian apostles, some centuries later, so these men also were supposed to have to fight against evil spirits, and their success was great. And, as Professor Max Müller happily observes, their recognition that it was a duty to preach the truth as they had received it to every man, woman, and child, was a new thought in the history of the world, the love of all humanity.

The following verses are a translation by Dr. John Muir of a prophecy from the Lalita-vistara of what the mission of the Buddha should be:—

"The world of men and gods to bless,
The way of rest and peace to teach,
A holy law thy son shall preach—
A law of stainless righteousness.

By him shall suffering men be freed
From weakness, sickness, pain, and grief,
From all the ills shall find relief
Which hatred, love, illusion breed.

His hand shall loose the chains of all
Who groan in fleshly bonds confined;
With healing touch the wounds shall bind
Of those whom pain's sharp sorrow gall.

His potent words shall put to flight
The dull array of leaden clouds
Which helpless mortals' vision shrouds,
And clear their intellectual sight.

By him shall men who, now untaught,
In devious paths of error stray,
Be led to find a perfect way—
To final calm at last be brought."

And these are the words of a Buddhist preacher respecting his Master's estimate of "the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches" (they are quoted from the Somadeva by Professor Max Müller): "To give away our riches is considered the most difficult virtue in the world; he who gives away his riches is like a man who gives away his life: for our very life seems to cling to our riches. But Buddha, when his mind was moved by pity, gave his life, like grass, for the sake of others; why should we think of miserable riches? By this exalted virtue, Buddha, when he was freed from all desires and had obtained divine knowledge, attained unto Buddhahood. Therefore let a wise man, after he has turned away his

desires from all pleasures, do good to all beings, even unto sacrificing his own life, that thus he may attain to true knowledge."

The experience of Gautama reminds us very forcibly of what Christ had to encounter: they both found a national religion "grown decrepit in theology and mythology, scholasticism and speculation, ceremonies and outward observances of every sort, meritorious works and hypocrisy, sacerdotal and philosophical pride." And yet beneath all this, and in spite of it, true and beautiful moral thoughts, noble ideas of the Deity, the necessity for righteousness, justice, mercy, and love for man, were insisted on and taught in many an earnest parable and well-turned maxim. And what was original and new in both reformers alike was not so much that they placed (as has been often said) man's chief duties in purity, benevolence, compassion, self-sacrifice, love—others had done that before them:—it was that they appealed to the natural feelings and common sense of men to say whether these things were not *enough*, and the priestly traditions, and formulas, and speculations, mere unnecessary lumber, dangerously liable to interfere with man's only real duties. Assuredly we cannot too much honor Buddha and Christ—the Enlightened and the Anointed—the two truest radicals that ever lived!

With regard to Brahmanism, the religion that

Gautama strove to reform, but which, like Judaism, continues to flourish as an example of the manner in which men cling to institutions long after their usefulness has passed away, it must be confessed that its moral excellencies are now buried beneath an almost inconceivable mass of ceremonies and superstitions. As Keshub Chunder Sen remarks—"The Hindus walk and sit religiously, eat and drink religiously, work and sleep religiously; their social organism is interwoven with their religion." It is the complex code of Menu that has thus moulded every detail of a man's daily life, placing ceremony and morality on precisely the same footing, and making them equally binding on conscience.

Buddha quietly disregarded the old formalism and the tyrannous caste system, and appealed straight to the hearts and intelligence of his hearers, addressing himself especially to the poor and degraded; and this is what his message to them was:—

"Let good-will without measure, impartial, unmixed, without enmity, prevail throughout the world, above, beneath, around."

"Anger is not appeased by anger, but by gentleness."

"Mental control, and the subjection of the passions, is the path to happiness and eternity."

"Reverence shown to the righteous is better than sacrifice."

"A man buries a treasure in a deep pit, which lying day after day concealed therein profits him nothing . . . But there is a treasure that man or woman may possess, a treasure laid up in the heart, a treasure of charity, piety, temperance, soberness. . . . A treasure secure, impregnable, that cannot pass away. When a man leaves the fleeting riches of this world, this he takes with him after death. A treasure unshared by others, a treasure that no thief can steal. Let the wise man practice virtue: this is a treasure that follows him after death."

"Let man perform those actions of which the future will never cause him to repent."

"Be not anxious to discover the faults of others, but jealously watch your own."

"As the solid rock stands unbroken by the storm, so the wise man is unmoved by contempt or applause."

"All religion is contained in these three sentences—purify the mind; abstain from vice; practice virtue."

Almsgiving to those advanced in perfection is as "good seed sown on a good soil that yields an abundance of good fruits. But alms given to those who are yet under the tyrannical yoke of passions are like a seed deposited in a bad soil; the passions of the receiver of alms choke as it were the growth of merits."

"Real defilement consists in evil thoughts, murders, thefts, lies, fraud, the study of worthless writings, adultery—such are Amaghanda, and not the eating of flesh."

"Let the love that fills the mother's heart as she watches over an only child, even such love, animate all."

"There are difficult things in the world: being poor, to be charitable; being rich and great, to be religious. . . . To repress lust, and famish desire. . . . To bear insult without anger. To move in the world without setting the heart on it. Not to contemn the ignorant. Thoroughly to extirpate self-esteem. To be good, and at the same time to be learned and clever. . . . To save men by converting them. To be the same in heart and life. To avoid controversy."

"Drinking of the water of a life of seclusion and of the water of subjugating the passions, drinking also of the pleasant beverage called the perception of truth, one becomes freed from emotion and sin."

"As the bee collects honey and departs without injuring the flower, so let the sage dwell on earth."

"His thought is quiet, quiet are his word and deed, when he has obtained freedom by true knowledge, when he has thus become a quiet man."

"If one man conquer in battle a thousand times

thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors."

"If a man does what is good, let him do it again; let him delight in it: happiness is the outcome of good."

"Let no man think lightly of evil, saying in his heart, It will not come nigh unto me. Let no man think lightly of good, saying in his heart, It will not benefit me. Even by the falling of waterdrops a water-pot is filled."

"Some people are born again; evil-doers go to hell; righteous people go to heaven; those who are free from all worldly desire enter Nirvāna."

"All men tremble at punishment, all men love life; remember that thou art like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter."

"He whose evil deeds are covered by good deeds brightens up this world, like the moon when she rises from behind the clouds."

"Speak the truth, do not yield to anger; give, if thou art asked, from the little thou hast; by these steps thou wilt go near the Gods."

"The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; the fault of others one lays open as much as possible, but one's own fault one hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler."

"Cut out the love of self, like an autumn lotus, with thy hand! Cherish the road of peace."

"What is the use of platted hair, O fool? what of the raiment of goatskins? Within thee there is ravening, but the outside thou makest clean."

> "Conquer a man who never gives, by gifts;
> Subdue untruthful men by truthfulness;
> Vanquish an angry man by gentleness;
> And overcome the evil man by goodness."

"To honor father and mother, to provide for wife and child, and to follow a blameless vocation: these are excellencies.

"To be charitable, act virtuously, be helpful to relatives, and to lead an innocent life; these are excellencies.

"Humility, reverence, contentment, gratitude, attentiveness to religious instruction: these are excellencies.

"To be gentle, to be patient under reproof: these are excellencies. Self-restraint and chastity, the knowledge of the great principles: these are excellencies."

The noble eight-fold path, which all men ought to try and follow, was—1. Right views. 2. High aims. 3. Kindly speech. 4. Upright conduct. 5. A harmless livelihood. 6. Perseverance in well-doing. 7. Intellectual activity. 8. Earnest thought.

"This is my exhortation. The parts and power of men must be dissolved; with diligence work out your salvation."

The whole ethical portion of Buddha's teaching is summed up by M. Laboulaye (quoted by Professor Max Müller) in these words: "Every shade of vice, hypocrisy, anger, pride, suspicion, greediness, gossiping, cruelty to animals, is guarded against by special precepts. Among the virtues recommended, we find not only reverence of parents, care for children, submission to authority, gratitude, moderation in time of prosperity, submission in time of trial, equanimity at all times, but virtues unknown in any heathen system of morality, such as the duty of forgiving insults, and not rewarding evil with evil. All virtues, we are told, spring from Maitri, and this Maitri can only be translated by charity and love." In other words, Buddha anticipated Christ in choosing the "Enthusiasm of Humanity" as the basis for his moral doctrine.

In his Sermon on the Mount, delivered to his disciples only, Buddha gave a short summary of his leading principles, which, very briefly, amounted to this:—Concupiscence, anger, and ignorance are the source of all passions, and hence of all sin and suffering: those only are wise who understand this, and cease to be governed by their passions, or to care for the enjoyments of the senses. As might then be expected, *chastity* holds a foremost position amongst the necessary virtues; and Buddha saw no better way of securing it than by the avoidance of

all possibility of temptation—that is to say, by shunning the society of women. In a reported conversation with Ananda, one of his chief disciples, he concluded by saying that if a devotee was obliged to see and speak with a woman, he must think of her as his mother or sister.

The Roman Catholic Bishop Bigandet, in his interesting "Life of Gaudama," thus emphatically speaks of the merits of Buddhism—and his testimony is the more valuable, by reason of its being touched with the jealous caution peculiar to the religious and politicians when criticising other creeds than their own :—"It may be said in favor of Buddhism, that no philosophico-religious system has ever upheld to an equal degree the notions of a saviour and deliverer, and of the necessity of his mission for procuring the salvation, in a Buddhist sense, of man. The *rôle* of Buddha, from beginning to end, is that of a deliverer, who preaches a law designed to secure to man deliverance from all the miseries under which he is laboring." The Bishop's remarks here continue in a way that shows that his prejudices would not allow him to see in the end and aim of Buddhism anything but absolute annihilation. That Nirvāna, however, cannot fairly be understood as implying this, we shall see further on. Elsewhere the Bishop adds :—"The Christian system and the Buddhistic one, though differing from each other in their

respective objects and ends as much as truth from error, have, it must be confessed, many striking features of an astonishing resemblance. There are many moral precepts equally commanded and enforced in common by both creeds. It will not be deemed rash to assert that most of the moral truths prescribed by the Gospel are to be met with in the Buddhistic scriptures. . . . Both creeds teach man to combat, control, and master the passions of his heart, to make reason predominate over sense, mind over matter, to root up from his heart every affection for the things of this world, and to practice the virtues required for the attainment of these great objects. Is there anything surprising that persons, having in many respects views nearly similar, resort to means or expedients nearly alike for securing the object of their pursuit, without ever having seen or consulted each other? He who intends to practice absolute poverty must of course abandon all his earthly property. He who proposes renouncing the world ought to withdraw from it. He who will lead a contemplative life must look out for a retired place, far from the gaze and agitation of the world. To control passions, and particularly the fiercest of all—the sensual appetite—it is required that one should keep himself separate from all that is calculated to kindle its fires and feed its violence."

And again: "In reading the particulars of the life

of the last Buddha Gaudama, it is impossible not to feel reminded of many circumstances relating to our Saviour's life, such as it has been sketched out by the evangelists. The origin of the close affinity between any doctrinal points and maxims common both to Christianity and Buddhism having been ascertained, it will not be difficult to find out and explain how the votaries of both have come to adopt so many practices, ceremonies, observances, and institutions nearly similar."

This short sketch would be both incomplete and unsatisfactory without a few words in explanation of the great aim and sanction of Buddhism, namely, the attainment of Nirvāna. In a recently published "Catechism according to the Canon of the Southern Church," this is defined as being "a condition of total cessation of changes; of perfect rest, of the absence of desire, and illusion, and sorrow; of the total obliteration of everything that goes to make up the physical man. Before reaching Nirvāna, man is constantly being reborn: when he reaches Nirvāna, he is reborn no more." And the cause of this continued rebirth is "the unsatisfied desire for things that belong to the state of individual existence in the material world." Also in one of the sacred books of the Northern Buddhists occurs this promise of their Master:—"When I shall have entered into complete Nirvāna, I will send forth

numerous miracles." This difficult point cannot then be disposed of in the usual off-hand fashion, by saying that Nirvāna means personal annihilation. Looking at the whole question of existence from the point of view suggested by the theory of transmigration, the Buddhist argument might be stated thus:—"If your life is evil, it will result, after death, in the production of a still more imperfect creature, yourself in a sense, who will suffer for your present defects. Seek for good, get rid of desire and all that causes you to love a physical existence, and you will attain peace, and will be making a step forward to ultimate Nirvāna; in the meantime, your goodness will result, by transmigration, in the formation of a more perfect being, and may even prove to be the influence which after many ages will produce a supremely Enlightened Being, or Buddha." The first step to be taken is the invariable practice of virtue, of which the chief *raison d'être*, according to Buddhist doctrine, is that it opens the only way to deliverance from the curse of physical life: in which theory we may note precisely the same touch of refined egoism that we observed before in the Mithraic exhortations to morality. Notwithstanding the partial incomprehensibility of the promised reward, Buddha has had far more followers than any other religious teacher, at the present moment more than a third of the

human race acknowledging him as their Divine Lord and Master.

Before bringing these notes on Buddhism to a close, the essential point of difference between this and the chief monotheistic religions calls for a moment's attention: it is as follows—that whilst these latter all agree in teaching that God can and does personally aid all who call on him for help, Buddha's doctrine was that no such assistance can be expected from heaven; but that man must work out his own salvation unaided, except by the favoring conditions and laws of nature. He further taught that the results, whether as reward or punishment, of men's conduct follow from the action of natural laws, and cannot be traced back to the will of a personal Deity, whom, indeed, the modern Buddhist regards as "a gigantic shadow thrown upon the void of space by the imagination of ignorant men." Observe, that there is no denial of the Divine existence, nor even of the Divine help—in one sense—but only of Divine *interference;* and, moreover, that though there is implied a necessary agnosticism on man's part, this should not be confounded with the wholly unphilosophical views of dogmatic atheism.

Certain writers have tried to prove, by means of the striking points of resemblance between the two religions, that the doctrines of Christianity were actually taken from Buddhism; but so far their

success has not been great. Granting, however, what is probably the whole truth, that some slight connection between the two really existed, this parallelism of religious and moral growth in similarly favorable environments is exactly what the theory of evolution would lead us to expect; and it is such facts that suggest the justice of impartially rejecting the claims of all religions to be considered, *in any special or exclusive sense*, Divine revelations. It is from regarding our religion only in its later manifestations, from ignoring its humble origin and gradual development, that we have been, as it were, dazzled by its matured beauty into an exaggeration of its place and meaning in the world's history. To take a very simple comparison: what, for example, should we be tempted to think, from an equally uncritical standpoint, of the latest inventions of electrical science? Should we not feel similarly inclined to cry out, It is a God who has taught us these things! But we know the history, the very gradual growth of the knowledge now so rich in results; that it is the sum of the contributions of many students and workers; and that they who have finished the work are not necessarily greater than some of those into whose labors they entered.

Surely it is fair enough for evolutionists to assert the justice of a like historical, or organic, view of

religions; and if, by so studying them, the natural growth of each Christian doctrine, theological as well as moral, can be traced back to its birth in rude fetichism and superstition, does that make these in reality less divine than if they had come down to us out of heaven in all their finished grandeur? The chief justification for our belief in a special revelation to Israel has consisted in the apparently vast superiority of the moral and religious doctrines of that nation over all others: and this, we are now learning, was but the assumption of ignorance, and without foundation in actual facts. It is only one more example of what has long been obvious to all unprejudiced thinkers, that every increase of our knowledge, historical or physical, gives a fresh blow to the old theory of "special interference."

In the consideration of the moral doctrines dealt with in this chapter, and also of those more directly influencing the teaching of Christ, which we shall now proceed to examine, one word of warning is needed. By ignoring the nobler portions of alien creeds, and lightly passing over the archaisms and moral deficiencies of their own, orthodox Christians have established a prejudice in favor of the latter very detrimental to impartial criticism; indeed, occasionally there are not wanting signs of irritation on their part, when the faiths of others are proved to be not so groundless and foolish as religious partisan-

ship could desire. As we shall soon see, the morality taught by Buddha, the Jewish Rabbis, and Christ (to take no further examples), was practically identical,—not unfrequently expressed in the same terms. By the aid, however, of the process mentioned, we have been taught to attribute to the last named a superiority that cannot be fairly maintained; but we may reasonably hope that no very long time will elapse before we have effected a complete readjustment of our attitude towards the other great religions of the world. Meanwhile every honest thinker should be on his guard against the temptation to credit his own religion exclusively with the virtues it inculcates, but fails to produce; whilst he holds others accountable for the vices they condemn, but cannot eradicate.

In conclusion, let us briefly glance over the chief points of this chapter: its object has been to give some slight and popular illustrations of certain historical facts, which have received as yet only a cold and hesitating recognition from orthodox teachers, and consequently have not gained that general attention to which their great importance entitles them; they are as follows:—

1. Like all other moral and religious developments,

that of the Israelites was the result of a perfectly natural origin and gradual growth.

2. Other creeds of equal beauty and value were being simultaneously developed in various parts of the East.

3. Owing to such causes as the Captivity, and the Alexandrian conquests in Asia and Egypt, some of these religions became known to the Jews, and, in one case at least, exercised a most important influence on their later doctrines.

We are only on the threshold, as it were, of our acquaintance with the histories of the ancient civilizations: until quite recently, few details of any but the Jewish were known to us, and it may be truly said—to adapt an old paradox—that in thus knowing but one history, we really knew none at all.

CHAPTER II.

THE ETHICS OF CHRISTIANITY.

In this chapter will be given some of the most obvious evidence in support of the view of Christ's ethical teaching which has been already advanced in the Introduction to these Notes: viz., that, on even a slight examination of what we now know of his environment, his doctrine takes its place naturally as *a selection*, with but little alteration or addition, from the moral and religious ideas then prevalent among his countrymen.

Unfortunately, without perhaps its always being said in so many words, Christians are led, or left, to suppose that their Master's teaching was essentially a new revelation. As we shall shortly show in detail, all that he taught was "in the air;" sometimes, indeed, in existence in the exact form of words he used. A second point that calls for notice is that, owing to the very natural desire to exalt the merit of Christ by representing him in an attitude of complete opposition to his contemporaries, we have too generally ascribed to his opponents an impossible blackness, and uncritically neglected the brighter aspects of his time. We are apt to forget that it was

a period when keen interest was taken in everything that concerned religion, law, and ethics; that industry and learning received great honor and respect; that public education was established and compulsory; that all men were taught some industrial art, and that many of the Rabbis themselves lived by manual labor; that munificent almsgiving and a willing support of the national religion were invariably practiced: in short, that life was full of those excellent habits and methods which tend so strongly to what may be called the mechanical promotion of goodness.

It will be well, however, not to dwell further on such questions as these, until the proofs spoken of are before the reader. For greater convenience, the long list of passages to be quoted from various sources will be arranged under four chief headings, and then again under several subdivisions: they will be principally taken from the Apocrypha, the Book of Enoch, the Talmud, the New Testament, and the non-canonical Gospels and Epistles accepted by the early churches. And first, a word or two as to some of these collections.

The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament vary in date from about 180 B. C. to about 30 B. C. In their moral doctrines a steadily increasing insistence on such points as forgiveness, philanthropy and almsgiving is the most noticeable point. To the same

period belongs the Book of Enoch: this is the work erroneously referred to in the epistle of Jude (v. 14) as being written by "Enoch, the seventh from Adam"; it is still retained in the Abyssinian Canon, where it follows the Book of Job; and at the time of Christ it was revered equally with the other books of the Hagiographa. In the main, this work resembles those very curious visions of unsound imaginations which may be found in most collections of sacred writings; abounding in incomprehensible threats and promises, mystical numbers, names and duties of angels, descriptions of future rewards and punishments, strange titles applied to the Deity, and similar vague and unprofitable matter. The anonymous author, who speaks of his work as being addressed by the Patriarch Enoch to "his dear son Mathusala," probably wrote between 120 and 100 B. C., and the chief moral characteristic of his book, as the quotations which will be given will show, was a constant and vehement denunciation of wealth and power, as *per se* criminal.

But our principal source of information respecting the moral ideas prevalent among the Jews at the time of Christ is, of course, that vast monument of learning and thought—full of wisdom, and almost equally full of strange folly—the Talmud. The Tanaites, the first authors of this huge commentary, began their work in the fourth century B. C., but the

whole was not completed until the fourth century A. D., when it was finally committed to writing under the superintendence of the Rabbi Ascha. Still, as Professor Deutsch remarked in his famous Essay ("Quarterly Review," October, 1867), "We need not urge the priority of the Talmud to the New Testament, although the former was redacted at a later period. To assume that the Talmud has borrowed from the New Testament would be like assuming that Sanskrit sprang from Latin, or that French was developed from the Norman words found in English." Similarly, Dr. Zipser concludes his Essay on "The Talmud and the Gospels" with the statement that most of the passages he quotes from the Talmud —many of which are repeated in this chapter—were the utterances of doctors who "either lived anterior to the founder of the Christian religion, or lived in distant countries, far away from the theatre of his life, where they had no knowledge either of the existence of the Christian religion or of the gospel. We may, therefore, in all probability, conclude, that the founder of the Christian religion had imbibed these moral truths—which, in their contents as well as their wording, resemble those we have quoted from the Talmud—in the schools of the Pharisees, with which his injunction to his apostles and followers (Matt. xxiii. 3) fully coincides." It is particularly necessary to insist on the fact of so much of the

Talmud being really far older than the date of its first publication would imply, because of the apparently forcible argument—How could Christ be indebted to the Talmud, if the Talmud was not yet written? The answer is—True, it was not completed before Christ's time, but much of it already existed in traditional form; especially are many of the best moral sayings those of Rabbis—Antigonus, Hillel, Shammai, Gamaliel, Johannan—whose teaching preceded his. Nor should we forget, in connection with this point, the ease and perfect accuracy with which national traditions and poetry, religious and legal works, were handed on in ancient days, often during many centuries, entirely by memory. Homer's poems, for instance, remained unwritten for some four or five centuries after his death; while a still more remarkable example is that of the Rig-Veda, or sacred hymns of India—more than a thousand in number—"which have been handed down for three or four thousand years by oral tradition." (See No. III. of Max Müller's Hibbert Lectures.)

Those of our readers who are wholly unacquainted with Rabbinical literature should be warned against the error of supposing that the quotations we are about to give are *average* specimens of the contents of the Talmud; for, in reality, they represent the very best of its moral and religious doctrines. Any inclination to regard this work as occupying the same

lofty moral position as the writings of the New Testament will speedily be removed by reference to such a collection of extracts as Mr. Gershon's "Treasures of the Talmud," or to Professor Polano's "Selections from the Talmud," either of which will afford a much fairer basis for comparison than the passages given in this chapter.

The Talmud consists of two parts: the Mishna, or body of the Oral Law, explains, enlarges, and fixes the Mosaic or Written Law; whilst the Gemara (Discussion) contains still further annotations and amplifications by the Rabbis, often in the form of tales, legends, homilies, and so forth. The present form of the Mishna was in all probability the work of the elder Hillel, though it was not committed to writing for public use until about 200 A.D. by Juda the Holy (see Polano, Introduction, pp. 6, 7). Whole treatises are devoted to discussions of the most trifling ceremonial details; for instance, the two great Rabbinical Schools just before the date of Christ's birth —those, namely, of Hillel and Shammai—were perpetually differing with great earnestness and often anger on such points as to whether, at meals, it was right to fill the goblet for the blessing first, and then wash the hands, or reverse this order of proceeding; nor could they agree as to whether a man should put the napkin on which he wiped his hands on the table or on the couch; or whether, after a meal, the hands

ought to be washed first, and then the room be swept, or the other way about. Surely, to any but the most ritualistically disposed, this must seem "straining of gnats" with a vengeance? Also elaborate regulations and explanations of such laws as "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of linen and woolen together" (Deut. xxii. 11) are considered necessary. But, if we except the case of the cryptograph, or cipher, writings, which to the uninitiated necessarily seem nonsense (see Gershon, Preface, vii.) it is perhaps in the Treatise Sabbath that the most remarkable hairsplitting and logical trifling is to be found. For example, the tailor must not go out with his needle near dusk on the sabbath-eve, lest he forget and carry it with him on the sabbath itself. A woman may not go out with a finger-ring that has a seal on it, though whether she may with a false tooth authorities cannot agree. They differ also as to whether a cripple may take his wooden leg with him. The exact distance a man may throw anything on the sabbath is carefully regulated. A knot may be untied, only if it can be done with one hand. He who has the toothache must not rinse his teeth with vinegar, but he may dip something in vinegar, and then rub his teeth with it; "and if he does get cured he does get cured," the treatise quaintly adds. A man who intends to go further than two thousand paces on the sabbath from his home must deposit

food for two meals at the necessary distance before the sabbath begins; by this device that place becomes his home, and he may then go two thousand paces more beyond it. And yet, with all this punctilious extravagance, there are not wanting many touches of common sense by way of counterpoise; danger always superseded sabbatical observances, and even for the sake of a babe it may be broken without hesitation; though, certainly, the argument used has rather a marring effect, "for the babe will keep many a sabbath yet, for that one which was broken for it." Self-respect is also held to be a more binding consideration—"Rather live on your sabbath as you would on a week-day, than be dependent on others."

The Talmud was as severe on Pharisaic hypocrisy as Christ himself was, speaking of "painted Pharisees," a fair parallel to his expression, "whited sepulchres." We are told that there are no fewer than seven classes of Pharisees; and each kind is described with pitiless and sarcastic accuracy—possibly a more effective method of reform than the use of angry denunciation; while none of them are admitted to be truly worthy of the name, except the last class, which consists of those "who do the will of their Father which is in heaven, because they love him."

The obligations of the New Testament to the Talmud—or, at all events, to the same general sources

of doctrine—are, as might reasonably be expected, both numerous and important. In the words of Professor Deutsch—"There are many more vital points of contact than divines yet seem to recognize; for such terms as Redemption, Baptism, Grace, Salvation, Regeneration, Son of Man, Son of God, Kingdom of Heaven, were not, as we are apt to think, invented by Christianity, but were household words of Talmudical Judaism, to which Christianity gave a higher and purer meaning. No less loud and bitter in the Talmud are the protests against 'lipserving,' against 'making the law a burden to the people,' against 'laws that hang on hairs,' against Priests and Pharisees. . . . The ethics in both are, in their broad outlines, identical."

When, however, we attribute sayings to particular teachers, such as Hillel or Christ, it must always be with a certain reservation, owing to an essential difference between the methods of ancient and modern historians. A modern writer, when giving a speech or saying of any historical character, intends us to regard it as actually uttered by the person in question; the means for reporting the speech were available on the occasion, we may suppose; and hence we can reasonably expect an almost verbatim account of what was said. But of course in ancient times it was different; in those days the historians themselves composed the speeches they appear

to report; sometimes perhaps from tradition, but as a rule simply by putting into the speaker's mouth what he might very fairly be supposed to have said. There was no dishonesty about this, for the whole process was a perfectly understood thing; nor would any contemporary readers of the speeches given by Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, or Tacitus have dreamt that they were following the *ipsissima verba* of anybody else than the author himself. Professor Kuenen's explanation of this custom is so perfectly satisfactory that we cannot do better than give it here: "In our days, the individuality of the historical writer is held in check, as it were, by public opinion. This demands from him truth, nothing but truth, and shows itself severe in the maintenance of this requirement, and in the punishment of every sin against it. In antiquity, in Israel as well as elsewhere, the case was different. The historian could then move much more freely. Attention was directed more to the spirit in which he wrote, and to the tendency of his narrative, than to the truth of the entire representation, and to accuracy in the details. Historical writing was still in its infancy. If we, as is only fair, proceed upon the facts themselves, and leave out of account what may appear to us to be desirable, we must affirm that what we now would call the sole end was then viewed as a means, and, conversely, that

what we, at most, could consider as an incidental advantage, was then regarded as the principal object. The object was, to express it in one word, the training of the reader in this or that religious or political direction. In the estimation of the writer, the account of what had occurred was subordinate to that end, and was therefore, without the least hesitation, made to subserve it." ("The Prophets and Prophecy in Israel," chap. xii. p. 430.)

Now we have not the slightest reason for assuming that the Gospels are any exception to this general rule—indeed, there is an almost absolute certainty that it was followed in their case. For what is the so-called Sermon on the Mount but a compilation of excellent maxims and parables, all possibly uttered by Christ on various occasions, but no more? Comparing the parallel collection in the Gospel of Luke, is it not evident that the two are compositions by different persons out of the same materials—that is to say, from the sayings of Christ carefully and lovingly carried in the memories of his disciples, until they were committed to writing for the use of the early Church? Or, to take another example,—the long farewell discourse given in the Gospel of John: this is undeniably the work of a Greek, not a Hebrew writer; and that the same man could have spoken in that purely Greek, articulated style, and in the Jewish, disconnected manner of the speeches reported

in the other Gospels, is simply inconceivable. The only explanation is, that these speeches were composed according to the prevalent custom of those days—partly, that is, from traditional sayings of Christ's, but also partly by attributing to him what he *might* have said. The whole of the Sermon on the Mount, so far at least as its moral teaching is concerned, could easily be reconstructed out of the Old Testament and the Talmud combined; though, doubtless many of the beautiful illustrations and parables with which it abounds are genuine and even original *logia* of Christ's. The expression so often used, "It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you," &c. (see Matt. v. 21, 27, 31, 39, 43), is very suggestive on this point; for Christ himself can hardly have been ignorant that what he is thus represented as claiming as his own was probably quite familiar to his hearers already. Hence that he ever used so marked an expression is most unlikely under the circumstances; though the compiler may very well have added it as conferring distinction on the doctrines so enunciated. To a similar purpose we may ascribe the sentence at the end of the Sermon; unless indeed we are to understand these two verses (Matt. vii. 28, 29) as meaning that it was the vigorous style of his teaching which astonished the people; the matter could hardly have surprised them, for, as it has been neatly said, "Le discours de la mon-

tagne courait les rues de Jérusalem bien avant qu'il eut été prononcé." It would be manifestly unfair to draw any conclusions from this fact adverse to the perfect *bona fides* or honesty of the Gospel writers; all that we are justified in saying is that in non-scientific ages the intellectual consciences of men were satisfied with a different standard of accuracy from our own.

Before going on to the analysis we propose to make, there is another side issue well worthy of a passing notice, by reason of a charming illustration we have of it in the Talmud. A great point is often made of the refusal of the Jews to believe in Christ, *notwithstanding his miracles:* now the question here is not whether those miracles ever took place at all —such a digression would indeed be unjustifiable— but simply whether, if it were actually wrought, a miracle could in those days be fairly claimed as a logical proof of the truth of an accompanying doctrine. What the Rabbis thought of the matter is shown in the following interesting legend:—

"In one of the celebrated academies where all the sages of Israel were assembled, there arose an important discussion between Rabbi Eliezer, one of the glories of the synagogue, and his colleagues, as to the interpretation of certain doctrinal matters referring to things clean and unclean. All the arguments

advanced by Rabbi Eliezer in support of his opinions had been unanimously opposed and rejected by the other doctors. 'Well,' indignantly exclaimed the illustrious Rabbi, 'let this banana part from its roots, and plant itself on the opposite side.' At these words, the tree detached itself from its roots, and planted itself on the opposite side. 'What does that prove?' cried the doctors with one voice; 'and what connection has the value of this banana with the question which occupies us?' 'Well,' again exclaims Rabbi Eliezer, 'may the rivulet that flows near us demonstrate the truth of my opinion;' and suddenly, oh miracle! the waters of the brook reascended to their source. 'Well,' once more replied the other doctors, 'whether the waters flow in one direction or another, what connection is there between this circumstance and the subject of our controversy?' 'Well,' impatiently said Rabbi Eliezer, 'may the walls of this room serve me as proof and testimony;' and the pillars supporting the edifice bow, obedient to the voice of their master, and the walls crack and threaten to overwhelm them. Then Rabbi Schoschonah, one of the most renowned sages of the age, exclaimed, 'O walls! O walls! when sages discuss the interpretation of the law, what have you to do with their arguments?' And the walls stopped as they were falling, and remained leaning suspended over the heads of the doctors.

'May God himself pronounce supreme judgment,' cried Rabbi Eliezer, and from the heavenly heights the daughter of the voice was heard saying, 'No longer call in question the doctrine of Rabbi Eliezer: reason is on his side.'

"But Rabbi Schoschonah protested: 'Neither reason, nor the law,' he cried, 'is now in the depths of the heavens; neither miracles nor mysterious voices have, in our eyes, the power to demonstrate the truth. To human reason, to the decision of the majority of the sages of Israel, is committed the interpretation of thy law, O Lord! Henceforth these alone are the only powers that can prevail.'" Notwithstanding the miracles that were performed, notwithstanding the intervention of the Divine voice, the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer was condemned by the doctors his contemporaries. And (adds the Talmud) Rabbi Nathan, having met the prophet Elijah, asked him what had been said in heaven respecting the debate, and received the following answer: "The Eternal smiled, and replied, 'My sons are the strongest, my sons have triumphed!'"

We can easily understand how this spirit of philosophical independence, this logical estimate of the moral value of wonder-working (see also Deut. xiii. 1), would influence men of thought and learning, when prophets appealed to their "works" in proof of their divine mission. Would they not regard

such appeals as mere *ad captandum* arguments, designed to influence popular ignorance; but of no force or value for educated men? Let us be just then, even to the enemies of Christ, and remember, when told of their obstinacy and incredulity, that these men lived in an atmosphere of belief in the miraculous; the Gospels admit the fact, only claiming greater difficulty and marvellousness in Christ's works over those of others: even to the disciples themselves the difference was but one of degree, and not of kind.

The four headings under which our quotations will be arranged are:—

I. The more especially Religious Ideas: the nature of God, Prayer, Trust, Repentance. The God civilized men worship is the heavenly reflection of the qualities they love: hence it is no bad way of studying a people's best aspirations, to see how they describe their Deity, since he is the perfect representation of their ideal of goodness.

II. The leading Ethical Principles, which were mainly insisted on at the period under consideration: such as Love, Mercy, Truth, Charity, Justice, etc.

III. The Ascetic Basis of Morality: under which head will be discussed the prevailing doctrines with

regard to Marriage and Divorce, Family Ties, Poverty and Riches, the Non-Resistance of Evil, etc.

IV. The Sanctions of Morality.

[Of course in reading the following quotations, particular attention should be paid to the perfect similarity between the teaching of Christ and that of the other Rabbis about this time. It may also be noticed, as a further parallelism between them, that Christ's arguments are generally conceived in the true Rabbinical spirit, and his citations of passages from the Old Testament are made in precisely the same curious—in our eyes loose and inconsequent—manner as those we come across in the Talmud. See, for example, his answers to the Pharisees' questions about the payment of the tribute, and as to his authority for teaching (Matt. xxi. 24; xxii. 19–21); or, again, the reply with which he met the Sadducees' argument against the doctrine of the resurrection (Matt. xxii. 32).]

Religious Ideas.

I. *The Divine Nature.*

"Be as a father unto the fatherless, and instead of an husband unto their mother: so shalt thou be as the son of the Most High, and he shall love thee more than thy mother doth" (Ecclus. iv. 10).

"Blessed be the Lord, who provides for our necessities every day" (Talmud, Hillel).

"Imitate God in his goodness. Be towards thy fellow-creatures as he is towards the whole creation. Clothe the naked; heal the sick; comfort the afflicted; be a brother to the children of thy Father; he

comforteth those who are afflicted, go and do likewise."

"Be bold as a leopard, and swift as an eagle, and fleet as a hart, and strong as a lion, to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven."

"He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 45, 48).

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt. x. 29).

"Love your enemies and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High, for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil" (Luke vi. 35; compare xv. 11–32,—the Parable of the Prodigal Son).

It is one of the many claims inaccurately made for Christianity that it was the first revelation of the Fatherhood of God: whereas we find both the doctrine itself, and even this particular expression of it, familiar to the early Egyptians, some three thousand years before Christ. The tender, familiar terms he himself used in speaking of the Deity were by no means uncommon in his day; for some time all thoughtful minds had felt the need of these gentler and kindlier views of their God, so describing him that they could indeed love and reverence

him. And nowhere do we find this doctrine of the Divine love, and man's need of it, more clearly expressed than in the teaching of the Alexandrian Jew, Philo, who was born about thirty years before Christ. The following is a fair summary of the more important part of his creed—a combination it may be noticed, of Judaism with the philosophy of Plato:—

"That there is but One God, whom we ought to love and serve, and endeavor to resemble in holiness and righteousness.

"That he rewards humility and punishes pride.

"That the true happiness of man consists in being united to God, and his only misery in being separated from him: the soul being mere darkness, unless it be illuminated by him.

"That men are incapable of praying well unless God teaches them that prayer which alone can be useful to them.

"That the only thing solid and substantial is piety —the love of God: that this is the source of all virtue, and the gift of God himself.

"That it is better to die than to sin; we must be constantly learning to die, and yet to endure life, in obedience to God.

"That it is a crime to hurt our enemies and to revenge ourselves for the injuries we have received. It is better to suffer wrong than to do it.

"That God is the sole cause of good and cannot be the cause of evil, which always springs solely from disobedience and the ill-use we make of our liberty.

"That self-love produces that discord and division which reigns among men and is the cause of their sins.

"That the love of our neighbors, which proceeds from the love of God as its principle, produces that sacred union which makes families, republics, and kingdoms happy.

"That the world is very evil, and that we ought to fly from it and unite ourselves to God, our only health and life. That while we live we are surrounded by enemies, the conflict calling for constant carefulness and resistance; and that we cannot conquer except by the aid of God.

"That the Logos, or Word, formed the world; that to know the Word gives us happiness now and eternal joy after death.

"That the soul is immortal: the dead will rise again to judgment, when men shall appear with their virtues or vices, and by them be doomed to eternal misery or rewarded with eternal happiness."

Could words more plainly express the doctrine that communion with the Perfect Holiness and Love is the sole source of content; that charity, forgiveness, humility, self-sacrifice, are the greatest of human duties, and that a sure retribution awaits men after

death? Nor would it be easy to advance a much clearer proof than is contained in this creed of the Alexandrian philosopher, that the Christian ideas were already in existence when Christ came into the world. (For further information respecting Philo, see Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," vol. iii. chap. xi. 193, *et seq.*)

II. *Prayer.*

"It is better to say a short prayer with reflection, than a long prayer without fervor" (Talmud).

"Prayer, without devotion, is like a body without soul."

"May God be blessed every day for the daily bread which he gives us" (Hillel).

Two ancient Jewish prayers—the origin of the Lord's Prayer:—

"Our Father, which art in heaven, be gracious to us, O Lord our God: hallowed be thy name: and let the remembrance of thee be glorified in heaven above, and upon earth here below. Let thy kingdom reign over us, now and forever. The holy men of old said, remit and forgive unto all men whatsoever they have done against me. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil thing. For thine is the kingdom, and thou shalt reign in glory for ever and for evermore."

"Our Father, who art in heaven, thy will be done on high: vouchsafe to bestow a peaceful and tranquil mind on those who honor thee on earth; but do, O Lord, what seems good in thy sight. Give me only bread to eat, and raiment to put on."

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7).

"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19).

"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matt. xxi. 22; compare xvii. 20).

"In praying, use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him" (Matt. vi. 7, 8).

"Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matt. vi. 9–13).

It will not perhaps be out of place to speak here of the radical change that is undoubtedly coming over all of us — if we except a small number of fanatics known as the Peculiar People—with regard to this question of Prayer. As Mr. Spencer remarks, the African medicine-men beat their gongs, and howl and dance, as the best way of obtaining rain when it is wanted: the modern Church prays and sings hymns for the same purpose: the only essential difference between the two methods consisting in the greater decency and refinement of the second. And yet, signs of a far more important divergence being near at hand are not wanting; for, whereas the savage priest would not hesitate to ask for an adjournment of sunset, or that water might run uphill, the civilized one would Logically, the latter occupies a very awkward position indeed: believing that the Omnipotent Deity has promised to answer *all* faithful prayers, he nevertheless recognizes that accurate knowledge on any point precludes the possibility of prayer. The sciences of Meteorology and Hygienics are still in a very rudimentary state; but as science advances, prayer retreats. No one would dream of asking that the sun should rise an hour earlier tomorrow, because we can see in our almanacs exactly when it must rise; but some people still pray for fine weather, or for rain, because on this point our predictions are yet uncertain: though it is doubtful,

even here, whether, for example, any one could be found of sufficient simplicity to pray for the non-fulfilment of one of those meteorological messages from New York. Is then only that *inevitable* which our present science can certainly foretell? Setting aside all casuistical attempts at an impossible reconciliation, is not this how the matter stands? Though it was the unequivocal doctrine of Christ, as of the Old Testament and the Talmudical writers, that God will change the course of events, his original purpose, in answer to men's prayers—and, moreover, that to bring such alteration about is right and dutiful on our part—we, on the other hand, are unmistakably tending towards a firmer belief in unvarying natural laws, *never* interfered with. And that this must be so, is evident if we consider that the old doctrine implies a frequent disconnection between cause and effect, which (if real) would render all the predictions of science—to speak very plainly—so many guesses, liable to fail whenever piety pulled the trigger of prayer, and set Omnipotence to the work of alteration.

This particular point is but one example of the many radical differences between the views of religion and science on the whole subject of causation. As Mr. Spencer says ("Data of Ethics," p. 48),—"How slowly . . . the conception of causation evolves, a glance at the evidence shows. We hear with sur-

prise of the savage who, falling down a precipice, ascribes the failure of his foothold to a malicious demon; and we smile at the kindred notion of the ancient Greek, that his death was prevented by a goddess, who unfastened for him the thong of the helmet by which his enemy was dragging him. But, daily, without surprise, we hear men who describe themselves as saved from shipwreck by 'divine interposition,' who speak of having 'providentially' missed a train which met with a fatal disaster, and who called it a 'mercy' to have escaped injury from a falling chimney-pot—men who in such cases recognize physical causation no more than do the uncivilized, or semi-civilized. The Veddah who thinks that failure to hit an animal with his arrow resulted from inadequate invocation of an ancestral spirit, and the Christian priest who says prayers over a sick man in the expectation that the course of his disease will so be stayed, differ only in respect of the agent from whom they expect supernatural aid and the phenomena to be altered by him: the necessary relations among causes and effects are tacitly ignored by the last as much as by the first."

So much ill-feeling is usually, though perhaps unnecessarily, shown in disputes on this and kindred points, that it may be worth while to devote a few more lines to an attempted explanation of the moderate scientific case—that is, of the belief of those who

think it desirable that their religious creed should not be in direct contradiction with the existing knowledge of nature's laws. It is argued on the other side—and it may at once be admitted, not without some force—that men will soon cease to worship and commune with a God in whose present, particular action on themselves they do not believe; and that —such is human nature—a practical atheism will, in no very long time, be the inevitable result. The evolutionist regrets this danger, but cannot offer to change his scientific doctrines in order to meet it; moreover, he thinks he has good reason for trusting that a deeper knowledge of the beautiful scheme of nature, and a sounder faith in the future destiny of humanity, will prove a sufficient remedy. And this, we hope, may be accepted as a fair statement of the creed he opposes to the old orthodoxy:—

We believe that God created the world, and that the theory of evolution expresses, more exactly than any other yet propounded, the principles of the action of nature upon all living things. Hence we also believe that the world does not, like a machine, require a constant personal attention; but that the Creator, in his wisdom, has left it without further interference on his part, and, so far as we can judge, *entirely* under the guidance of natural laws. And this he has done, we venture to think, for man's sake, who is thus surrounded by an order so absolutely

fixed, that science is possible: in other words, that man is encouraged to study these unvarying laws, as he learns more and more surely that they are not liable to any influences beyond his power of calculation, and therefore can be studied to his great intellectual as well as material profit. Thus the complete mental education of man is secured. So too in obedience to the moral precepts of nature, whom no prayers can turn from a salutary, because unbending sternness, he finds his only chances of happiness. And thus (by his ultimately learning that every act must be followed by its consequences; that by no possibility can repentance for sin take the place of its punishment) is secured his complete moral education.

That the very scantiness of such a creed should win for it the popular epithet, "atheistical," is only what might be confidently expected: every confession of necessary ignorance, however humbly worded, is always so entitled by those who reserve all their scepticism for scientific facts, whilst eagerly credulous of doctrines that are, from their very nature, beyond the reach of any possible proof or verification.

[The following notable example of the change spoken of above, is taken from the *Pall Mall* of May 27, 1882:—"As Victoria has lately been suffering from a severe drought, the Bishop of Melbourne was asked to frame a special form of prayer for rain for use in his diocese. He flatly refused. Changes in the weather, he said, were the result of unwavering natural laws,

and prayer was an agency more fitted for securing spiritual blessings than material needs."]

III. *Trust.*

"He who called man into existence, will also clothe and provide him with all necessaries" (Talmud).

"Did you ever behold the lion bearing burdens, the stag holding harvest, the fox engaged in traffic, or the wolf selling viands? And yet they all find their food without care. How much more should this be so with man, who had been created to the service of the Almighty? But our iniquities have perverted our high destiny, and brought us sorrow and care."

"To what purpose has God created insects and vermin? They have been created for a wise end: that the sinner may take a lesson, and not despair of God's providence and his paternal love: for, since he gives life to, and maintains, these useless creatures, how much more will he do so to man?"

"He who makes supplication to God in an uncontrolled and ardent spirit, is considered of little faith."

"He who has bread in his basket for to-day, and asks where he shall find some for to-morrow, is of little faith."

"On whom do we rest? On our Father, who is in heaven."

"Each hour is enough for its trouble."

"Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. . . . Behold the birds of the heaven, that they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye of much more value than they?" (Matt. vi. 25, 26).

"Be not therefore anxious for the morrow, for the morrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34).

"Ask great things, and the small shall be added to you; and ask heavenly things, and the earthly shall be added to you" (Traditional Saying of Christ's).

[This doctrine of *improvidence*, for such it seems to us, was in Christ's eyes simply the realization of absolute trust in the Fatherhood of God:—Seek the kingdom of heaven, and leave God to take care of the rest! How literally he meant this to be understood is shown by the metaphor of the birds and the flowers: we may, however, freely admit that probably the climate and charitable customs of his country to a great extent justified the advice. But so powerfully has experience re-acted on this spirit of trustfulness, that we read even such an order as —"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. vi. 2)—with a difference, thus:—Be very careful how you shield others from the natural consequences of their conduct, for "to stand between men and the effects of their folly, is to help to fill the world with fools."]

IV. *Repentance.*

"There was a king who bade all his servants to a great repast, but did not tell them the hour: some went home and put on their best garments and stood at the door of the palace: others said, 'There is ample time; the king will let us know beforehand.' But the king summoned them of a sudden; and those that came in their best garments were well received; but the foolish ones, who came in their slovenliness, were turned away in disgrace. Repent to-day, lest to-morrow ye might be summoned" (Talmud; compare Matt. xxii. 2–14, xxiv. 42–51, xxv. 1–13).

"Repent one day before thy death."

"Even the most righteous shall not attain to so high a place in heaven as the truly repentant."

"Even if the offender should offer in sacrifice all the sheep of Arabia, he will not be justified before asking forgiveness of him he has offended."

"Whoso restores what he has stolen before he offers his trespass-offering is absolved from his guilt; but a trespass-offering without restoration does not clear from sin."

"Sins committed against God, true repentance on the day of atonement can procure remittance for; but sins committed against our fellow-creatures neither repentance nor the day of atonement can

purge away, if amends have not been previously made, and the injured brother appeased."

"If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. v. 23, 24).

"I say unto you that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, (more) than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance" (Luke xv. 7).

"They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mark ii. 17).

General Moral Principles.

I. *Truth.*

"As for truth, it endureth, and is always strong; it liveth and conquereth for evermore. With her there is no accepting of persons or rewards; but she doeth the things that are just, and refraineth from all unjust and wicked things; and all men do well like of her works. Neither in her judgment is any unrighteousness; and she is the strength, kingdom,

power, and majesty of all ages. Blessed be the God of truth" (1 Esd. iv. 38–40).

"Who is he who will never see the face of God? These are, first the hypocrites, then the liars" (Talmud).

"He who gains public esteem by a feigned virtue —by imposture—he is a thief. Whosoever steals the good opinion of men, it is as if he stole the esteem of God."

"Let thy yea be yea: let thy nay be nay."

"Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32).

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. v. 33–37).

Here we have one of the many cases in which Christians not only deliberately go contrary to their Master's teaching, but,—to make matters worse—attempt, very clumsily, to explain away the change that has been found desirable. Christ, in very dis-

tinct terms, forbade all swearing, as the Rabbis had done before him: whilst James laid down the same doctrine, if possible, more clearly still:—"But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment" (v. 12). But men are not yet trained to such absolute exactness as to be able to dispense with an occasional solemn reminder that they may not indulge in their ordinary inaccuracies and exaggerations. "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," if insisted on in everyday life, would be somewhat oppressive to most of us; and so oaths are, politically and legally, useful. Still the compilers of the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion are hardly to be congratulated on their discovery that these commands of Christ and his brother could only refer "to rash and vain swearing"; in accordance with which explanation, and by a curious touch of unintentional irony, oaths are taken on the New Testament itself.

II. *Justice.*

"At the creation of the world God instituted this just retribution—measure for measure—and, if all the laws of nature should be reversed, this law would stand forever" (Talmud).

"One ought to abstain from judging a friend or an enemy, for one finds not easily either the friend's faults or the enemy's merits."

"With the measure we mete, we shall be measured again."

"Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you" (Matt. vii. 1, 2).

"Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John vii. 24).

"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (Traditional Saying of Christ's.)

III. *Mercy.*

"He who is merciful towards his fellow-creatures shall receive mercy" (Talmud).

"Let this be thy guide in life: if thou dealest mercifully with thy fellow-creatures, the All-Merciful will have mercy on thee."

"One may not desire an enemy's misfortune, nor rejoice in his fall."

"Be like God, compassionate, pitiful; make yourself equal to God."

"He who forgives trespasses committed against

him by man, his trespasses will also be forgiven by God."

"Whose sins does God forgive? His who himself forgives injuries."

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14, 15).

"Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful. And judge not and ye shall not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released: give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom" (Luke vi. 36–38; compare also the Parable of the Two Debtors, Matt. xviii. 21–35.)

IV. *Love.*

"Do that to no man which thou hatest" (Tobit iv. 15).

"Love peace and pursue it; love all men, and thus bring them near to the law of God" (Talmud, Hillel).

"Thou shalt not say, I will love the wise, but the unwise I will hate: but thou shalt love all mankind alike."

"Love thy neighbor as thyself, that is the basis of the Divine law."

"Whosoever does not persecute them that persecute him, whosoever takes an offence in silence, he who does good because of love, he who is cheerful under his sufferings—they are the friends of God, and of them the Scripture says, And they shall shine forth as does the sun at noonday."

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth; lest the Lord should see it, and it be evil in his sight, and turn his wrath from him upon thee."

"Wear mourning for the Egyptians, suppress the prayer of glorification on the seventh day of the Passover. It is the anniversary of the day when your enemies the Egyptians perished in the Red Sea, and God desires not to be glorified because his creatures have been drowned beneath the waves." The Midrasch on the above runs as follows:—"On the morning of the day when the Egyptians were drowned in the waves of the Red Sea, the angels came before the throne of God to sing his praises. 'Peace,' cried the Eternal to them, 'my creatures are about to perish in the waters, and you desire to sing!'"

The Talmud tells the following charming story of Hillel, who died, it may as well be noticed, when Christ was about ten years old. A certain heathen,

contemptuous of the vast mass of Jewish laws and ceremonies, went to Shammai, one of the two leading rabbis of the day, and promised mockingly he would become a convert if the whole law could be taught him while he could stand on one leg. Shammai got very angry, and sent the fellow about his business. So he went to the other great rabbi, Hillel, to repeat his joke. The president heard him very quietly and then said—"Good, my son! make ready and attend. Do not to others what you would not have them do to you. This is the substance of the law, the rest is only its application."

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. vii. 12).

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets" (Matt. xxii. 37–40).

"Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you" (Matt. v. 44).

"Ye have received without payment—give without payment" (Matt. x. 8).

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye

also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John xiii. 34, 35).

[The totally unjustifiable pretence to novelty in this doctrine of love proves that it cannot have been enunciated by Christ as here reported; he was not so ignorant of the morality that preceded his teaching.]

"Never be joyful, except when ye shall look on your brother in love" (Traditional Saying of Christ's).

Two other excellent expressions of the "Golden Rule," as it is called, are well worth quoting here: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not to others," were the words of the Chinese philosopher, Confucius, five hundred years before Christ. "Do not force on thy neighbor a hat that hurts thine own head," was the still older Hindu proverb. But is there not underlying all forms of this precept a slight suggestion of egoism, just a suspicion of the idea of possible retaliation? Can we accept the maxim as anything but a rough and ready criterion of action, from its very simplicity admirable for the semi-civilized, but far from being an ideal rule of life? There can be but one truly satisfactory basis for the guidance of one's conduct towards others—and that is *sympathy;* the value of which depends entirely on its accuracy and fineness; and that again on the expression of the emotions and their inter-

pretation. To discuss this, however, is not our business here; we have only to note the existence of this slight taint of self-consideration in the sanctions of even the noblest morality we have yet touched upon; the point is very interesting, and will again claim our notice in a more important connection, when we come to speak of the moral sanctions of Christianity further on.

V. *Charity and Almsgiving.*

"Give alms of thy substance; and when thou givest alms let not thine eye be envious, neither turn thy face from any poor, and the face of God shall not be turned away from thee. If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly: if thou hast but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little; for thou layest up a good treasure for thyself against the day of necessity. Because that alms do deliver from death, and suffereth not to come into darkness. For alms is a good gift unto all that give it in the sight of the Most High. . . . Give of thy bread to the hungry, and of thy garments to them that are naked; and according to thine abundance give alms; and let not thine eye be envious, when thou givest alms" (Tobit iv. 7–11, 16).

"Water will quench a flaming fire; and alms maketh an atonement for sins. And he that requiteth good turns is mindful of that which may come hereafter; and when he falleth, he shall find a stay" (Ecclus. iii. 30, 31).

"Reject not the supplication of the afflicted; neither turn away thy face from a poor man" (Ecclus. iv. 4).

"He who helpeth the poor in his troubles, of him says the prophet, Thou shalt call, and the Lord shall answer" (Talmud).

"He who gives charity in secret, is greater than Moses himself."

"The house that does not open to the poor shall open to the physician."

"Even the birds in the air despise the miser."

"Let thy house be opened wide, and let the needy be thy household."

"He who wishes to salt his money, that is, to preserve it, ought ceaselessly to diminish it by charity; so to lose is to gain."

"Alms themselves are only rewarded in proportion to the charity they contain."

"Let the poor be the sons of thy house."

"He who possesses the three following virtues is of the race of our father Abraham: they who have them not are not his children. His true children are compassionate, modest, and charitable."

"For one farthing given to a poor man in alms, a man is made partaker of the beatific vision."

"Rabbi Jannai saw one giving money openly to a poor man; to whom he said, It is better you had not given at all, than so to have given."

The Eight Degrees of Charity—collected from various parts of the Talmud by Maimonides:—

"The first, and highest, is that of the man who aids the poor before his fall, either by gifts or by loans, or by a partnership to prevent his falling into want."

"The second is that which gives without knowing and without being known."

"The third is that of the man who knows the poor one to whom he gives, and who does not make himself known. So did the wise; they used to cast purses of money secretly into the houses of the poor."

"The fourth is that of the man who is known by the poor one, without ever knowing him personally."

"The fifth is that of the man who gives to the poor one, from hand to hand, without waiting to be asked."

"The sixth is that of the man who only gives after having been asked."

"The seventh is that which gives less than it ought to give, and without benevolence." And, lastly—

"The eighth, the lowest degree of the charitable scale, is that which gives with annoyance and regret."

Before quoting the examples of Christ's teaching on this very practical point, a few words must be said on an important question of critical interpretation:—In what sense are we to understand that teaching? As has been already said, one great object of the quotations in this chapter is to show that all Christ's ethical doctrine had its natural source in the moral ideas that preceded and surrounded him, and that even the form he gave it was only occasionally original. This is a fact with which all—even the most orthodox, notwithstanding some "disturbance"—ought to become thoroughly familiarized, and to use for critical purposes: the inferences from it are so significant, especially the one we have now to consider,—namely, the correct appreciation of Christ's meaning. Anticipating the remaining details of this chapter, we may say that its conclusions will be that Christ found such doctrines as that poverty was essential to the spiritual life, the duty of indiscriminate almsgiving, and of offering no resistance to evil doers, the desirability of extreme asceticism, and the like, prevalent amongst the more thoughtful of his countrymen; that he sanctioned these in unmistakable terms, handing them on practically unaltered, and stamped with his approval;

that his earliest followers adopted precisely the same course; and that the Church for centuries preached and practised these doctrines. Yet the system of interpretation now in vogue in Protestant churches is to ignore all such testimony as to the real meaning of Christ's words; to alter and amend this up to our later knowledge; and then to say that he never expected us to understand him literally, but, in fact, wished our practice to be pretty much the reverse of his preaching! Who can fail to see the reason for such argument? Is it not simply that modern experience and the growth of science have proved much of the ancient doctrine and practice wrong; that it would therefore contradict the orthodox assumptions about Christ's nature to admit that such faulty opinions were really his; and further, that Christianity could not hope for an even nominal acceptance, without such alterations and concessions?

Not for one moment do we wish to deny the entire justice of Mr. Matthew Arnold's critical canon, "Christ over the head of his reporters"—that on many occasions his disciples manifestly misunderstood him, and have consequently given us very mutilated versions of what he really said; and that it is accordingly only reasonable that isolated sayings attributed to him, in plain contradiction to his general teaching, should be received with the greatest cau-

tion and allowed but little weight. But for all this we are on comparatively safe ground with regard to the great proportion of the ethical sayings: for why should these be misunderstood? They were no novelties, but such as the common people could hear gladly, being familiar thoughts put into simple and beautiful words. Here surely, then, we may have confidence in the Gospel histories, as being to all intents and purposes correct; and may we not even go a step further and accept the teaching of the chief apostles and the practice of the early Church in explanation or illustration of any doubtful or difficult points? At all events they were far more likely to be right in these matters than we are, having in their favor—(1) a similar environment, and the absence of the obscuring power of time; and (2) a large mass of tradition of recent date and consequently of great illustrative value. Is it unreasonable to believe that a churchman of the first or second century, in Palestine or Egypt, would be much more likely to understand his Master's meaning, than an Englishman or Frenchman eighteen hundred years later?

The point then to be particularly insisted on is this:—*the true meaning of a moral teacher is what the words he uses would naturally imply to his hearers.* As the great Hebrew scholar, Dr. John Lightfoot, wrote, more than two centuries ago—"I concluded as assuredly that . . . the best and most natural

method of searching out the sense is, to inquire how, and in what sense, those phrases and manners of speech were understood, according to the vulgar and common dialect and opinion of that nation; and how they took them, by whom they were spoken, and by whom they were heard. For it is no matter what we can beat out concerning those manners of speech on the anvil of our own conceit, but what they signified among them, in their ordinary sense and speech." So too, Dr. Cox more tersely argues: "Christ was a Jew, and spoke to Jews; and in what but their Jewish sense can we fairly and reasonably interpret his words?"

For example, take this question of Almsgiving: here are the facts of the case. In Christ's time a perfect monomania existed among the Jews for this form of charity: so much so, indeed, that the Rabbis, not many years afterwards, had actually to forbid the unlimited practice of the very virtue they had fostered, and to ordain that no one should give more than a fifth of his patrimony to the poor. Our quotations from the Talmud also show that it was looked upon as a special merit in almsgiving that it should be "indiscriminate"; and it is not hard to understand the charm such a point would have for impulsive and generous minds, without an inkling of the doctrines of Political Economy. Who can read even the few examples we have given, and fail to

recognize that these Jews loved the uncalculating benevolence that is the most striking feature in this boundless charity? The one thing considered was the virtue of the *giver*—his love and pity that sought immediate and kindly expression, and even a delicate and inoffensive way of conferring the kindness. Can it be pretended, then, that his countrymen would regard Christ's words as not being meant literally, when he urged this very thing—indiscriminate giving? The modern conscience, it is true, cannot unreservedly admit the beauty of these old-fashioned ways, because modern experience has proved their harmfulness; the motto of the "Charity Organization Society," for instance, can hardly be said to be—"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matt. v. 42). Our system of scientific charity involves an altogether different class of thoughts and feelings from those which Christ and his contemporaries contended for—greater cautiousness, less confidence in our fellows, anxious thought for the morrow, and a good deal besides, very foreign to those simpler times. It is therefore worse than disingenuous, it is also stupid, to argue that, if societies and poor laws are now found to be the more prudent way of dealing with poverty, we are still truly obeying the spirit of Christ's teaching, though setting his direct orders at defiance. He never contemplated

the possibility of such changes as the world has passed through since his day; nor have we the slightest hint that he anticipated his moral teaching, so solemnly and beautifully expressed, one day becoming an antiquity—something for his professed followers to admire and talk about, but on no account to practice.

"Give to every one that asketh thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again" (Luke vi. 30).

"And there came a poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, This poor widow cast in more than all they which are casting into the treasury: for they all did cast in of their superfluity; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living" (Mark xii. 42–44).

"Howbeit give for alms those things which ye can; and behold, all things are clean unto you" (Luke xi. 41).

"Sell that ye have, and give alms; make for yourselves purses which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief draweth near, neither moth destroyeth" (Luke xii. 33).

"One thing thou lackest yet; sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Luke xviii. 22).

"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35).

"Give without distinction to all that are in want, not doubting to whom thou givest. But give to all, for God will have us give to all, of all his own gifts. They therefore that receive shall give an account to God, both wherefore they received, and for what end. And they that receive without a real need, shall give an account for it; but he that gives shall be innocent. For he has fulfilled his duty as he hath received it from God; not making any choice to whom he should give, and to whom not. And this service he did with simplicity and to the glory of God." ("The Shepherd of Hermas," Second Book, Command II. 6–9.)

[No words could show more clearly the essential differences between the charity of Christ and the early Christians, and that of the present day, than this last quotation. Of the work from which it is taken, we may mention that Irenæus quotes it as scriptural, Origen considers it to be divinely inspired, and Eusebius and Jerome state that it was read in the churches, though not admitted as strictly canonical.]

VI. *Work and Action.*

"Love work, and hate lordship" (Talmud).

"All my days I have grown up amongst the wise and have not found aught good for a man but

silence; not learning, but doing is the groundwork; and whoso multiplies words, occasions sin."

"It is well to add a trade to your studies; you will then be free from sin."

"The tradesman at his work need not rise before the greatest doctor."

"Greater is he who derives his livelihood from work than he who fears God."

"Get your living by skinning carcasses in the street, if you cannot otherwise; and do not say, I am a great man: this work would not befit my dignity."

"Providence sees all, free-will is given, the world is judged by goodness, and all is determined according to works."

"A man who studies the law, and acts in accordance with its commandments, is likened to a man who builds a house, the foundation of which is made of freestone and the superstructure of bricks. Storm and flood cannot injure that house. But he who studies the law, and is destitute of good actions, is likened unto the man who builds the foundation of his house of brick and mortar, and raises the upper storeys with solid stone. The flood will soon undermine and overturn the house."

"The day is short, and the work is great."

"Whosesoever wisdom is in excess of his works, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are

abundant, and its roots scanty: and the wind comes and uproots it, and overturns it. And whosesoever works are in excess of his wisdom, to what is he like? To a tree whose branches are scanty, and its roots abundant: though all the winds come upon it, they stir it not from its place."

"It is not incumbent upon thee to complete the work; but thou must not therefore cease from it."

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21).

"Every one therefore which heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and it beat upon that house, and it fell not: for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof" (Matt. vii. 24–27).

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me

meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. . . . Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me" (Matt. xxv. 34–36, 40).

"So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16).

"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. . . . Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. vii. 17, 18, 20).

"Should you be with me gathered in my bosom, and not do my commandments, I will cast you off, and say to you, Go from me, I know not whence you are, workers of iniquity." (Traditional Saying of Christ's).

VII. *Miscellaneous.*

The following sayings do not come under any of the above headings; they are, however, given, so that no part of Christ's moral teaching may be omitted: it being essential that, after having gone through this chapter, the reader shall not feel that there still

remain other doctrines unconsidered, and consequently that on their account some modifications in our deductions may be necessary. Moreover, if a passage is not found under any particular heading, though it might very well have been inserted there, the reader must not at once conclude that it has been left out altogether: it probably will be found in another place, being used in a different connection to that looked for; and, to avoid unnecessary length, each passage is only quoted once.

"He who calls his fellow-man slave, bastard, or villain, endangers his own life" (Talmud).

"Be as particular about a small command, as about a great."

"He who causes his brother to blush in public, shall have no share in the future life."

"Be slow to quarrel, and prompt to be reconciled."

"It is not sinners whom we must hate, it is sin."

"Whosoever does not increase in knowledge, decreases." (Compare the following quotation.)

"Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away" (Matt. xxv. 29).

"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you" (Matt. vii. 6).

"If thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between him and thee alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the church: and if he refuse to hear the church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matt. xviii. 15–17).

[Note, however, the probable ecclesiastical origin of this saying, comparing vv. 21, 22, a very different piece of advice.]

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Mark xii. 17).

"Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem. I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 4, 5).

"Every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, that they have been wrought in God" (John iii. 20, 21).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin" (John viii. 34).

"His disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John ix. 2, 3).

"But do ye seek from little to increase, and from a greater thing to be a less." (Given in the "Beza" MS. after Matt. xx. 28.)

"Good must needs come, but blessed is he through whom it comes." (Traditional saying of Christ's.)

The Ascetic Basis of Christian Morality.

We have already had occasion to allude to the general prevalence of Monasticism and the Ascetic Principles of Virtue over the East, as being the original source of the same practices in Christendom: so astonished indeed were the early Jesuit missionaries in Cochin China, some three centuries ago, by the many striking resemblances to their own systems, that they at once came to the very orthodox conclusion that what they saw was an attempt of the devil to imitate Christianity. The fashions of Hindu ascetics have been most graphically described by Mr. Edwin Arnold in his beautiful poem—giving an account of Gautama's Life and Work—which he

calls the "Light of Asia"; and we take the liberty of extracting the following painful passage, in illustration of their manner of life:—

"Midway on Ratnagiri's groves of calm,
Beyond the city, but below the caves,
Lodged such as hold the body foe to soul,
And flesh a beast which men must chain and tame
With bitter pains, till sense of pain is killed,
And tortured nerves vex torturer no more—
Yogis and Brahmacharis, Bhilshus, all
A gaunt and mournful band, dwelling apart.
Some day and night had stood with lifted arms,
Till—drained of blood and withered by disease—
Their slowly-wasting joints and stiffened limbs
Jutted from sapless shoulders like dead forks
From forest trunks. Others had clenched their hands
So long and with so fierce a fortitude,
The claw-like nails grew through the festered palm.
Some walked on sandals spiked; some with sharp flints
Gashed breast and brow and thigh, scarred these with fire,
Threaded their flesh with jungle thorns and spits,
Besmeared with mud and ashes, crouching foul
In rags of dead men wrapped about their loins.
Certain there were inhabited the spots
Where death-pyres smouldered, cowering defiled
With corpses for their company, and kites
Screaming around them o'er the funeral spoils:
Certain who cried five hundred times a day
The names of Shiva, wound with darting snakes
About their sun-tanned necks and hollow flanks,
One palsied foot drawn up against the ham.
So gathered they, a grievous company;
Crowns blistered by the blazing heat, eyes bleared,
Sinews and muscles shrivelled, visages
Haggard and wan as slain men's five days dead;
Here crouched one in the dust who noon by noon

Meted a thousand grains of millet out,
Ate it with famished patience, seed by seed,
And so starved on; there one who bruised his pulse
With bitter leaves lest palate should be pleased;
And next a miserable saint self-maimed,
Eyeless and tongueless, sexless, crippled, deaf;
The body by the mind being thus stripped
For glory of much suffering, and the bliss
Which they shall win—say holy books—whose woe
Shames gods that send us woe, and makes men gods
Stronger to suffer than Hell is to harm." (Page 115.)

It was from India, very possibly, that these strange theories passed into Egypt and Syria, where precisely similar details are found to repeat themselves. Thus we read of men never leaving their cells for forty years or more, living on coarse bread and water: of a monk whose dwelling was an old cistern, and whose only food was five dried figs daily: of another who never changed his rough hair shirt—who never washed, not even his feet: of another who in fear for his chastity—his hands being fastened—bit out his tongue, that the pain might keep him from temptation: of others who went naked for years: of some who lived manacled with heavy irons: many in perpetual silence: most in indescribable filth. Not unfrequently in the Old Testament do we come across indications of these ideas: the Nazarites, for instance, were moderate ascetics; Saul lying naked on the ground, in a trance, when the prophetic spirit fell upon him, reminds us of a

Hindu devotee; Elijah and Elisha were monks; so, too, to come down to much later times, was John the Baptist. Of all these men the ruling principle of life was—virtue through self-imposed privation and suffering. Especially during the many wars and disturbances at the beginning of the third century B.C., was it common for the pious, as in the days of the prophets, "to withdraw from the world and consecrate themselves to God by Nazarean vows." (See Polano, "Selections from the Talmud," p. 211.)

But of the various examples Syria has to offer of ascetic communism or monasticism, it will be sufficient to take the case of the Essenes only, the largest monastic sect of Palestine, whose earnest efforts to live up to the nobler ideas of God and duty that were beginning to prevail, must now be sketched.

It was in the second century B.C. that these enthusiasts first arose; to avoid the vices and pollutions of large towns they lived in villages, chiefly founded by themselves, in those same borderlands which afterwards witnessed the birth of Christianity. Our main authorities for the history and doctrines of this remarkable sect—the result of one of those waves of impulse towards purity and justice that in later times occurred so frequently in the annals of Christendom—are the Jewish writer Josephus, and Philo. From the former we learn that the Essenes led a monastic life under the rules of chastity, obedience, and

silence; they worked hard, ate and drank seldom and with sobriety; they were extremely charitable to the needy and distressed; they were gentle in manner, peaceable, and trustworthy; they declined to confirm their statements by oaths; gross sins were punished by banishment from their society; pleasure was considered wrong; all luxury was forbidden; slavery was not allowed; the sabbath was strictly observed; sacrifices of blood were not permitted. They always began the day with prayer; then they worked to the fifth hour, when followed ablutions with cold water, and a simple meal, interspersed with prayers. After this they worked again to the dusk of the evening, when a second simple meal closed the day. They taught "that bodies are corruptible, and that the matter they are made of is not permanent; but that souls are immortal and continue for ever." Riches they despised, having all things in common; marriage was permitted, but celibacy was considered "the more excellent way." They of course held the theory—apparently a necessity to thoughtful and religious minds entirely ignorant of the physical sciences—that all the desires and propensities of the body are evil, and must be subdued by the severest mortifications and asceticism. Philo, in his Treatise "On the Virtuous being also Free," gives the same account of them; he tells us that these men were originally poor and even

destitute, living in villages to avoid the contamination of cities, refusing to act in any employments connected with war, even as makers of warlike weapons. Their sacred books "present an infinite number of instances of a disposition devoted to the love of God, and of a continued and uninterrupted purity throughout the whole of life, of a careful avoidance of oaths and falsehoods, and of a strict adherence to the principle of looking on the Deity as the cause of everything which is good, and of nothing which is evil. They also furnish us with many proofs of a love of virtue, such as absence of all covetousness of money, from ambition, from indulgence in pleasures —temperance, endurance, and also moderation, simplicity, good temper, the absence of pride, obedience to the laws, steadiness, and all such virtues; and lastly, they bring forward as proofs of their love of mankind, good will, equality beyond all power of description, and fellowship." (See also Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," vol. iii. chap. x. 126-136.)

The remarkable points of resemblance between this sect and the early Christian Church have led many to imagine that there is some mistake in the matter, and that the two were identical. But, since the Essenes existed long before Christ, our safer conclusion must be that Essenism and Christianity alike were practical manifestations of a lofty morality by no means exceptional or peculiar. It is indeed quite

possible that the founder of the later religion may have himself been an Essene; but if so, his wider sympathies and superior common sense soon carried him beyond the narrow limits of the sect: their want of mental robustness and vigor, and total deficiency in missionary zeal, effectually preventing the survival of these amiable enthusiasts.

I. *Asceticism and Purity.*

Before passing on to the quotations on this point, we must again call attention to the important question of their interpretation. As all readers of the Gospels will remember, many of Christ's words (taken literally) teach, or approve of, a degree of asceticism which modern morality cannot but regard as, at best, a grievous mistake,—an attempt to do good by first causing an incurable harm. Accordingly, we are once more told he did not wish to be understood literally, when, for example, he recommended severe bodily mutilations as a means of avoiding temptation. But, as before in the case of almsgiving, history at once shows that this line of defence is untenable:—if a teacher, finding certain customs prevalent and generally respected in his country, recommends them as salutary and worthy of imitation, he simply *cannot* mean by that to give a piece of merely meta-

phorical advice. Only under the stupefying influence of an endangered orthodoxy would any one dream of imputing such an intention to Christ: for it is really to charge him with a cruel, and even dishonest action, since his hearers would necessarily regard his words as implying approbation of the maiming, blinding and mutilating, not to mention lesser severities, that were being practiced so very frequently at the time. Does not the history of the early Church plainly show that they did so understand him; and, if we bear in mind the wide prevalence of the Hindu belief (common also to Mithraism) in the antagonism between flesh and spirit, and that this unhealthy, barbarous, and often revolting fanaticism was but its natural consequence—is it reasonable to feel greatly surprised that the same ideas influenced Christ and his followers? Indeed, would it not have been an almost inexplicable fact, an anomaly, in the history of religious and moral development, had this been otherwise?

The foundation of these ideas clearly lies in the undoubted power of pain and bodily mortification, not merely to divert the mind from sensual thoughts, but, by their weakening tendency, for a time to prevent the recurrence of temptation. Even at the present day such practices are by no means unknown in the church, for it is only natural that these aids to virtue should seem to minds that are religious

rather than scientific, too valuable to be laid aside. But very different is the doctrine of modern science (which Buddha, alone amongst the reformers of the East, seems to have partially anticipated) that virtue based on asceticism cannot be cultivated with advantage to manliness or intelligence; and that to make a man pure by means of mutilation, by making him less than a man, is an impatient and foolish interference with the slowly sure methods of nature.

The Talmud gives a legend of a certain Rabbi Matthia, which may be quoted as a good illustration of the strength of the old doctrine: it will be observed that the particular form of mutilation practiced, viz. blinding, was precisely one of those mentioned by Christ with approbation. The story runs that Satan asked for permission to tempt this holy man. "Go," said the Eternal, "and you will waste your time." Then Satan took the form of an extremely beautiful woman, and appeared before the Rabbi; but he, who had never allowed his senses to trouble his reason, nor his fleshly nature to dominate over his spiritual, turned away his eyes resolutely. Still the woman was as quick as he, and again stood before him: do what the Rabbi would, she kept her beauty ever in his sight. So he called his favorite disciple, and bid him take a nail and make it red-hot. This he thrust into his eyes, blinding himself, and Satan fled defeated. Then the Eternal said to the

angel of healing, "Go, and restore his sight to my well-beloved son." But Matthia refused the boon, for he feared he might be again tempted; and he said, "No, that which is done, is done." But the Eternal sent Raphael back, with the promise that the spirit of evil should never attack him more. Then he permitted himself to be cured.

"Whoso looketh upon the wife of another with a lustful eye is considered as if he had committed adultery" (Talmud).

"In every deed, it is chiefly the thought, the intention, that God inquires into, and judges."

"Grant, O Lord, that we be not led into sin, nor into temptation, nor into contempt: take far from us evil thoughts, that we may lay hold of the good."

"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matt. v. 21, 22).

"Ye have heard that it was said, thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. v. 27, 28).

"If thy hand or thy foot causeth thee to stumble,

cut it off, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire. And if thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire" (Matt. xviii. 8, 9).

"All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are eunuchs, which were made eunuchs by men: and there are eunuchs, which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it" (Matt. xix. 11, 12).

[A point well worthy of passing notice, is Christ's estimation of sins of thought—his classing them as equally criminal with the corresponding actions. One difference they certainly have—you do not harm your neighbor to the same extent; for illustration take the example just quoted from Matt. v. 28. Hence with us the result counts for a good deal, and is alone punished. The other view is touched with the exaggeration natural to a reformer; for, even if the disposition of the agent be alone taken into consideration in estimating the guilt, a sinful thought can rarely be so contaminating as the corresponding act. Or, to take those hypothetical cases of anger given in Matt. v. 21, 22, is it not rather in disagreement with our more accurate ethics to speak of angry feeling now as the equivalent of actual murder in times past; whilst anger edged with scorn ("Racha" is a term of contempt), and anger deepening into hate ("Moré" implies condemnation), are esteemed even more guilty?]

"Should any one for this reason kiss (a woman) a second time because she pleased him (he sins); men must therefore act thus with extreme caution in the kiss (of peace), or rather the salutation, as knowing that, if perchance it should be sullied by thought, it would place them out of the way of eternal life" (Traditional saying of Christ's).

"They who wish to see me and to lay hold on my kingdom must receive me by affliction and suffering" (Traditional saying of Christ's).

"I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing" (Rom. vii. 18).

"If ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the spirit ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Rom. viii. 13).

"The place which is on the right hand is theirs who have already attained unto God, and have suffered for his name's sake. But there is yet a great deal remaining unto thee, before thou canst sit with them. But continue as thou doest in thy sincerity, and thou shalt sit with them: as all others shall that do their works, and shall bear what they have borne. I said to her: Lady, I would know what it is that they have suffered. Hear, then, said she; wild beasts, scourgings, imprisonments, and crosses for his name's sake. For this cause the right hand of holiness belongs to them, and to all others as many as shall suffer for the name of God; but the left belongs

to the rest." ("The Shepherd of Hermas," Book I. Vision III. 15–18).

"And we came into a certain field, and there he showed me a young shepherd, finely arrayed, with his garments of a purple color. And he fed large flocks; and his sheep were full of pleasure, and in much delight and cheerfulness; and they, skipping, ran here and there. And the shepherd took very great satisfaction in his flock; and the countenance of that shepherd was cheerful, running up and down among his flock. Then the angel said unto me, Seest thou this shepherd? I answered, Sir, I see him. He said unto me, This is the messenger of delight and pleasure. He therefore corrupts the minds of the servants of God, and turns them from the truth, delighting them with many pleasures, and they perish" (Idem, Book III. Similitude VI. 8–10).

It would be quite possible to fill volumes with accounts of the revolting asceticism that naturally resulted from the application of such doctrines to the daily life of the early Christians; for they were, as a rule, men of small knowledge or culture, and too amply imbued with the passionate devotion of martyrs. Eunuchism (a common device among the Brahmans, and, indeed, in many other religions), being commended by Christ in no uncertain terms, was widely practiced; amongst others, Origen, Valens

of Barathis and his disciples, actually employed it, whilst Clement of Alexandria advised it as highly virtuous. Moreover, directions are given in the Apostolical Constitutions that such saints particularly deserve the prayers of the Church:—"Let us pray for the eunuchs who walk in holiness; let us pray for those who live in the continency of virginity, and lead a pious life."

The whole question being a very unpleasant one, and quite sufficiently known—though its full significance is not duly appreciated—it will be enough here to mention two typical cases of this artificial and worse than useless moral method, those of the early Christian saints, Baradatus and Simeon Stylites. The former, by way of self-mortification, so arranged a block of stone in his cell, already too small for him to lie down or even sit in, that he was forced into a perpetual crouching position. His bishop, however, fearing for his life, forbade this torture; so, by way of compromise, he passed his existence standing with his arms raised above his head—an exact copy, it will be noticed, of a Hindu devotee. Simeon of the Column passed his life, as is well known, for nearly forty years standing on the top of a pillar thirty-six feet in height. Chained up there, he spent his time in prayer, meditation and preaching; and he, too, imitated the Hindus in even refusing to kill the vermin on his unwashed body and filthy rags. It was

natural that such theory and practice should be accompanied by an extreme contempt for personal beauty, nowhere more strikingly shown than in the common belief in the deformity of Christ: a tradition entirely the result of the prevailing ideas, just as nowadays, on the contrary, such a gratuitous supposition would only give rise to annoyance and distress. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyril of Alexandria were the principal upholders of this foolish belief: the last-named actually speaking of his Master as "the ugliest of the sons of men."

II. *Family Ties.*

In his very plainly expressed opinions about such matters as the Claims of Relationship, Marriage and Divorce, the Morality of Wealth and Poverty, and the Duty of meeting Evil by a Policy of Non-Resistance, still further conclusive reasons are to be found for assigning an ascetic basis to the ethical doctrines of Christ. But, before proceeding to the necessary quotations, we must deal with two points, proper attention to which, to a great extent, frees his teaching on these questions from that charge of unnatural harshness which has too frequently been brought against it. And these are (1) the great ideal of

Christ's Life, summed up in that expression so often on his lips, "the Kingdom of Heaven"; and (2) the chief aim of all his teaching—namely, the creation in men's hearts of an overpowering love for God and humanity. The attainment of the Kingdom constituted, in his eyes, the whole duty of man. As he once said: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: yet he that is but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matt. xi. 11). And on another occasion he defined what he himself understood by this expression, by telling his hearers that the kingdom of God was "within" them (Luke xvii. 21).

Such was his dream of human blessedness—an earthly Reign of Holiness; and the sole means to which he trusted for its realization consisted in the production of an intense enthusiasm for this divine holiness, as contrasted with what must, in comparison, be called *mere* virtue: the latter signifying a state of conflict where temptations are felt, but successfully resisted, whilst the other is a state of rest—vice being impossible, because so repugnant to the master-passion overruling the feelings. Certainly, whether original or not, this is pre-eminently "the secret and method" of Christ, and no one had ever insisted so strongly on the point as he did. In Buddhism, Mithraism, and with the Rabbis, the doctrine

existed, but entirely without the leading importance that was now distinctly assigned to it.

By this criterion, then, the general question of the permanent value of the Christian scheme is to be determined, rather than by a detailed examination of its various moral doctrines; for the ordinary statement is here probably true, that Christ's purpose was not to lay down a system or code of ethics, but to create such a sentiment of love and enthusiasm in every man's heart, that each should become "a law unto himself." The principle or spirit of his teaching is undoubtedly the most important question; but we must not therefore lose sight of the fact that in the letter, or form—as it is called—are often contained certain practical deductions from the principle, *as they appeared to strike its author;* hence these cannot be ignored, as of no critical significance, in the estimate we form of the value of the principle itself.

Christ, then, was not content with producing right action, but he desired such an absolute integrity of feeling that wrong-doing should be out of the question, the lower passions and instincts being swallowed up by a purifying enthusiasm—an ardent love for God and man. Unfortunately, however, the dry light of science discloses a fatal flaw in this theory, in the fact that it is directly opposed to the whole order and method of nature. *Habitual morality depends on physical organisation;* and man

starts from original brutality, instead of with an originally divine nature, which is what Christ's idea assumes. His intention was to appeal to this supposed divinity within us, and awaken it; whereas, on the contrary, it is to qualities that do not yet exist in us at all—to the possibilities of the future—that we have to look for the fulfilment of our hopes. We have a long way still to travel before the slow process of evolution will have sufficiently eliminated the influence of the old savage, or even brutal, taints from our minds and bodies to admit of this expected permanent virtue. Hence to go to work by means of enthusiasm and aspiration is as yet an Utopian dream—an attempt to get rid of the necessity for centuries of crime and suffering, and to anticipate the process of natural evolution by a sort of moral jump. If such a reformer meets, as Christ did, with disciples whose faith and power is above the average, he will have success—for a time; but, when the master is dead, his followers will find themselves in danger of lapsing from his beautiful ideal; will find the lofty standard of purity he preached far beyond their undeveloped powers; and will therefore be driven to seek the violent aid of an intense asceticism, in order to keep their lives up to the unnatural level he desired. A virtuous soul in a vicious body, and in spite of it!—that, in one word, is their dream; of which the outcome is a brief personal satisfaction

at the cost of very serious harm to posterity. And as for the improvident enthusiasm which they have glorified as divine, has it not in reality proved to be one of the most retarding forces ever brought to bear on human progress? "The most melancholy of human reflections, perhaps," says a suggestive writer, "is that, on the whole, it is a question whether the benevolence of mankind does more good or harm." We have now learnt to dread the hastiness that invariably accompanies enthusiasm; it is so apt to blind us to future interests—even to those comparatively near at hand—by ever urging us on to fresh attempts at a prompt and impetuous cure of our present evils.

But the message of science is to be patient; a quiet hopefulness, more for our children than ourselves, may help us much, it is true; but we must be careful not to be inspired by it into setting up mistaken ideals, misleading standards of right and wrong, and impulsively longing for a virtue at present unattainable. We must not *unintelligently* interfere with the natural passions, not knowing what their use may be; but accept an occasional outbreak as a legacy of the past, only to be finally and safely got rid of by slow degrees. "Good must needs come," but our premature, ill-advised efforts may retard it no less than carelessness or indifference: science here is the only divine prophet, and her

teaching must be implicitly followed. Let us know our limits then, and be content. Yet we may love these dreams of the past—(for are they not a prophecy of the future?)—even while we see that their realization is not for ourselves.

"If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26).

"And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But he said unto him, Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the kingdom of God. And another also said, I will follow thee, Lord; but first suffer me to bid farewell to them that are at my house. But Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 59–62, compare Matt. viii, 21, 22).

[Note, in passing, the proximity of these two instances; is it not as though the writer had said,--I give these as examples of what the Master's custom was: they are not special cases, but typical.]

"Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a

man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. x. 34–37).

"Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Mark x. 29, 30; cf. Matt. xix. 29 and Luke xviii. 28–30).

"And one said unto him, Behold thy mother and brethren stand without, seeking to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? and he stretched forth his hands towards his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. xii. 47–50).

"Call no man your father on the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 9).

No one surely can read these passages without being convinced of Christ's comparative disregard for ordinary earthly relationships. His followers were to exist only for himself; they were to be ready to renounce, not merely rest and ease, and all thoughts

of a quiet, happy home, but even their nearest and dearest friends, to break every bond of union, to sacrifice all home love, for the sake of *the Kingdom.* Unquestionably, in his eyes, the ties of flesh and blood were accidental, external, temporary—simply a physical connection. Family feeling was, for him, only an extended selfishness; and his followers were bidden not to love their own relatives especially, but all men equally, because of the Fatherhood of God. However, man cannot be remade to suit these theological doctrines: we are essentially egoistical, and love, in consequence, must begin at home. The natural process is: love for one's family, based on similarity, companionship, gratitude; then love for one's country—patriotism; and lastly, love for mankind—humanitarianism: only this final stage has not yet been generally reached. Out of good fathers and brothers are made good citizens; out of good citizens true lovers of their race will one day arise. Such is sure progress by evolution. Love begins at home; and there it must stop awhile, if its development is to be healthy and trustworthy: sympathies too widely spread at first, can never be otherwise than vague and fruitless. At least, this is the rule for us of the vast majority: a great man is only to a very limited extent a safe example for little men to follow.

The result of Christ's slight regard for the ties of

relationship is seen in the conduct of the monks and hermits, his ascetic disciples. Too often, in their pursuit of conditions believed to be necessary for their salvation, they were led into a cruel and selfish disregard of the feelings of those who loved them. Men, driven by terror into austerity and hardness of heart, refused to say farewell to a dying mother, or to look on a sister—for fear of pollution! What sadder perversions of the religious instincts of humanity are recorded?

III. *Marriage and Divorce.*

"If a man remain unmarried after the age of twenty, his life is a constant transgression. The Holy One—blessed be He!—waits until that period to see if one enters the matrimonial state, and curses his bones if he remains single" (Talmud).

"Rabbi Jacob teaches that he who has no wife abideth without good, without help, without joy, without blessing or atonement: to which Yehoshua ben Levi adds,—(yea) also without peace or life. Rabbi Cheya says that he is not a perfect man, for it is said, And blessed them, and called their name man (Gen. v. 2)—where both are spoken of together as one man."

"Even the altar sheds tears over him who has put away his wife."

"A man must not send away his wife except for the cause of adultery."

[With regard to the question of Divorce, however, the various schools differed. Christ's decision, given in Mark x. -12, is taken almost verbatim from the teaching of the school of Shammai, between whose followers and those of Hillel there was a controversy on this point; the former maintaining "that a divorce can only take place when an actual breach of matrimonial faith, proved by witnesses, has been committed; but the latter considering moral faithlessness a sufficient cause to sanction a divorce" (Zipser).]

"It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement; but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress; and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. v. 31, 32).

Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery" (Luke xvi. 18).

"And there came unto him Pharisees, tempting him, and saying, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said, Have ye not read, that he which made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say

unto him, Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses for your hardness of heart suffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it hath not been so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery. The disciples say unto him, If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, but they to whom it is given" (Matt. xix. 3–11; compare Mark x. 2–12).

[Note the parenthetical remark, "but from the beginning it hath not been so"—implying belief in the "original innocence" theory of creation.]

The passage where Paul enters at length into the question of marriage, namely, the whole of the seventh chapter of his First Epistle to the Church at Corinth, is too long for quotation here; but his doctrine amounts to this:—If a man must, let him marry; but it is better if he can abstain; and such, I believe, was the judgment of Christ. (See 1 Cor. vii. 10, 12, 25.)

"And I said unto him, What therefore is to be done, if the woman continues on in her sin? He answered, Let her husband put her away, and let him continue by himself. But if he shall put away his

wife and marry another, he also doth commit adultery. And I said, What if the woman that is so put away, shall repent, and be willing to return to her husband, shall she not be received by him? He said unto me, Yes; and if the husband shall not receive her, he will sin, and commit a great offence against himself; but he ought to receive the offender, if she repents; only not often" (Shepherd of Hermas, Book II. Command IV. 6, 7).

"Blessed are they who have wives as though they had them not; for they shall be made angels of God" (Acts of Paul and Thecla, i. 16).

"If any man can remain in a virgin state to the honor of the flesh of Christ, let him remain" (Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp, ii. 9).

There is some disagreement, it will be observed, between the Rabbinical teaching and the more ascetic doctrine of Christianity on this question; the latter, however, presenting a natural development of certain prominent points in the early priestly legislation about marriage, where it is undoubtedly regarded as productive of temporary uncleanness (see Lev. xv. 16–18; 1 Sam, xx. 26; xxvi. 4,5). Hence it is easy to understand how, by later refinements, this idea developed until the unmarried state came to be looked upon as of a special holiness. The Church's view of marriage was, briefly, that it was a painful necessity; and nowhere is her admiration for unna-

tural purity more conspicuous than in this connection. Tatian, for example, considers that Paul's somewhat grudging acquiescence is to be understood as only sanctioning a spiritual union ; in his opinion, any thing more than this was " to serve incontinence, fornication, and the devil." Tertullian declared of second marriages, that it made no difference whether a man had two wives one after the other, or both at once ; in either case it was simple adultery : he moreover insisted on the veiling of all virgins, not being mere children. Also Chrysostom was but giving expression to the general ecclesiastical opinion, when he said of women that they were "a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly fascination, and a painted ill."

The disastrous policy pursued by the Church in obedience to these theories, and in complete misapprehension of the amount and type of virtue that might be advantageously demanded of human nature, is thus criticised by Captain Galton ; "The long period of the dark ages, under which Europe has lain, is due, I believe, in a very considerable degree, to the celibacy enjoined by religious orders on their votaries. Whenever a man or woman was possessed of a gentle nature that fitted him or her to deeds of charity, to meditation, to literature or to art, the social condition of the time was such that no refuge was possible elsewhere than in the bosom of the Church.

But the Church chose to preach and exact celibacy; the consequence was that these gentle natures had no continuance; and thus by a policy so singularly unwise and suicidal that I am hardly able to speak of it without impatience, the Church brutalized the breed of our forefathers. She acted precisely as if she had aimed at selecting the rudest portion of the community to be alone the parents of future generations. She practiced the arts which breeders would use who aimed at creating ferocious, currish and stupid natures. No wonder that club law prevailed for centuries over Europe; the wonder rather is, that enough good remained in the veins of Europeans to enable their race to rise to its present very modest level of natural morality." ("Hereditary Genius," p. 357.)

The three points that call for special attention in Christ's doctrines about marriage are—(1) that to be able to keep pure and unmarried was the most excellent state; (2) that divorce was only justifiable on the one ground of adultery; and (3) that marriage with a divorced person was adultery. Of course, such ideas were found impracticable, and have been quietly set on one side; but as our modern views and English laws on the subject are probably known to most persons, we will only stop to notice a curious semi-recognition of their opposition to Christ's teaching on the third point. Any person who wishes to

marry "her who is put away," is quite at liberty, according to our law, to do so; but (and this is the point alluded to) it is also legal for any clergyman to refuse to perform the marriage under such circumstances; in which case a more modern-minded minister has to be found.

The present tendency in all Protestant countries on the question of divorce is only another example of that unacknowledged but steady departure from many of Christ's ethical doctrines, which is the necessary consequence of their essential impracticability. In England and Belgium, for instance, divorce is constantly on the increase, having doubled its average proportion to marriages in the last thirty years; and this is doubtless, mainly due to the growing conviction that it is not right to sacrifice the happiness of human life to any ancient opinions and dogmas whatever. Our English compromise, "legal separation," would have seemed but little less objectionable to the Jewish moralists than actual divorce; and it is, moreover, open to doubt whether there is not more justice, if for the time less expediency, in the American system, as it prevails in the older and more settled States. Twenty years ago in Massachusetts, to every fifty-one marriages there was one divorce; now the proportion is one to twenty-one. Nine distinct justifiable causes for divorce are recognized by the law; while in the neighboring State of Connec-

ticut there is also what is popularly known as the "Omnibus Clause," namely, that divorce may be obtained on proving "any such misconduct of the other party, as permanently destroys the happiness of the petitioner, and defeats the purposes of the marriage relation." These instances are mentioned here, because it is undoubtedly in the United States that nations, common sense has the best chance of legalizing itself, free from the influence of ancient traditions and customs; consequently it is there that modern tendencies most clearly show themselves.

It is interesting to notice the recorded development of moral feeling on this question of the union of the sexes. Beginning in the earliest and most barbarous tribes with unrestricted promiscuity, we find this by degrees improved into various forms of polygyny and polyandry. Moreover, whereas the abduction of women was formerly a principal point of honor in marriages, the gradual civilization of morality has led to its being regarded as one of the greatest of crimes. After marriage by abduction came marriage by direct purchase; and now we have arrived at marriage by indirect purchase: but "already some disapproval of those who marry for money or position is expressed; and this, growing stronger, may be expected to purify the monogamic union by making it in all cases real instead of being in some cases nominal. As monogamy is likely to be raised in character by a public

sentiment requiring that the legal bond shall not be entered into unless it represents the natural bond; so, perhaps, it may be that maintenance of the legal bond will come to be held improper if the natural bond ceases. Already increased facilities for obtaining divorce point to the probability that whereas, in those early stages during which permanent monogamy was being evolved, the union by law (originally the act of purchase) was regarded as the essential part of marriage, and the union by affection as non-essential; and whereas at present the union by law is thought the more important, and the union by affection the less important—there will come a time when the union by affection will be held of primary moment, and the union by law as of secondary moment: whence reprobation of marital relations in which the union by affection has dissolved. That this conclusion will seem unacceptable to most is probable—I may say, certain. In passing judgment on any modified arrangement suggested as likely to arise hereafter, nearly all err by considering what would be likely to result from the supposed change, all other things remaining unchanged. But other things must be assumed to have changed *pari passu*" (Spencer, "Sociology," i. 788).

IV. *Poverty and Riches.*

There is no more startling doctrine in the books of the Prophets (and it is even more strongly expressed by the apocryphal and other writers who immediately preceded the age of Christ) than that of an intimate spiritual connection between such characteristics as wealth, impiety, violence, wickedness, on the one hand: and poverty, gentleness, humility, godliness, on the other. This remarkable belief Christ unhesitatingly adopted; in his eyes riches were simply "unrighteous," the pursuit of them being absolutely inconsistent with the service of God; and if a man happened to possess wealth, he had better give it away, or his future life would suffer in consequence.

"I beheld the angels of punishment, who were dwelling there, and preparing every instrument of Satan. Then I inquired of the angel of peace, who proceeded with me, for whom those instruments were preparing. He said, These are preparing for the kings and powerful ones of the earth, that thus they may perish" (Enoch lii. 3–5).

"Then I looked and turned myself to another part of the earth, where I beheld a deep valley burning with fire. To this valley they brought monarchs and the mighty" (Enoch liii. 1, 2).

"All the kings, the princes, the exalted, and those who rule over the earth, shall fall down on their

faces before him, and shall worship him. They shall fix their hopes on this Son of Man, shall pray to him, and petition him for mercy. Then shall the Lord of Spirits hasten to expel them from his presence. Their faces shall be full of confusion, and their faces shall darkness cover" (Enoch lxi. 12–14).

"Those, too, who acquire gold and silver, shall justly and suddenly perish. Woe unto you who are rich, for in your riches have you trusted; but from your riches shall you be removed" (Enoch xciii. 7).

"Woe unto you who despise the humble dwelling and inheritance of your fathers! Woe unto you who build your palaces with the sweat of others! Each stone, each brick of which it is built, is a sin." (Enoch xcvii. 13, 14. Similar doctrines are to be found in xlvi. 3; lxii. 66; xcv. 4; xcvi. 6–11; ciii. 4, 5; civ. 2, etc., etc.)

"If you have given yourselves up to the study of the holy law, or, on the other hand, neglect it by seeking worldly lucre; then you resign, by the pursuit of the first, all pleasure of this life—and by the restless striving after worldly possessions, you lose sight of, and renounce, the imperishable treasures of a better world" (Talmud).

One of the Talmudic fables also teaches that men can choose between earthly and heavenly possessions, —but cannot have both. This, however, being perhaps the least doubtful of all the doctrines to be

considered, very few quotations are necessary: if desired, those under the headings of "Almsgiving," and "Other-worldliness," may be consulted, as generally equally applicable to this point.

"Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. . . But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation" (Luke vi. 20, 24).

"I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles" (Luke xvi. 9).

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish" (Luke xvi. 25).

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. vi. 24).

"Verily I say unto you, It is hard for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. xix. 23, 24).

"When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou

makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just" (Luke xiv. 12–14).

"Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 33).

"Accept not anything from any man, and possess not anything in this world" (Traditional Saying of Christ's).

[Concerning this question, the early Church never had the slightest doubt about Christ's meaning and intentions: indeed, seeing how naturally these agree with the prevailing ascetic views of life, it would be curious had either his teaching or her practice been different.]

"And all they that believed were together, and had all things common; and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need" (Acts ii. 44, 45).

"And not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need" (Acts iv. 32, 34, 35).

"They that desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil" (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10; compare James i. 9–11; ii, 5–7).

This simple political economy was honestly tried, and failed almost immediately, owing to its producing a crop of sturdy idlers, to meet whose case Paul laid down the additional regulation—"If any will not work, neither let him eat." (2 Thess. iii. 10). The fact is, Christ allowed his own intelligent insight into human nature to be so strongly influenced by current religious theories, that certain of his doctrines—of which this is by no means the least important—broke down at once, from their expecting a great deal too much from existing humanity. He overrated the results to be obtained by touching men's hearts, and so overlooked the counter-influences of natural greediness, laziness, sensuality, and the like. However, after a very short time, the Christian doctrine of communism only survived in certain monasteries and similar institutions, which continued, with well-meaning stupidity, to foster the spirit of pauperism and dependence. It is not without much bitter experience that we have learnt that charity creates far more poverty than it can ever relieve, and that impulses to benevolence can only occasionally be followed

without danger and even mischief. Both Jews and heathens alike based their earliest attacks on Christianity on the ground that it was a political revolution, and they argued that Christ had taught utterly impracticable rules of life · nor does it now appear that they were altogether mistaken.

Dr. Strauss thus describes the ancient doctrine: "Pernicious above all is the pursuit after worldly goods—nay, even the possession of such—in so far as one is not willing to relinquish them. The rich man in Scripture is certain to go to hell, on the sole grounds, so far as appears, of his faring sumptuously every day. Jesus has no better advice to give to the wealthy youth who would do something more beyond the mere fulfilling of the ordinary commandments, than to sell everything he has and give it to the poor. Christianity, in common with Buddhism, teaches a thorough cult of poverty and mendicity. The mendicant monks of the Middle Ages, as well as the still flourishing mendicancy at Rome, are genuinely Christian institutions, which have only been restricted in Protestant countries by a culture proceeding from quite another source."

The modern view of the matter is certainly that wealth means the possibility of leisure, without which man can make neither mental nor mechanical progress; that further, not only is wealth thus essential to culture, but also, indirectly, to morality itself—

which is but a poor, superstitious quality if without culture; and, it may even be added, men need the education involved in the accumulation of property, as tending to cultivate both industry and carefulness, in a way no other training could. "Blessed are the poor!"—possibly, in days of happy ignorance, and in the kindly climate of Palestine: but not now, in the civilized world, where such permanent poverty as Christ contemplated, means isolation from the thoughts and inventions of science, inability to study the great problems of life and so help on the future development of man, comparative powerlessness for good, and opportunities for little but inactivity and suffering. As Mr. Buckle says: "We are perpetually reminded of the evils produced by wealth, and the sinful love of money, and yet assuredly no other passion, except the love of knowledge, has been productive of equal benefit to mankind:—to it we owe all commerce and industry; industrial undertakings and trade have made us acquainted with the productions of many countries, have aroused our curiosity, enlarged the field of our vision, by bringing us in contact with nations of various ideas, customs, and languages; accustomed us to vast undertakings, to foresight and prudence; taught us, besides, many useful technical crafts; and, lastly, endowed us with invaluable means for the preservation of life and the alleviation of suffering. All this we owe to the love

of money. Could Theology succeed in extirpating it, all these influences would cease, and we should in a measure relapse into barbarism."

Without the slightest cynicism it may be said that it is natural, and therefore right, that men should desire wealth, and that this is the very basis of our modern political economy. And the system of business life that we build upon it is productive of vigor and keenness, and on the whole works well, evoking as it does many human, useful qualities; whilst any attempt to go back to the abandoned principles of Ebionitism instead (and such attempts are still occasionally made) is always a failure. What may be termed our Trade Mottoes—Supply and Demand, Competition, Buy Cheap and Sell Dear, Get Rich by Directing the Labor of Others—are strange comments, if we would but see it, on Christ's simple doctrines; but we "better" ourselves, by following the new, instead of the old, teaching.

Closely connected with the general question of wealth, and therefore requiring a short notice here, is that of the morality of taking interest for money; or "Usury," as it was formerly called. To begin with, we find any taking of "increase" from a "brother" forbidden by the Jewish law—see Exod. xxii. 25; Lev. xxv. 35–37; Deut. xxiii. 19, 20. Then, as we pass on through the Old Testament, this com-

mand expands into a condemnation of all taking of interest, from brethren and strangers alike—see Ps. xv. 1, 5; Prov. xxviii. 8; Neh. v. 7, 9; Ezek. xviii. 8, 9, 12, 13; xxii. 12. Christ uttered no direct precept on the subject—so far as is known,—but doubtless accepted the most advanced moral doctrine of his country on this as on other questions: the only sayings of his at all bearing on the matter are given in Matt. xxv. 26, 27; Luke vi. 34–36; xix. 20–24. But in the writings of the early Fathers (many of whom explain that "usury" means the taking of any interest, *however small*), in sundry decrees of Councils, and in the Canonical Law, this practice is most unequivocally condemned, and classed with the deadliest sins: for many centuries the Church continued to so regard it, and did what she could to prevent its general acceptance. By way of example, a short passage may be given from a sermon by the well-known English bishop, Jewell: "Usury is a kind of lending of money, or corn, or oil, or wine, or of any other thing, wherein, upon covenant and bargain, we receive again the whole principal which we delivered, and somewhat more for the use and occupying of the same; as, if I lend one hundred pounds, and for it covenant to receive one hundred and five pounds, or any other sum greater than was the sum which I did lend. This is that that we call usury, such a kind of bargaining as no good man, or godly

man, ever used; such a kind of bargaining as all men that ever feared God's judgment have always abhorred and condemned. It is filthy gains and a work of darkness; it is a monster in nature; the overthrow of mighty kingdoms; the destruction of flourishing states; the decay of wealthy cities; the plagues of the world, and the misery of the people. This is usury."

But this "kind of lending" having become the very basis of the world's business, the Church has now learnt to keep a discreet silence on the matter; a complete change of front has been effected, though not acknowledged. It is not long since we were treated to some clever, but rather unfair, bishop-baiting on this very point. (See "Contemporary Review," Feb. 1880.) On grounds of common sense and expediency, the Bishop defended himself with perfect success. What, however, in the face of the plain doctrine of Scripture and of the Church, could he answer to the demand for a religious justification of the new economic order, but that it is absurd to go to such sources for instruction in political economy? The retort is not a new one, but, at all events, it possesses the merit of honestly yielding the only real point at issue—namely, as to whether, in practice, common sense is not to be obeyed rather than religious doctrine, whenever these two come into conflict. It would be well if the Church always

recognized, in word as she does in deed, this simple truth. In any case, "usury" is not a question for one man to be attacked about; it is rather typical of many matters which Christians ought to take at once into careful consideration, in order to clear their present compromised position from charges of pretence and insincerity.

V. *Humility and the Non-Resistance of Evil.*

"Do not judge thy neighbor till thou hast stood in his place" (Talmud; Hillel).

"He who curbs his wrath, his sins will be forgiven."

"Do not believe in thyself till the day of thy death" (Hillel).

"Be of them that are persecuted, not of them that persecute. Be thou the cursed, not he who curses."

"He who humiliates himself will be lifted up; he who raises himself up, will be humiliated."

"Whosoever runs after greatness, greatness runs away from him: he who runs from greatness, greatness follows him."

"It would greatly astonish me if there could be any found in this age who would receive an admonition: if admonished to take the splinter out of his

eye, he would answer, Take the beam out of thine own."

"Teach thy tongue to say, I do not know."

"If there is anything bad about you, say it yourself."

"Not what you say about yourself, but what others say."

"It thou hast done harm to any one, be it ever so little, consider it as much; if thou hast done him a favor, be it ever so great, consider it as little. Has thy neighbor shown thee kindness, do not undervalue it; and has he caused thee an injury, do not overrate it."

"What good soever thou doest, do it for the sake of thy Maker; boast not of it to thine own glory."

"Doctor—first heal thine own wounds."

"If thy companion call thee ass; put on the saddle."

"What should a man do to live? Let him die. What should a man do to die? Let him live."

"If any one striketh or woundeth thee, pray for grace and compassion for the aggressor, even if he should not ask it of thee."

'Those who are afflicted, and do not afflict in return; those who are reviled, and do not revile in return; who suffer everything for the love of God, and bear their burden with a gladsome heart, will be rewarded according to the promise: Those who love

the Lord shall be invincible as the rising sun in his might."

"Wherever there is mention in the Scriptures of God's greatness, his love for the humble is spoken of."

"Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3, 4).

"How can ye believe which receive glory one of another, and the glory that cometh from the only God ye seek not?" (John v. 44).

"Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matt. xxiii. 12).

"When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee" (Luke xiv. 8–10),

"Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy

brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" (Matt. vii. 3).

"Whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant" (Matt. xx. 26, 27).

"Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. . . . Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even the Christ" (Matt. xxiii. 8, 10).

"The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them; and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve" (Luke xxii. 25, 26).

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves" (Matt. x. 16).

"Then came Peter, and said to him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 21, 22).

"Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you; pray for them that despitefully use you" (Luke vi. 27).

"Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you,

Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain" (Matt. v. 38–41; compare Lam. iii. 30).

"Already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? why not rather be defrauded?" (1 Cor. vi. 7).

After making every possible allowance for the paradoxical form of these last precepts of Christ's, and his Apostle's practical comment on them, it must be confessed that obedience to them would have some startling effects: to begin with, we should have to abolish our policemen and soldiers, society's guardians against criminals at home and enemies abroad; besides stopping the whole system of modern trade, money investments and accumulation, and annulling all our fundamental maxims, social, political, and financial. In what sense, it may be parenthetically asked, can a Society be fairly called Christian, when, if it honestly obeyed Christ, it would inevitably and immediately cease to exist? Even granting the convenient assumption that Christ never meant half he said, would it be possible to follow the *principles* of such advice; does not our increased knowledge of the world and its laws rather teach us that this non-

resistance theory would never answer? At best, it is but fostering your own virtue at the expense of those who oppress you; for such inaction is precisely so much encouragement of their misdeeds. And here again we have the characteristic flaw of ancient ethics, that in every judgment of conduct the effect on the agent alone was considered; but there is a natural justice—a special retaliation suited to every conceivable case—which a man ought to do his best to bring about; no other cure for evil-doing being practicable. Surely to allow a crime to be committed, even against oneself, if it can be prevented, is immoral on the very face of it? "Resist not him that is evil!"—rather let us be thankful that human nature revolts against such a doctrine, and that consequently obedience to it has been but the rare exception.

Consider, moreover, the practical comment passed by modern Christendom on this theory of invariable non-resistance: the largest armies ever maintained; the greatest wars ever fought; the most perfect and deadly instruments of warfare ever invented—since the world began; the chief European Powers spending considerably over half their annual incomes, and between them keeping up some six million soldiers, as precautionary measures against the rapacity, real or imagined, of one another! And yet that there is much to be said in defence of the principles that

lead to such action, we need go no further than a Christian pulpit to prove. (See Canon Mozley's "University Sermons," No. V. War.) "There is doubtless an instinctive reaching in nations and masses of people after alteration and readjustment, which has justice in it, and which rises from real needs. The arrangement does not suit as it stands: there is want of adaptation; there is confinement and pressure; people kept away from each other that are made to be together." And when this real need of social improvement and rectification arises, war must follow; because a *status quo* is blind to new wants, and does not look favorably on the proposed change. Wars of progress then are good, as are wars of self-defence. The Canon goes on to show, very convincingly, how war produces a noble type of character, and creates the spirit of self-sacrifice, and how moreover it is itself elevated "by the mingled effect of glory and grief." To which may be added, that it creates a class of men whose business is patriotism; and no one can deny that our soldiers and sailors are very useful in helping to keep that virtue alive, until the yet distant day arrives when it can be safely absorbed in humanitarianism. Or again, we may look at the question from a somewhat different point of view, with Mr. Ruskin ("The Crown of Wild Olive," Lecture III. War): "All the pure and noble arts of peace are

founded on war; no great art ever yet rose on earth, but among a nation of soldiers. . . . There is no great art possible to a nation but that which is based on battle" (p. 99). And—"When I tell you that war is the foundation of all the arts, I mean also that it is the foundation of all the high virtues and faculties of men. . . . The common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourish together, I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the vices of civil life only flourish together. We talk of peace and learning, and of peace and plenty, and of peace and civilization; but I found that these were not the words which the Muse of History coupled together: that on her lips the words were—peace, and sensuality,—peace, and selfishness,—peace, and death. I found, in brief, that all great nations learnt their word of truth, and strength of thought, in war; that they were nourished in war, and wasted by peace; taught by war, and deceived by peace; trained by war, and betrayed by peace;—in a word, that they were born in war, and expired in peace" (p. 105).

Sanctions and Arguments.

We now come to a point that is habitually ignored by apologists of the higher religions, and as invariably overstated by their opponents. As we took

occasion to notice, in both Mithraism and Buddhism, the ultimate sanction lay in an appeal to self-interest; a far-seeing and refined form of it, it is true—that which Leigh Hunt so happily expressed by the term "Other-Worldliness." A detailed examination of Christ's teaching shows that he too used this particular sanction twice as frequently as all others put together: a fact which has often been advanced by hostile critics as a sign of defective morality on his part. There is, however, but little justice in the argument. Morality depends upon two chief factors, custom and knowledge; the one conservative in its action, the other constantly tending to change: and the truly moral teacher is he whose doctrine is on a level with the best knowledge of his time, but who in preaching it preserves a due respect for existing beliefs. Moreover, just as in the education of the individual, at whatever point he may have arrived, there is always the danger of forming mental fat rather than mental muscle, by giving him intellectual food in advance of his requirements, so is it with the moral progress of the race. To appeal only to the intellectual appreciation of pure unselfishness, of the beauty of an ideal goodness, would indeed be a most dangerous plan: for, however well it might sound, the result would almost inevitably be vague and empty sentiment. Such sanctions are still ahead of us: we are intelligent enough to be touched by

them, but our moral food needs to be simpler and more modest. Hence it is well to lay constant stress on the *advantages* of virtue, and only occasionally employ such arguments as, "So shalt thou be as the son of the Most High;" or, "Be not as slaves that minister to their lord with a view to receive recompense" (Talmud); or again, in the beautiful words of Christ, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48).

I. *Other-Worldliness.*

"Help the poor for the commandment's sake, and turn him not away because of his poverty. Lose thy money for thy brother, and thy friend, and let it not rust under a stone to be lost. Lay up thy treasure according to the commandments of the Most High, and it shall bring thee more profit than gold. Shut up alms in thy store-houses; and it shall deliver thee from all affliction" (Ecclus. xxix. 9–12).

"Do right to the widow, judge for the fatherless, give to the poor, defend the orphan, clothe the naked, heal the broken and the weak, laugh not a lame man to scorn, defend the maimed, and let the blind man come into the sight of my clearness. Keep the old and young within thy walls. Where-

soever thou findest the dead, take them and bury them, and I will give thee the first place in my resurrection" (2 Esd. ii. 20–23).

"If thou hast worked much, great shall be thy reward: for the master who employed thee is faithful in his payment. But know that the true reward is not of this world" (Talmud).

"He who pursues the pleasures of this world, abandons the joy of the world to come; but he who resigns earthly enjoyments, shall partake of everlasting bliss in future life."

"In proportion to our sufferings in this world, will our reward be in the world to come."

"I will teach my son the law only, for one is nourished by its fruit in this world, and its capital is kept for us in the life to come."

"My fathers laid up treasures on earth, but I lay up treasures in heaven. My fathers laid up treasures where they will not profit them, but I lay up treasures where they will yield eternal fruits. My fathers laid up treasures where the greed of man could rob them, but I lay them up in a place where no human hand can reach them. . . . My fathers labored for this world, and I for a better world."

"This money goes for alms, that my sons may live, and that I may obtain the world to come."

"Rabbi Lazar was the almoner of the synagogue. One day going into his house, he said, What news?

They answered, Some came hither, and ate and drank, and made prayers for thee. Then, saith he, there is no good reward. Another time going into his house, he said, What news? It was answered, Some others came, and ate and drank, and railed upon you. Now, saith he, there will be a good reward."

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called sons of God.

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven" (Matt. v. 3–12).

"Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven.

"When therefore thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have received their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee.

"And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you they have received their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall recompense thee" (Matt. vi. 1–6).

"Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may be seen of men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; that thou be not seen of men to fast, but of thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also" (Matt. vi. 16–21).

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matt. x. 41, 42).

"Blessed are ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven" (Luke vi. 20–23).

"Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (Luke x. 20).

"He that loveth his life loseth it; and he that

hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John xii. 25).

"Keep the flesh pure, and the seal unspotted, that we may receive eternal life" (Traditional Saying of Christ's).

"Blessed are they who have been persecuted through righteousness, for they shall be perfect; and blessed are they who have been persecuted for my sake, for they shall have a place where they shall not be persecuted" (Traditional Saying).

"The Lord saith, Ye shall be as lambs in the midst of wolves. But Peter answers him and saith, What if the wolves tear in pieces the lambs? Jesus said to Peter, Let not the lambs fear the wolves after they are dead; and do ye fear not those who kill you, and can do nothing to you; but fear him, who, after you are dead, hath power over soul and body, to cast them into the Gehenna of fire" (Traditional Saying).

"I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run, that ye may attain" (1 Cor. ix. 23, 24).

"If in this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most pitiable. . . . If, after the manner of men, I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised,

let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die" (1 Cor. xv. 19, 32).

"But this I say, He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bounteously shall reap also bounteously" (2 Cor. ix. 6).

"We cannot, therefore, be the friends of both worlds; but we must resolve, by forsaking the one, to enjoy the other. And we think it is better to hate the present things, as little, short lived, and corruptible, and to love those which are to come, which are truly good and incorruptible" (Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, iii. 7).

"For if we shall do our diligence to live well, peace shall follow us. And yet how hard is it to find a man who does this? For almost all are led by human fears, choosing rather the present enjoyments than the future promise. For they know not how great a torment the present enjoyments bring with them, nor what the future promise" (Second Epistle of Clement, iv. 7, 8).

"Let us either fear the wrath that is to come, or let us love the grace that we at present enjoy: that by the one, or other, of these we may be found in Christ Jesus, unto true life" (Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians, iii. 6).

The result of this teaching was strikingly shown in the mania for martyrdom, which soon assumed such serious proportions in the early Church. In the con-

fident expectation that they were thus winning immediate happiness and glory in heaven, many fanatics courted torture and death, until at length it became necessary for their leaders to sternly forbid what in most cases was, after all, a useless form of suicide. The abuse of a moral theory, however, is not necessarily a proof of any inherent error in it: we should rather infer that it was not adapted to the wants of those who thus misapplied it; and, bearing in mind the general religious beliefs of the time, this doctrine occupies a natural place among them, and presents a simple and appropriate view of the Divine Justice. "In proportion to our sufferings in this world, will our reward be in the world to come," and "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish"—such are the root ideas of this childlike philosophy; and the practical deduction to be drawn is morally valuable, if not carried to excess:—Therefore postpone your present gratifications for a future, greater advantage of a higher quality. Most animals, for example, have little or no sense of providence; and where we meet with it—as in the case of ants or bees—it always strikes us as most admirable, and as constituting a decided superiority over others that do not possess it. So, too, with savages; those who acquire this power of foregoing immediate enjoy-

ment with a view to future benefit, thereby obtain a great advantage over others of a more primitive and unrestrainable greediness. It is a distinctly moral quality, since without it no further welfare or good is possible for humanity; and, if carried to the extent of postponing everything to what is supposed to be the ultimate good, it constitutes in all probability the loftiest argument for right action by which average men are capable of being steadily influenced. This *calculating* virtue, then, we must recognize as necessary to our rudimentary morality: it is what we teach our children with excellent effect. "Goodness its own, and only reward" may be occasionally brought out for our admiration; but, if adopted as a working method for the improvement of humanity, all its theoretical beauty could not save it from practical failure.

II. *General Terrorism.*

No one can have thoughtfully read either the Epistles of the New Testament, the Apocryphal Epistles and other Patristic Writings, or (to come down to modern times, when the tendency has grown by use) defences and eulogies of the Faith, without being struck by frequent cases of what may be termed accumulative exaggeration. Passionate feeling can

never be judicial: its impulse, when uttering the praises of what it loves, is to outdo all former efforts; and, in such competition, who can reasonably expect a well-balanced statement of facts? Is not the result generally a mere mass of words, casting a shadow on the truth? But this style of writing has great influence over others of like opinions and impressionability: sentiment creates sentiment; and as yet, in the case of Christianity, only a very slight reaction has set in. To quote a recent example of this laying on of words—and that it is a fair type of its kind all who read it will allow: "The essence of the Gospel is the love of God to man, stretching over all, infinitely great, inexhaustibly rich even to the most sinful, a redeeming love that goes forth to seek and save, that cannot rest till it has brought back the wandering, that will not suffer one—not even the least—to be lost, the love of a father that cannot and will not suffer the loss of one single child." Now, without stopping to inquire whether such paternal affection is so very remarkable—or whether to take care of "the least" is not precisely what a father would first think of doing—we would call attention to the point that, to a great extent, it is this massing of uncritical sentiment which determines the current belief in the superiority of Christianity to other religions, although the application of similar advocacy to some of these might be employed

with equal justice and no less effect. And who, that did not know it, would imagine that one of the chief doctrines developed by the religion so described is that this loving Father created the world with the certain foreknowledge that a vast majority of these "children" were doomed to an eternity of suffering of the most awful character? "If there be any doctrine ever taught in the name of Christianity which can claim to be really Catholic, it is the doctrine of never-ending punishment. This has been believed by the majority of Christians in all ages, in all churches, and, with very insignificant exceptions, of all sects. Fathers, schoolmen, and reformers, zealous Roman Catholics and ardent Protestants, have agreed that this is an undeniable portion of the Catholic faith. We cannot deny that it is a Catholic doctrine, but is it Christian? Dr. Farrar says that the Scriptures, interpreted in the light of 'modern criticism,' are 'absolutely silent' as to 'endless torture.' Like transubstantiation and many other Catholic doctrines, it is founded on taking literally words which were never intended to have a literal meaning," (Dr. Hunt, Article on Eternal Punishment, "Contemporary Review," April 1878).

It is indeed an instructive fact that historical Christianity not only has recourse to a general "other-worldly" line of argument, in this resembling the majority of religious systems, but also conde-

scends to such downright terrorism. The foundation of all religion for savages, and to some extent, therefore, for their near descendants, must be fear; love is too late an arrival and, consequently, insufficiently developed to replace it: and so it is not altogether surprising to find Christ and his followers represented as appealing to men's fears far more frequently than to their affections. Even at the present day, it must be allowed that the large body of religious Philistines are by no means without reason, when they argue that to deprive most people of their faith in hell would be to take away their best chance of salvation; in other words, that men must be scared into heaven, or they probably will not get there at all. We should also consider, in further excuse of the Church's policy, the great difficulty there is in clearly and satisfactorily describing the permanent pleasures of the future life. The attractiveness of golden harps and jewelled pavements can hardly last forever· whilst, for men of slight knowledge or cultivation, an eternity of mental development and occupation is wholly unimaginable. Hence, owing to the difficulty of representing the one alternative as permanently desirable, it was the more necessary to insist on the fearful horrors of the other. Without this the hold of the Christian Church over the barbarians of Central and Northern Europe would probably have been but precarious.

In order to ascertain the real doctrine of Christ and his apostles on this question, we would suggest that it is, as usual, merely necessary to ask what was that of the highest morality of their time. On such a very vital point of ecclesiastical policy the Gospels may, or may not, give an unbiassed version of Christ's sayings; yet so much the more conclusively, on this very account, does it appear that his attitude towards the whole question of future punishment was practically the same as that of thousands of kindly, educated men and women at the present day. They do not allow themselves to dwell on the subject: there it is, an article of faith, it is true, but one to be kept as much out of thought as possible, on a back shelf of the mind.

The natural history of the theory is probably this. Private revenge being gradually abandoned as men became more civilized—and the perplexing fact that many sinners were prosperous and happy, being duly observed and commented on—men's natural sense of justice demanded a belief in a future divine retaliation for sin, whether committed directly against the Deity or not:—"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." But the conception of such a purely scientific idea as the universal rule of cause and effect being then impossible, the supposed punishment was an arbitrary one, and not in direct natural consequence of the particular evil committed. Moreover,

to understand the apparent injustice of an almost infinite retribution for sometimes trivial offences, we should bear in mind the political surroundings in the midst of which these doctrines originated: that it was among nations accustomed to absolute despotism, who thought no tortures too severe for the wretch who dared to say or do anything against his rulers; the *distance* between monarch and people appearing, by universal consent, to immeasurably enhance the guiltiness of such conduct. Even now, traces of the same idea may be detected; justifiable perhaps on grounds of political expediency, but none the less utterly opposed to a perfect morality. Hence, by a logical extension, all sin against the Deity came to be regarded as infinite, and men set their imaginations to work to devise duly severe punishment for the sinners. A similar development from the exaggerated professions of inferiority and servitude, so frequent in early ceremonialism, may be observed in various expressions common to religious humility; as, for example—"Even so ye also, when ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do" (Luke xvii. 10). Is not this simply the language of slavish propitiation? Does it not depict God as a tyrant, exacting the utmost service as his simple right, and then feeling no satisfaction in, nor gratitude for, such faithful

efforts to please him? Let those believe who will, that these words were ever spoken by Christ. And, similarly, do not the ordinary books of devotion abound in strained expressions of morbid humility and self-accusation, savoring far more of cringing obsequiousness before a dangerous Despot, than of the frankness and trust with which a son should greet his loving Father?

The following is a good specimen of early terrorism, none the less interesting from the fact of its being nearly five thousand years old: "The wicked will not see the countenance of the Lord of Heaven, nor ever hear his voice; they will go about without heads; drag after them their hearts; be boiled for ever in a cauldron; be hanged for ever by their legs." Such was the Egyptian theory on this question; but we also find the same doctrine of excessive punishment prevalent in India, and in Persia—where Mithraism distinctly taught belief in a devil, in hell, and in lasting torments. Before, however, passing on to the quotations needed for the examination of this "gospel of hell-fire," there are one or two expressions of general terrorism, which, on account of their very serious consequences, should not be entirely passed by.

"Five have no forgiveness of sins: (1) He who keeps on sinning and repenting alternately; (2) He who sins in a sinless age; (3) He who sins on pur-

pose to repent; (4) He who causes the name of God to be blasphemed." (The Talmud does not specify the fifth case).

"Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the spirit shall not be forgiven" (Matt. xii. 31).

[Seeing how valueless these words are from their mysterious vagueness, we can but regret that they were reported—if indeed they were ever spoken by Christ at all—when we think of the many weak-minded sufferers who have died in agony under the terror they have inspired.]

"And I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. xii. 36, 37).

III. *Hell.*

"And he answered me, saying, The Most High hath made this world for many, but the world to come for few. . . . There be many created, but few shall be saved. . . . I have said before, and now do speak, and will speak it also hereafter, that there be many more of them which perish than of them which shall be saved; like as a wave is greater than a drop." (2 Esd. viii. 1, 3; ix. 15, 16).

"Moreover abundant is their suffering until the

time of the great judgment, the castigation, and the torment of those who eternally execrate, whose souls are punished and bound there for ever. And thus has it been from the beginning of the world. Thus has there existed a separation between the souls of those who utter complaints, and of those who watch for their destruction, to slaughter them in the day of sinners. Thus has it been made for the souls of unrighteous men, and of sinners; of those who have completed crime, and associated with the impious, whom they resemble. Their souls shall not be annihilated in the day of judgment, neither shall they arise from this place" (Enoch xxii. 11–14; compare xxvi. 1, 2).

"Woe to you sinners, when you die in your sins; and they, who are like you, say respecting you, Blessed are these sinners. They have seen all their days; and now they die in goodness and in wealth. Distress and slaughter they saw not while alive; in honor they die; nor ever in their lifetime did judgment overtake them. (But) has it not been shown to them, that, (when) to the receptacle of the dead their souls shall be made to descend, their evil deeds shall become their greatest torment? Into darkness, into the snare, and into the flame, which shall burn to the great judgment, shall their spirits enter; and the great judgment shall be for every generation, even for ever" (Enoch ciii. 4, 5).

Dr. Lightfoot explains that "the Jews do very usually express *hell*, or *the place of the damned*, by the word *Gehinnom*, which might be shown in infinite examples; the manner of speech being taken from the *valley of Hinnom*, a place infamous for foul idolatry committed there; for the howlings of infants roasted to Moloch, filth carried out thither, and for a fire that always was burning: and so most fit to represent the horror of hell." Perhaps the best example of this imagery in the Old Testament is the passage in Isaiah lxvi. 24:—

> "Then shall they go forth and see
> The dead bodies of the men that rebelled against me;
> For their worm shall not die,
> And their fire shall not be quenched,
> And they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

Concerning the doctrine of the Talmud on this point, Dr. Deutsch wrote in his "Quarterly" Article (Oct. 1867, p. 459): "There is no everlasting damnation according to the Talmud. There is only a temporary punishment even for the worst sinners. Generations upon generations shall last the damnation of idolaters, apostates, and traitors. But there is a space of only two fingers' breadth between Hell and Heaven—the sinner has but to repent sincerely, and the gates to everlasting bliss will spring open. Every man, of whatever creed or nation, provided he be of the righteous, shall be admitted into it. The

punishment of the wicked is not specified, as indeed all the descriptions of the next world are left vague." Also Chief Rabbi Adler (quoted by Dr. Farrar), states that "the Jews do not possess any authorized dogmatic teaching on the subject of endless punishment." Some ancient Rabbis held that the worst sinners were to be punished in torture until the day of resurrection, and were then to be annihilated.

"The sinners of Israel and the sinners of the Gentiles shall descend with the body into Gehenna, and for twelve months shall be condemned in it; at the end of twelve months the body shall be consumed, and the soul burned up, and the wind shall scatter it under the feet of the just" (Talmud).

"The judgment of the ungodly is for twelve months."

"God hath prepared Gehenna for the ungodly who transgress his commandments."

"In Gehenna the fire is kindled every day."

"The impious shall be burned up by the heat of the sun."

"Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many be they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few be they that find it" (Matt. vii. 13, 14).

"Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him

which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28).

"It is good for thee to enter into life maimed and halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire" (Matt. xviii. 8).

"And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now here he is comforted, and thou art in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us" (Luke xvi. 23–26).

"And that servant which knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes" (Luke xii. 47, 48).

"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these shall go away into eternal punish-

ment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. xxv. 41, 46; compare also xiii. 41, Mark ix. 43–48, Jude 7, Rev. xiv. 11, xx. 8–15).

This last passage owes much of its apparent plainness to the rather misleading term "eternal," which the Revisers of the New Testament have, in their excessive caution, retained as the equivalent of a Greek word signifying a great, but indefinite, duration of time. Seeing, however, what the Rabbinical doctrine was, we need not hesitate to say that Christ most certainly held that the future punishment for sin would neither last for ever, nor be in any way unduly severe; allowing of course for Eastern ideas of what due severity in such a matter would be.

It was only amongst men habituated to the sight of intense suffering, as so many of the early Fathers of the Church were, partly owing to their pagan surroundings, but very largely also to their own ascetic practices, that the later explicit doctrine of terrorism could be fully elaborated; and that this is no mere hypothesis is shown by the zest with which some of these writers argue that the sight of the tortures of hell will constitute one of the chief joys of heaven. Tertullian, for example ("De Spectaculis," cap, xxx.), says that the spectacle to be enjoyed by Christians hereafter will be so fascinating that the gayest earthly festivals are as nothing in comparison: this supreme amusement being simply to witness the

agonies of the damned! These fancies, of course, took time to develop: men only slowly grow to the idea of extreme suffering; but then "the first repulsion is soon exchanged for indifference, the indifference speedily becomes interest, and the interest is occasionally heightened to positive enjoyment." And so we need not be surprised to find that the Church has, at times, taught as simple truisms, recommending themselves naturally to men's feelings, what we now view with the utmost disgust and horror; indeed, the believer in evolution would be rather perplexed had it been otherwise. There is, probably, hardly an educated man living in England who would not, at one time or another, have been burnt to death by Christians, on account of the doctrines he now safely holds.

Certainly it is a curious thought that the perfected doctrine of Hell is the specialty of the Christian Church; that she may claim to have elaborated it with an amount of conjectural detail which is absolutely unique. Nor can any impartial student of Church history doubt that the power of ecclesiasticism has been largely based on the systematic terrorism of the belief in eternal punishment: this dogma it is which has given the Papacy its prominence in the temporal affairs of Europe, not seldom amounting to an absolute control. No one can fail to see the many immoral possibilities of a condition of credulity

such as this implies; nor is it easy to restrain our feelings when we find the Church teaching the eternal damnation of infants dying unbaptized—a doctrine never doubted for over twelve centuries; or burning heretics with damp wood, so as to prolong their agonies; or forcing children to kindle the fires in which their parents were doomed to die; or assuring converts that their heathen friends were condemned to everlasting torment; or lightly using that tremendous engine of superstition, Excommunication. Indeed, when we call to mind the plain facts of Church history, it is not hard to understand that some are unwilling to attach themselves, even in name, to a creed disfigured by as degrading bigotry as ever tyrannized over man.

There is a reputed saying of Christ's, the wisdom and policy of which history has amply criticised for us: "Whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever ye retain, they are retained" (John xx. 23). This was expanded in the Apostolic Constitutions (lib. ii. cap. 51) into the following: "He who is cast out of the Church by its duly constituted ministers is deprived of the glory of eternal life: in this world he is shunned by the good, and God hath already judged him for the next:" which may fairly be termed,—Damnation by man, God acquiescing. Afterwards, the Council of Elvira (307 A.D.) discovered no less than fourteen offences

which no subsequent repentance or reformation could wash out; all hope of salvation was gone for ever! One such unpardonable sin was "to bring a false accusation against a bishop or priest, and fail to prove it." At first, it was usual to show no mercy, but invariably to refuse the "viaticum" (a Christianized form of the ancient "obolus" custom) to certain classes of sinners, whether repentant or not, so securing their damnation; but after a time more leniency was shown.

Thus grew up the awful power known as Excommunication, the most disastrous tyranny ever built up on the superstitions of humanity: men believing that any bishop, priest, or deacon could regulate, as he chose, the damnation or salvation of every living being inferior to himself in ecclesiastical rank. Naturally, private enmity often availed itself of such accessible means of revenge—excommunication being bought and sold, like any other commodity. Even animals were occasionally subjected to it: caterpillars and flies were killed by its powers—at least, so say Church historians; sparrows, rats, leeches, were brought to their proper behavior by it. It became at last, from frequent use, a mere ban or curse, a final resource when other means of revenge failed. Assiduous ecclesiastical teaching had succeeded in so degrading men's intelligence that they could once more, like their savage forefathers, believe that influence,

wisely purchased, would place Omnipotence at their orders. And so the inefficiency of human law was supplemented by excommunication ; it was employed in instances of theft and debt ; and, it may be added, "the Church, when condemning the debtor to endless torments, took no account of his possible inability to pay, though secular courts might when inflicting their merely temporary punishments."

Can anything be more opposed to progress in moral ideas than to retain (even in a half-hearted, wavering fashion) any belief whatever in the divine origin of this barbarous terrorism? Or can words be too strong to express our opinion of men who "doubted not there were infants not a span long crawling about the floor of hell?" As Mr. Lecky remarks, in reference to the brutal doctrine about still-born children, who were regarded as hopelessly damned, "Nothing can be more curious, nothing can be more deeply pathetic, than the record of the many ways by which the terror-stricken mothers attempted to evade the awful sentence of their Church. . . . For the doctrine of the Church had wrung the mother's heart with an agony that was too poignant even for that submissive age to bear."

Nor can we altogether dismiss this teaching as a relic of barbarism, now only surviving amongst the uneducated; for thus did one bishop report and

comment on the words of another, only a very few years ago: "Bishop Harold Browne, speaking in support of the National School system, said (in Nov. 1870): 'We have not troubled their little brains, as some people seem to think, with all kinds of dogmatic theology; though by the bye I don't think people know what dogmatic theology means. The fact that there is a God is dogmatic theology. The fact that there is a heaven, a hell, that our Saviour came down to save us, that is dogmatic theology.' These little ones, then, are taught about hell—that is to say not about death and the grave, which are facts before their eyes continually, or about a righteous judgment for faults committed against the better knowledge which they possess, to which even the conscience of a child will bear witness, but about the everlasting torments of hell-fire, that revolting and blasphemous dogma, which dooms to never-ending woe the vast majority of human beings, of men, women, and children, with whom they meet upon their daily pathway, which makes the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 'the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation,' into a very Moloch, reigning upon a throne of glory, while shrieks and groans are ever resounding from the bottomless abyss, and, as some teach, the cries of little innocent unbaptized babes among the rest, 'and the smoke of their torments goes up for ever and

ever!'" (Colenso, "The Pentateuch and the Moabite Stone," p. 374.)

For the sum of fourpence a very instructive little collection of literature on this subject can be bought, in the shape of three pamphlets, respectively entitled "Hell Opened to Christians,"—"The Terrible Judgment and the Bad Child,"—and "The Sight of Hell." The first of these is from the Italian of the Rev. Father Pinamonti, and is mainly interesting for some curious woodcuts depicting a few of the promised tortures. The other two, written especially for children by the Rev. J. Furniss, and published (*Permissu Superiorum*) at one penny each (Duffy & Sons, Dublin and London), would, however, furnish the reader with all the food for reflection he can desire. Their author has evidently felt that in these degenerate days Hell is not pictured vividly enough for practical purposes of terrorism, and has accordingly done his imaginative best to supply this great want. And he deserves every credit for his work, for anything better calculated to drive a sensitive child mad with fright it would be impossible to conceive. A few extracts will help us, as well as anything could, in forming our estimate of the morality of this Catholic doctrine.

"THE DUNGEONS OF HELL."

"*A Dress of Fire.*—Come into this room. You see it is very small. But see, in the midst of it there is a girl, perhaps about eighteen years old. What a terrible dress she has on: her dress is made of fire. On her head she wears a bonnet of fire. It is pressed down close all over her head; it burns her head; it burns into the skin; it scorches the bone of the skull, and makes it smoke. The red-hot fiery heat burns into the brain and melts it. You do not perhaps like a headache. Think what a headache that girl must have. But see more. She is wrapped in flames, for her frock is fire. If she were on earth she would be burnt to cinder in a moment. But she is in Hell, where fire burns everything, but burns nothing away. There she stands burning and scorched: there she will stand for ever burning and scorched! She counts with her fingers the moments as they pass away slowly, for each moment seems to her like a hundred years. As she counts the moments she remembers that she will have to count them for ever and ever."

"*The Red-hot Floor.*—Look into this room. What a dreadful place it is! The roof is red-hot; the walls are red-hot; the floor is like a thick sheet of red-hot iron. See, on the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl. She looks about sixteen years old. Her feet

are bare; she has neither shoes nor stockings on her feet; her bare feet stand on the red-hot burning floor. The door of this room has never been opened before since she first set her foot on the the red-hot floor. Now she sees that the door is opening. She rushes forward. She has gone down on her knees on the burning floor. Listen! she speaks. She says: 'I have been standing with my bare feet on this red-hot floor for years. Sleep never came on me for a moment, that I might forget this horrible burning floor. Look,' she says, 'at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off for one moment, only for one single short moment!' The devil answers: 'Do you ask for a moment, for one moment to forget your pain? No, not for one single moment during the never-ending eternity of years shall you ever leave this red-hot floor.'"

"*The Red-hot Oven.*—See! it is a pitiful sight. The little child is in this red-hot oven. Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven. It stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. You can see on the face of this little child what you see on the faces of all in Hell—despair, desperate and horrible!"

These disgusting extracts are fair specimens of the whole of these children's books; their very common-place and tautological treatment of the subject

being well-calculated to produce a greater effect than a more artistic method, in which the naked horror of the doctrine might be somewhat disguised. Such detailed descriptions also give more definiteness to the ordinary creed, and enable us better to realize how completely some religious doctrines, unwisely retained in all their primitive barbarity, may effectually check men's moral and mental growth. In reading these little books, it is indeed scarcely possible to avoid the charitable suspicion that their author perhaps intended them as a powerful attack on the orthodox doctrine of the Catholic Church. Whether he did or not, that is what they undoubtedly are.

At first sight it certainly seems almost incredible that such horrors can be believed, simultaneously with trust in the Love and Fatherhood of a God, for whose glory and satisfaction all this takes place. But that two beliefs contradict one another has never with the superstitious been any reason for rejecting either; they prefer to suppose that difficulties of this kind are removed by a reference to the universal argument, that the Divine ways are not as ours. By a clearer realization of this doctrine of hell-fire, we can also better understand the passionate frenzy and hate which Heresy, the supreme "mortal sin," invariably roused, in the days of ecclesiastical power. Then, hell and the devil were awful realities

to men, and not chiefly means for pointing a joke or adorning an anecdote. Even the exact locality of hell was known; Father Furniss, it may be noticed, places it only four thousand miles off, in the middle of the earth. We should be glad that our religious creed sits more easily on us—it is a healthy change in every respect.

The undoubted tendency of the more liberal theology of the day is to something like this position—the great central doctrine of Christianity, it is agreed, is the Fatherhood and Love of God: accordingly everything which contradicts this doctrine, implicitly no less than explicitly, is to be eliminated from religious teaching; quietly dropped, when possible—but openly repudiated when necessary. There is no question but that, thanks to this process, we shall soon have a religious morality taught vastly superior to anything ever dreamt of by the Church before, and the sooner the XXXIX. Articles, the Canons, etc., are altered into honest agreement with it, the better.

In the "Contemporary Review," a few years ago (April and May, 1878), appeared fourteen short Articles, by divines of various religious bodies, on this subject of Future Punishment; and in one of the most outspoken—and reticence was not the fault of any of the writers—that, namely, by Dr. John Hunt, the doctrine, as now revised and improved, is thus

clearly laid down: "The sole question to be settled is what Christ meant to say when He spoke of the future punishment of the wicked. The proper answer seems to be that he did not intend to convey any idea either of the real nature or of the duration of the punishment. It was something so awful that the strongest metaphors with which the minds of his hearers were familiar were used to describe it, but still they were metaphors, and all taken from things temporal and material."

The modern theological mind, then, is satisfied when the *eternity* and *definiteness* of the punishment are got rid of. We do not wish to deny that this is a very considerable moral improvement, but is it anything more than a temporary compromise with our sense of justice? By way of illustration, let us take a simple imaginary case. We will assume that of two brother sinners—both equally, and very, bad. One of them is suddenly killed in an accident; the other lives to take the warning and repent, and dies afterwards in a highly satisfactory state. Now even the gentler theology requires us to fear that, owing apparently to that unlucky accident, one of these equally guilty men escapes with a brief repentance, with its many earthly alleviations and gratifications, while the other has to undergo a punishment "so awful that the strongest metaphors," etc., etc.,—as we have just read. And if it be answered that it is

not our business to judge these men, or presume anything as to their respective future destinies, is not this to get out of the difficulty by denying all definite force and meaning whatever to the doctrine? Certainly, as it stands, even in its civilized form, we can only understand it as teaching that punishment for sins is vastly easier to bear in this life than in the next; and from this the difficulties our case illustrates, necessarily follow. Moreover, when we reflect that no man is altogether good or altogether bad, is it not manifestly impossible that the sharp and terrible line of demarcation implied by this heaven-*or*-hell theory could be justly drawn? And would it not therefore be wisest, without more ado, to substitute the simple but forcible doctrine of Causation: that every act, word, or thought of ours will always continue to bear fruit, for others as well as ourselves; and that these, their natural results, will constitute, so far as we can possibly tell, their only reward or punishment?

The change now taking place on this question is a fair example of what we may reasonably suppose has always been the method of religious development. No one pretends that this particular dogma is being so stoutly attacked simply because it is without sufficient warrant in Scripture; such deficiency would never have caused a moment's anxiety, were not these theories grossly offensive to our more

refined moral sense. Many are now too civilized to accept such moral monstrosities; and it is in consequence of this that they have set to work to prove that these were not the doctrines of Christ and his apostles. But the historical discovery cannot be claimed as the original cause of the rejection of the dogma, which, without the disturbing influence of conscience, would have been acquiesced in, for generations to come, as an undoubted portion of the Catholic Creed. And such probably is the history of all religious beliefs, in their origin and reformation alike: as men grow more humanized, their conception of God improves also; and the acts which the savage admiringly imputes to his Deity, only arouse a more advanced race to pity and disgust. What men believe of their God depends mainly on what they themselves are.

INCONSISTENCIES, ETC.

A few expressions indicative of Oriental imperiousness and religious intolerance, as well as certain inconsistencies in the reported doctrine of Christ, remain to be briefly noticed. However, in common fairness, only moderate stress must be laid on such proofs of moral inequality; for they may probably be

due to the original incorrectness of his biographers, or to later alterations in the text of the Gospels. As we have already had occasion to remark, the ancient historian's standard of accuracy was very different from ours, and therefore to emphasize isolated and minor points in Christ's teaching, more particularly where a strong polemical or ecclesiastical motive can be imputed to the writer, would be most unjustifiable. And yet these points should not be passed by altogether without notice; since, so far as their testimony goes, they suggest some slight moral archaisms and imperfections, which are natural enough to be fairly credible.

From the simple fact that Christ was not a systematic or scientific teacher, it was almost inevitable that some contradictions and inconsistencies should occur in his various sayings: to carefully avoid them would never enter into his thoughts—indeed no such speaker from the heart, and by impulse, could do so. Comparison between the following passages will enable those of our readers who consider this point of interest or importance, to satisfy themselves as to its character and extent: Matt. v. 16, and John iii. 20, 21, with Matt. vi. 3; Matt. xxiii. 3, 23, with xv. 1, 2, and xvi. 5–12; Matt. xviii. 15–17, with vv. 21, 22; Matt. vii. 1, with John vii. 24; Matt. v. 44, with x. 14, 15; Matt. v. 39, with Luke xxii. 36; Luke viii. 16, 17, and xi. 33-

36, with Mark iv. 11, 12; Matt. v. 18, with Acts x. 14–28, xv. 1–29, Rom. xiv. 1–6, 1 Cor. viii. 4–8.

The attacks on the Scribes and Pharisees, *as represented*, were far too general, violent, and indiscriminating, for a perfectly just and unbiassed mind to have dictated; there were many very excellent Rabbis and others in their ranks, and all should not have been involved in one wholesale system of abuse. (See Matt. xxiii. 13–36; Luke xi. 39–52.)

And again, we find Christ, on another occasion, represented in a similar spirit as recommending to his disciples a well-known symbolic act for expressing hatred and contempt, and for invoking divine vengeance on those who offended them: "Whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, as ye go forth out of that house, or that city, shake off the dust of your feet" (Matt. x. 14). Also, in the Parable of the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1–16) a very suggestive piece of moral argument is to be met with, apparently advanced as sound and conclusive: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" This is well worth noting as an instance of how a thing may seem natural and self-evident to minds in one age, and the very reverse to others, when some centuries have elapsed: for modern morality—in her hatred of anything like selfish despotism—would unhesitatingly reply to such a question, "Certainly not, unless what you do is thought-

ful and just." Nor does arbitrary conduct, such as that of the owner of the vineyard, admit of an easy vindication. What should we say of an English farmer, who paid his laborers after this fashion, and then answered a reasonable remonstrance with—"I choose to do this; you can go?"

There are also two other most unhappy and impolitic sayings, which call for our brief attention: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth" (Luke xi. 23); and "Constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke xiv. 23). Have not these been the Church's justification for treating all believers in alien creeds as her natural enemies—for employing violence and cruelty in their conversion, and killing them without pity, when they declined her rude invitations "to come in?" A parallel doctrine, which history has criticised and condemned in a very similar manner, is contained in the saying, "He that believeth not hath been judged already" (John iii. 18; compare the traditional saying in Mark xvi. 16). This curious theory, that *belief* is an important moral quality, we can but regard as a relic of ignorance, at length supplanted by the recognition of our duty to treat it as a pure question of evidence—a matter for the intellect to decide upon, whilst allowing the feelings as little influence as possible. But to the old doctrine is certainly due much of the barbarity

of religious persecutions; and it has also proved a principal cause in producing religious madness. However, we can detect in all these examples too palpable an ecclesiastical purpose, for them to be worth much as evidence, except of the general level of morality in the early Church.

"And his disciples asked him saying, Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him" (John ix. 2, 3). Here we have a suggestion of the terrible theory that physical suffering is inflicted *for the glory of God*, which afterwards played such a prominent part in the speculations about hell. The remark may moreover be noted as a good sample of the mythological explanations of natural events so prevalent in pre-scientific ages; and as therefore exhibiting (what necessarily must have been the case) entire ignorance of physical causation. The reasons for any one being born with a deficient complement of organs are purely physiological, the effect of general laws, and due to no special action of Providence. To suppose otherwise would indeed be to take a most gloomy view of the value of all medical research: it can hardly be too often repeated that the Interference Theory, in any shape or form, affirms the impossibility of all scientific knowledge whatsoever, by introducing into the

action of nature a factor of which we can never give any definite account. Another curious point about this passage is that, if we accept the story as authentic, both the disciples' question and Christ's answer indicate a belief in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls: "Is this man's blindness a punishment for his crimes in a previous state of existence?"—that is what it amounts to.

The Originality of Christ.

A far pleasanter task remains, in the consideration of the great moral principle which constituted the most valuable, and at the same time most original, work of Christ. His other teaching, with its numerous archaisms and shortcomings, he shared—as our quotations have now shown—with his fellow Rabbis: though, it may be added, he very probably did more than any other to popularize these doctrines.

In the early ages of the world, when men first began to unite and form nations, the tyranny of custom was absolutely essential for the creation of social characteristics—the qualities on whose basis alone a permanent union was possible; and "the soft minds and strong passions of youthful nations" required hardening and training by centuries of the "drill"

resulting from a complicated and despotic ceremonialism. Unthinking obedience is the best initial policy equally in the case of very young children and of very early nationalities. But, social coherency once firmly established, then arises the danger of the middle-aged nation being unable to break through the bonds of custom and tradition, so as to pass on to higher stages of mental and moral development. India and China are good examples of civilizations arrested in this way, where the retarding forces have been too strong, and all power of variability has been destroyed. As Mr. Bagehot says: "The beginning of civilization is marked by an intense legality; that legality is the very condition of its existence, the bond which ties it together; but that legality —that tendency to impose a settled customary yoke upon all men and all actions—if it goes on, kills out the variability implanted by nature, and makes different men and different ages facsimiles of other men and other ages, as we see them so often. Progress is only possible in those happy cases where the force of legality has gone far enough to bind the nation together, but not far enough to kill out all varieties, and destroy nature's perpetual tendency to change" ("Physics and Politics," p. 64).

[These considerations help us to understand the very different success that has attended Buddhism and Christianity: for though the legal systems of

which they were the reforms—Brahmanism and Judaism—have to a great extent checked the moral freedom which both Buddha and Christ aimed at establishing, still there is no comparison between the degrees of progress reached under the one religion and the other: not, however, in the lands of their birth—for their own countries both Reformers were too late.]

This, then, from the evolutionary point of view, is Christ's chief merit—what makes him the foremost leader of the world—namely, that, at the right place and time in moral history, he boldly rescued the essential laws of conduct from a bewildering mass of temporary legalism, marking once for all the absolute difference between the two orders of ideas. The earlier Hebrew prophets, it is true, had taught somewhat similar doctrines before him, but without anything like the same power and deliberate method; consequently, when they passed away, their teaching lost all its reforming force.

The "liberation of humanity" had begun long before in Greece; but the hardest battle of all, that for religious freedom, was fought and won in Judea. Religious fixity is based on superstitions so deeply rooted that argument can hardly touch them; there the yoke of custom is most tyrannical, there the hope of successfully questioning its justice and right, of starting the discussion of abstract principles, is faint-

est. Thus Christ found a large class of scholarly moralists, the Rabbis, ready for any discussions *within* fixed limits—those, namely, of the written and oral law; this they were prepared to interpret, but never to doubt. However, he went to the root of the matter, appealed to men's common sense ("Judge ye for yourselves what is right"), and criticised the most sacred traditions and customs with pitiless principle. Blind faith in the old forms and ceremonies, originally full of benefit and help for the untrained minds of more barbarous days, had become mischievous as a hindrance to further progress; but it called for the best and noblest type of man to dare to see and say this; for these things were supposed to be divine gifts, and he who attacked them needed strong convictions and a brave heart, knowing as he must what his fate would be if he persevered in his mission.

Even the greatest of the Rabbis, Hillel himself, could at one time insist on as beautiful maxims of perfection as ever Christ taught, but, at another, with equal emphasis teach the necessity of attending to minute ceremonial trifles, in reality only so many obstructions in the way of the higher life. The Jews at this period seem to have been wofully deficient in critical common sense; either the timidity of conservatism, or the dulness of orthodoxy, made them confound (or, at all events, appear

to do so in their teaching) the temporary value of observances and institutions with the vital force of true morality. And so, when M. Renan remarks, "Hillel was the real master of Jesus"—we can but reply, Jesus had no master. The statement would be true enough, if we are to regard him chiefly in the light of a teacher of the religious doctrines that have been erroneously attributed to him as their originator; so far as these are concerned, he was but continuing the great President's work—sometimes repeating his very words; but the distinctive peculiarity of Christ was that he consistently proclaimed the overwhelming force of the natural virtues over those that are merely formal and occasional, and no doctor of the Law taught him this truth. Our debt then to him is surely great enough to dispense with exaggeration at the hands of inaccurate or over-enthusiastic partisans; nor need we hesitate to admit that he found all the materials for his teaching, moral and theological alike, ready to his hand, and did not invent any of them. Indeed, no ethical system can be *invented*, for it is a gradual growth from the experience of many generations of men; but as it grows, weeds spring up with it, fossil conventionalities hinder its power and usefulness, and there is need of bold reformers, now and again, to clear away these obstructions.

With an exquisite sense of moral proportion Christ

opposed the inner to the outer, the disposition to the act, and on the former emphatically based the virtue and value of a man. His purpose was, as Professor Baur says, "simply to throw men back on their own moral and religious consciousness. A man has only to become clearly aware of that which announces itself in his own consciousness as his highest moral end, and he can realize it by his own efforts. When we thus look back to its earliest elements, Christianity appears as a purely moral religion." (Compare also Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," vol. iii. p. 279.)

In the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. v. 31, 33, 38), certain doctrines in the earlier law are directly contradicted by the higher views substituted by Christ; and again in the Parables of the Good Samaritan, and of the Publican and Pharisee, we have plain testimony as to his estimate of the probable dangers of formalism for the hearts and consciences of men. But to appreciate his attitude on the whole question of ceremonialism, it is not necessary to rely on such comparatively slight indications, since we have several specimens of his more direct and deliberate teaching on the subject. In the Law, especially in Leviticus, whole chapters are devoted to the consideration of what a man may eat, and what he may not eat; the decisions mainly turning on traditional or ceremonial points. These laws

the Rabbis had still further enlarged and complicated with a vast amount of commentary and discussion. But then came Christ, and said, with solemn emphasis and intention, "Hear me all of you, and understand: there is nothing from without the man, that going into him can defile him: but the things which proceed out of the man are those that defile the man" (Mark vii. 14, 15). [In accordance with which principle he instructed his disciples, "Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you" (Luke x. 8).] A reference to the parallel passage in Matt. xv. 17–20 cannot fail to satisfy the reader that far more is implied in Christ's words than disregard of the particular form specified; and that we must rather recognize in the spirit that dictated this teaching, a vigorous, common-sense protest against the mischief of treating any act of ceremonialism whatever as a question of moral duty. And when we consider how few, even now, eighteen centuries afterwards, have faith enough to accept all the consequences of this doctrine, how steadily the Church herself continues to "Judaize" in such matters, we shall the better appreciate the intelligence and courage that could persistently hold to these views in opposition to the staunchest religious conservatism the world has ever seen.

Moreover, Christ again and again broke the Sab-

bath, openly and with deliberation, as an ostentatious protest (using the words with no disagreeable meaning) against formalism. In the story of the healing of the cripple at the Pool of Bethesda, such a point occurs, which reads not unlike a challenge to the legal party: it was the Sabbath, and yet Christ, under no apparent necessity, said to the old man, "*Take up thy bed*, and walk" (John v. 8); indeed he seems to have delighted in public expressions of his horror and contempt for ceremonialism without beauty. There is also a traditional saying of his, given in one of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament (Cordex D, the "Beza" MS. of the sixth century), after Luke vi. 4, which so exactly coincides with his other teaching on the subject that it may fairly be assumed to be genuine. The passage runs as follows: "On the same day having seen one working on the Sabbath, he said to him, O man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and art a transgressor of the Law." And yet another saying attributed to him by early tradition is this: "I came to put an end to sacrifices, and, unless ye cease from sacrificing, anger will not cease from you."

Precisely the same doctrines were taught by his great follower, Paul: what calm indifference for forms combined with tender anxiety for the "weak

brother's" conduct, the apostle shows, whenever he deals with these questions in his Epistles.

"One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks· and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Rom. xiv.5, 6).

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day, or a new moon, or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (Col. ii. 16, 17; compare also vv. 20–23; 1 Tim. iv. 3).

It is impossible too much to admire the excellent common sense shown in this way of regarding ceremonial morality: "Keep the sabbath? By all means, if you think it best to do so. Break it? Certainly, if your conscience does not object." And that Paul laid great weight on this doctrine as being an essential part of Christ's theory of moral liberty, such a saying as the following proves beyond much doubt: "With freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that,if ye receive circumcision, *Christ will profit you nothing*" (Gal. v. 1, 2; compare chap. ii. and vi. 15; also Rom. ii. 28, 29; and Eph. ii. 14, 15).

"Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience' sake" (1 Cor. x. 25). That is to say, where ignorance is bliss in such trifles, it is folly to be too particular. Similar exhortations not to "run as proselytes to the Jewish law," and "no longer to observe Sabbaths," might be quoted from the Non-Canonical Epistles, if space permitted. Assuredly if any doubt can exist as to what Christ's real attitude was with regard to this great question—of ceremonialism being a religious duty binding on men's consciences—it should be at once removed by an inquiry into the history of the general doctrine of the early Church. Immediately after Christ's death, owing to the large numbers of Jewish converts to the reformed faith, the spirit of conservatism ruled supreme; the whole narrative of the Acts of the Apostles shows this beyond a doubt. (See particularly x. 14, 28; xi. 3; xv. 1, 20; xxi. 17–26.) And this state of things would naturally exert much influence on the histories which were then commenced of Christ and his sayings, and from which our Gospels are in all probability taken. Hence the many expressions of respect for the law and its observances which we find attributed to him, notwithstanding their incompatibility with much that he did and also with integral portions of his teaching. However, the Jewish party in the Church was soon upset; and, if some such explanation of the contradictions

in the Gospel accounts be sufficient, we may fairly accept Paul's as the true version of his Master's doctrine, and need have no uncertainty as to what that really was.

The religion of Christ then was the result of the conflict between all that was spiritually best in Judaism and its dominating formalism and increasing worldliness—in other words, of a great and radical Reform led by Christ, as the Reformation of the Middle Ages was led by Luther. And yet it was something more than this: it was also "the outcome and combination of a holy life, a noble death, a wonderfully pure and perfect character and nature, a teaching at once self-proving and sublime, the whole absolutely unique in their impressive loveableness."

It is manifest, from what has been said, that we cannot consistently attribute the success of Christianity either to the novelty or to the absolute perfection of its moral and theological doctrines; but rather to a number of favoring conditions, which could not be better summed up than by the old expression, "the Fullness of Time." They are as follows:—

1. Christianity owes much to its date and locality. The Greeks had given the world round the Mediter-

ranean their culture; the Romans, law and unity; Paganism had lost its substance and vitality, and had become a mere mass of external forms, attractive only to the vulgar and uneducated; Greek philosophy (especially Platonism) had spiritualized religious thought, and familiarized men's minds with anticipations of the leading Christian ideas; in illustration of which may be cited the teaching of Philo, as already briefly described in this chapter. All things were then ready for the new and more spiritual expression of the religious consciousness; politically and intellectually, the wants of the civilized world were fairly supplied; religiously, there was uneasiness and vague discontent. Many were driven by this state of things into Judaism, with its nobler theories of the Deity and of the Divine government; but when the reformed Judaism appeared and once took root, the older religion ceased to attract, and lost its place for ever as one of the great powers of the world. In the words of an author whose work has been often used in these notes, Christianity "exhibits the stage of moral development which was sure to be reached so soon as it was perceived not only that it was a duty to abstain from those injuries of one's fellows which are the fruits of the non-exercise of the passive virtues, but that there were certain actions beneficial to others the performance of which was required as a duty towards self. When once the idea was an-

nounced that the performance of benevolent actions would be attended with a spiritual result beneficial to the agent, or would be pleasing to the Deity, and that those who thus acted would be rewarded in the future life, there would be an ever-increasing tendency to look upon the practice of benevolence as a duty, the neglect of which would be visited with future punishment" (C. S. Wake, "The Evolution of Morality," vol. ii. p. 379).

There is only too much reason to fear that this view of the matter cannot fail to distress many religious minds, for whom such arguments as we have been considering in this chapter tell but little against the strong personal conviction which results from a steady perseverance in any faith. We may advance what we fondly imagine to be convincing proofs of a simple explanation of the origin and value of the creed in question, but the heart of our hearer whispers to him, "Never mind all this; you have experience on your side, after all—an experience which tells you that you have not been trusting in such a poor, such a *natural* creation as he would make your creed to be. Your sustaining help in many an otherwise crushing sorrow and difficulty can be only Divine." Well, in common fairness, the Christian, when he says this to himself, should not forget that the Buddhist—to take the best example—has just the same confident feeling, the same ex-

perience, the same "knowledge," about *his* creed; and the sympathy that ought to spring from this reflection may help to strengthen the spirit of tolerance, even if it does not lead to a more logical estimate of the precise value of this kind of testimony.

2. The character of Christ himself was quite as important a factor in the success of his doctrine as its environment: his simple, pure life, and brave death, could not but appeal strongly to men's love and admiration; and that, too, with increased force, so soon as the doctrine of his Divinity was once plainly promulgated. As it has been well said: "Men are guided by types, not by argument: some winning instance must be set up before them, or the sermon will be vain, and the doctrine will not spread . . . It is the life of teachers which is *catching*, not their tenets" ("Physics and Politics," p. 90).

3. The Christian theology, with its definite promises of rewards and very comprehensible punishments hereafter. Comparison with any other creed that may be selected will at once show the superiority of Christianity in this respect. Here should also be noticed the great temporary value of the Messianic idea, which gave firmness and persistence to the belief in Christ's miraculous nature, until it was merged in the doctrine of his Divinity.

4. There are a number of minor points which might be enumerated, but briefly to point out one

or two must now suffice. Such are—the great services rendered to the young religion by Paul, especially in rescuing it out of the timid hands of the Jewish party, under whose mismanagement it threatened at one time to become a mere compromise with the old formalism. Then, too, may be noticed the practical common sense shown in the concession of certain points logically at issue with its own higher principles. Take slavery, for instance, which the Essenes had forbidden. To allow it was morally a step back, from a Christian standpoint. But Christ himself had laid down a sort of sliding scale of virtue: "He that is able to receive it, let him receive it"—no burdens, not even moral ones, were to be laid on men's backs which they could not bear. In Buddhism there is just the same concession, in the form of grades of discipleship; the first, or lowest, merely having to obey the very simplest rules of good conduct.

Still further ground for explaining the appearance of Christianity by means of the evolution theory is found in some of the results that naturally followed from the practice of its doctrines by the Church; for by the many moral deficiencies, judged from a modern point of view, which it thus exhibits, its

true character, as a natural stage in human development, is most distinctly shown.

The early Christian, though set free from the superstitions of ceremonialism, was left a slave to many others, which fatally hindered the growth of his moral consciousness. Thus, for instance, he firmly believed that he was surrounded by countless demons (cf. Eph. vi. 12), whose sole business was his damnation: the result being a cowardly anxiety and preoccupation, which often broke out into violent asceticism and cruelty, and was an effectual bar to his further progress. For protection he had recourse to magic—another source of weakness—and believed in the use of names, relics, etc.; and again, this faith in demonism, combined with anxious solicitude about his future state, caused him to shrink from all contact with heathens, and to hate their work—art and learning alike—than which a greater hindrance to secular culture cannot well be imagined. And this conduct, it must be remembered, was in direct consequence of the twin theories of Terrorism and Asceticism; therefore the responsibility of Christianity for these results cannot be ignored. In those days religion was a much more vital matter than it is now; when, whatever a man's actions may be, we should seldom be justified in ascribing them to the effects of his creed. But in the past it was very different; and it is fair to say that the general

proceedings of any particular church or body of Christians should be regarded as the natural consequence of their religious beliefs far more than of their own personal characters.

That the attempts to rise, by the aid of asceticism, superior, not merely to the best morality of the time, but even to the highest practicable state, were accompanied by many relapses, was only what might have been expected. As early as the second century Irenæus speaks of much secret wickedness amongst the Church leaders, and finds consolation in the thought that they could not hope to escape their eternal punishment; whilst, according to Cyprian, the sufferings of the Church in the Decian persecution were "the just penalty of her ineradicable corruption. Bishops neglected their sacred functions to devote themselves to the accumulation of wealth wrung from the poor, while possessions gained by fraud were increased by merciless usury. As for the priesthood, it had neither purity of faith, charity of works, nor discipline of morals; while the laity were given over to avarice and cheating, blasphemy and slander." It would be easy to give abundant proof of the low morality that really prevailed in those days, on which we are too apt to look back, with uncritical sentiment, as a golden age. We are in fact blinded to their true character by those judicious selections of truth and fiction, which make

up what is commonly known as Church History. Far more accurate indications of the actual morality of the time may be got by reading some of its curious literature, where much trustworthy, because indirect and unintentional, evidence may be gathered. The Apocryphal Gospels of the Infancy of Christ, for example, abound in stories of the miraculous child punishing with death or severe suffering those who offended him in his play, or on other trifling occasions; and these are told with grave approval and for some time were implicitly believed in by the Church. What could show more plainly that in her eyes might was right? Justice and mercy are ignored in such supposed exhibitions of power, in which we find nothing better than the savage's creed that his chief cannot do wrong.

In conclusion let us note the tendency of the moral alterations in progress at the present day; how the staunch orthodoxy of the earlier Church is being replaced by a semi-orthodoxy or eclecticism which refuses admittance to much of the old creed. What may be called the theological-examination theory of salvation, as propounded in the Athanasian Creed for instance, is daily losing ground; the gross injustice of the doctrine of "election" (by which a

favored minority gain what it would have cost Divine Omnipotence no trouble to bestow on all) will also prove fatal to it; also that vicarious punishment was needed to satisfy God's justice, and that finite error calls for an infinite retribution, together with the theory of original sin, are, we may be sure, amongst the doomed beliefs. No amount of skilful polish can disguise the real character and savage origin of such doctrines much longer; and when this spirit of selection, or "heresy," has once become strong by exercise on these moral questions, we may safely prophesy that it will not then rest content but will pass on to those that are more especially intellectual. *Sliding dogmatism* is a fair term for the continual process of letting go which distinguishes many of the liberal party in the Church; they throw out a doctrine now and again as quietly as possible, to the pursuing wolves of criticism; always maintaining, however, that it was no original part of the Christian faith, and professing an absolute certitude in what is left—until another has to go.

And not only is the old creed being thus corrected, it is also being very largely added to: for the gospel ethics do not take sufficient account of the practical business of this life. "The sacredness of work, our duty of contributing to the best of our power to the material prosperity of mankind, and of providing for the future, as well as other such truths

and duties, receive no recognition." There is a certain rough strength needed for success and happiness in this daily life of ours, by no means compounded of purely Christian virtues; and, in this point, we may note the superiority, or at all events greater completeness, of the Rabbinical doctrines; whilst in another, the duty of kindness to animals, a similar superiority is found in Buddhism. But the greatest deficiency of all, the chief cause of weakness, in Christianity, when tried by a modern standard, is unquestionably its indifference to the virtues of the intellect. We may go even further, and say, its incapacity to recognize them, owing to an inherent and profound distrust of human intelligence, in this so essentially differing from the reasonableness of science. For while religion proudly claims to have received a supernatural revelation, worthy of absolute credit, science can only accept as her doctrines the systematized result of a careful study of nature; for the one, truth is what she believes; for the other, simply what she knows. "Not by stifling doubts that may arise, says Science, but only by patient investigation of the evidence, can a man honestly earn his belief; and if the evidence be insufficient, he has no right to believe at all." This serious shortcoming on the part of historical Christianity has not received due attention. It not merely neglects, but positively depreciates the intellectual virtues, such as

fearless truthfulness in study and thought, hatred of dulness and insipidity, unwillingness to bow to mere authority without careful examination, and the necessity for their cultivation. The education of humanity must be all-inclusive to be satisfactory; and this carelessness with regard to intellectual development still bears fruit in the too frequent occurrence of an insipid piety or a stupid fanaticism in the place of true moral feeling. Average modern religion is only a respectable veneer, entirely failing to reach men's hearts, and its chief claims to existence are expediency, example to others, and the like; the reason for which is that the Church, in the past, canonized popular ignorance, in her desire for a blind obedience to her own authority.

The business of reason is, however, better understood now, and it is a sorry look-out for institutions whose policy is to underrate its value and rights. But England is not so far advanced as France or Germany in the new criticism. "To our English race," says Mr. Matthew Arnold, "with its insularity, its profound faith in action, its contempt for dreamers and failers; inadequate ideals of life, manners, government, thought, religion, will always be a source of danger. Energetic action makes up, we think, for imperfect knowledge. We think that all is well, that a man is following a 'moral impulse' if he pursues an end which he 'deems of supreme importance.'

We impose neither on him nor on ourselves the duty of discerning whether he is *right* in deeming it so." But religious conservatism cannot do more than retard the growth of the intellectual conscience: and when once men cease to be satisfied with feeling a thing to be right, but go on to ask, "Ought we to feel this to be right?"—a good deal of dry light will be thrown on many respectable old dogmas. Most persons have unfortunately been content to live in the midst of creeds differing from their own, taking Pharisaic comfort in the thought that the others were all wrong, and their followers blind at best—but probably wicked. However, this happy conviction cannot long resist a wider knowledge; and when once there has flashed across a man's mind the extreme improbability that, with so many existing creeds, his should be the only true one, the commencement of religious tolerance is the certain result. Thus then we may hope that our growing acquaintance with the good work and noble thoughts of other religions will free us from that worst immorality of the intellect—perseverance in prejudice—and help us towards the philosophical frame of mind recommended in a wise Parsi saying: "If thou art a Mussulman go stay with the Franks; if a Christian, join the Jews; if a Shiah, mix with the schismatics: whatever thy religion, associate with men of opposite persuasion. If in hearing their discourses thou art

not in the least moved, but canst mix with them freely, thou hast attained peace, and art a master of creation."

In concluding this chapter, it may not be altogether superfluous to utter a word of warning against the danger of being unjust in our estimate of what Christianity and the Church have done for man: for they have been two chief factors in European civilization, and it would be singular indeed for believers in Evolution, of all persons, to deny their beneficence and importance. If in the preceding pages these have been insufficiently dwelt upon, the more pressing claims of other points on our consideration must be the excuse.

And now that we have reached the end of this historical portion of our Notes, may we not fairly sum up our conclusions as to the origin and historical position of Christianity in some such manner as this?—The Eastern world was fortunate in possessing many great moral and religious teachers; and it was out of their doctrines, ever increasing in perfection as time went on, that was gradually and naturally built up the most complete and beautiful religion of all. Hence (we may say) it was *necessary* that, in the process of evolution, this development should be reached, and that Christianity should come: yet this is no reason why we need hesitate to add—but blessed be he through whom it came.

CHAPTER III.

"MORALITY IS THE NATURE OF THINGS."

It is not improbable that many of the points noted in this chapter will seem, to persons but slightly acquainted with the conclusions of modern ethical science, startling and even painful: so it may be as well to begin by reminding ourselves that the true spirit of inquiry should be as ready to recognize or to infer one truth as another, and that impatience and disgust on these occasions are too often merely signs of prejudice. Like the former chapters, this also will consist very largely of extracts—now, however, from the works of the chief English exponents of the moral doctrines based on modern science—that is to say, of Spencer, Darwin, Tylor, Lubbock, and others. By adopting this plan, not only is greater accuracy of expression gained, but also, as Mr. Ruskin somewhere says, "More true force of persuasion may be obtained by rightly choosing and arranging what others have said, than by painfully saying it again in one's own way." There is a pleasant combination of modesty and laziness in the thought, with quite enough truth about it to sanctify their union. Since, moreover, these notes are only

intended as an easy introduction to the study of certain not very abstruse points in modern ethics, it is hardly necessary to apologize for their somewhat discursive and unconnected form.

When speaking of certain lines of conduct as moral, and of others as immoral, what we principally mean to imply in these days is that the former are beneficial, the latter detrimental, if generally practiced. Hence morality must be, not only different in different places, but constantly changing in the same place, as the environment alters; and we may expect to find some moral characteristics dying out, qualities at one time useful and admirable becoming harmful and objectionable, primitive vices slowly disappearing, and many efforts to be better than circumstances permit unsuccessfully made, in the long history of human development. It is, happily, no longer possible to fall into the old error of regarding morality as a purely conventional or artificial matter: as we now know, its form is invariably regulated by the natural surroundings, the conditions of society, and a variety of external and temporary factors. Imagine, for one moment, how impossible it would be for any society to exist, if its members were perfectly indifferent to all questions of right

and wrong; if they robbed, ill-treated, murdered one another in the most casual way; if they took no trouble to provide for future wants, or to rear their children; if, in one word, they had not even the elements of morality whereby to direct their lives. The process of natural selection, then, can logically account for the formation and continuance of certain rules of conduct, since without them men would have been kept in isolation, and the race would have soon ceased to exist. Indeed, we may observe a rudimentary sympathy amongst gregarious animals that must be explained in the same way: solitary individuals of their species would be without protection or warning against their enemies, whilst those sociably inclined would possess this advantage, which by itself is enough to account for their survival. Our first conclusion then is that, however rude and barbarous a nation may be, some rules of right and wrong it must observe, or its union cannot last. "But as to what acts have been held right and wrong, the student must avoid that error which the proverb calls measuring other people's corn by one's own bushel. Not judging the customs of nations at other stages of culture by his own modern standard, he has to bring his knowledge to the help of his imagination, so as to see institutions where they belong and as they work. Only thus can it be made clear that the rules of good and bad, right and

wrong, are not fixed alike for all men at all times. For an example of this principle, let us observe how people at different stages of civilization deal with the aged. Some of the lower races take much care of their old folks even after they are fallen into imbecility, treating them with almost gentle considerateness, and very commonly tending them till death, when respect to the living ancestor passes into his worship as an ancestral spirit. But among other tribes filial kindness breaks down earlier, as among those fierce Brazilians who knock on the head with clubs the sick and aged, and even eat them, whether they find their care too burdensome, or whether they really think, as they say, that it is kind to end a life no longer gladdened with fight and feast and dance. The horde must move in quest of game, the poor failing creature cannot keep up in the march, the hunters and the heavily laden women cannot carry him; he must be left behind" (Tylor, "Anthropology," p. 410).

If space permitted, it would be quite possible to trace the development of the different virtues from their rudimentary forms—their origins as so many advantages in the struggle for existence, up to their present proud position as delicate moral sentiments. This could be done with nearly all—such as, for example, courage, patriotism, gratitude, frankness, temperance, fidelity; whilst in the case of others,

such as humility, devotion, modesty, kindness to animals, it might be shown that these were supplementary to the former—that is, necessary or logical extensions of the same root ideas. One example, however, must suffice—that, namely, of love for others, or Altruism.

The normal state of wild life—that is, of all life in the earliest times—is one of general hostility; but, as we have seen, some rudiments of a give-and-take policy are absolutely essential to the existence of a tribe, or confederacy, of men, however rude may be the bonds that keep them together. Self-preservation, and similar considerations, were probably the first motives that led men to associate with one another: united, they would gain so many advantages in hunting or in fighting. Many animals, as we have noticed, are quite able to appreciate these points; and amongst some of the higher gregarious kinds a very perceptible development of fellow-feeling is the result. They "take pleasure in one another's company, warn one another of danger, defend and aid one another in many ways. These instincts do not extend to all the individuals of the species, but only to those of the same community. As they are highly beneficial to the species, they have in all probability been acquired through natural selection" (Darwin, "Descent of Man," p. 610).

Of the human federations so formed, some, be-

coming indifferent as to how individual members behaved to one another, would break up or die out: only those surviving and flourishing which encouraged to some perceptible extent the special social virtues, amongst which rank highly the permanent family relations—those, viz., of husband and wife, and parents and children. The typical savage has an intense sense of his own personal importance; his passions are very uncontrollable; he cannot endure thwarting or contradiction; the feelings of others get but small consideration at his hands; he is fond of power and tyranny. But all these qualities are antagonistic to tribal unity, and without that his chance of survival is but slight. Hence the free indulgence of his nature under *no* social restraints meaning destruction, he is forced to begin the education of his very unsympathetic disposition. And so we find consideration for others first shown because the tribes who practise it, to however moderate an extent, will be able to kill the isolated, friendless human beings who are without it.

Still hating all men not members of their tribe, by daily habits of co-operation within its limits, savages are led to a practice that must soon create the germs of trust, gratitude, kindness; such qualities again being advantageous, in the sense that a tribe possessing them would, other things equal, easily conquer another in which they were not de-

veloped. Similarly, obedience, fidelity, and affection for their chief would arise—also as military advantages. Moreover, the warlike state, as we had occasion to notice in the last chapter, is full of scope for the cultivation of many improving qualities; whilst the benevolent feelings, being concentrated within narrow boundaries, thereby gain in definiteness and intensity. And as civilization advances, and a more settled state permits the sexual and parental relations to become closer and more enduring, sympathy and its various manifestations will steadily continue to develop.

In time many tribes are united by conquest or treaty, and form a nation; and it then becomes necessary to extend the practice of friendship to a far wider circle. Another bond of union will be found in similarity of religious belief: we may notice, for example, how the mediæval Christians, whilst approving of truth and beneficence in the abstract, still thought it quite unnecessary to keep faith with, or show the smallest kindness to heretics. But all these limitations, with their gradual extensions, are requisite steps in the formation of a sure humanitarianism, which will some day most certainly be man's chief moral characteristic. The beauty of this virtue has been again and again perceived by religious teachers, and they have tried to induce their hearers to practise it; but its "fulness of

time" not having yet arrived, such efforts have always proved futile. Our intellectual development, owing to its being less antagonistic to man's original nature, and also to the more immediate advantages arising from its exercise, has made far more progress than our moral; we can consequently most of us appreciate the attractiveness of virtues that only a few can, very partially, practice. But, so far as we do possess it, our love for humanity is the result of a constant action and reaction between sympathy and sociality, "each as cause and consequence, greater sympathy making possible greater sociality, public and domestic, and greater sociality serving further to cultivate sympathy."

Another simple example of moral development along a similar line of natural expansion is briefly and clearly given in an Article on "The Natural History of Morals," in the "North British Review," vol. xlvii. p. 389: "First the command was, Thou shalt kill no one who lives in your tents: next, Thou shalt kill no one who lives in your own valley: next, Thou shalt kill no one who speaks the same language, worships the same gods, and dwells in the same land as yourself: and finally the lapse of ages brings the precept, Thou shalt kill no one who has not forfeited his life by committing murder, by striving to take your life, or by entering the lists of battle against your country. That is the length to

which modern civilization has reached. Modern civilization does not say that it is wrong to kill: what it condemns is the killing of certain men."

Like other moral qualities, the religious feelings also may be shown to have an easily traceable natural origin of their own. Of course in their higher development, as has often been pointed out, so far from being an advantage in the struggle for existence, religion and its noblest characteristics (self-abnegation, a delicate sense of moral duty, and the like) would have been positively fatal to their possessors in the early ages of the world. But the rudimentary qualities which constitute the basis of all religions, and with which alone we are here concerned, come under the category of distinct primitive advantages. The chief business of early savage races was undoubtedly war: and, since an army cannot be ruled by a committee, since on such occasions one supreme head is absolutely necessary (as the Israelites were shrewd enough to see when they demanded a king)—in this, a simple military requirement, we find the *raison d'être* of veneration, awe, dependence — the primary religious sentiments. From obedience to and reverence for the living chief, it was but a step to worship and propitiate his ghost: and, as Mr. Spencer has pointed out ("Sociology," vol. i., chaps. xx–xxv.), the idea of gods is originally derived from belief in the ghosts of dead

ancestors and chiefs. The superior solidarity and power of those tribes in which *loyalty* was developed is, then, sufficient to account for the origin, survival, and growth of the religious feelings.

Nothing can be more curious, and, at the same time, more instructive, than many of the attempts of religious theorists to explain the great problems of life. When, for example, we read, in the IXth Article of the Church of England, of man being "very far gone from original righteousness," and that accordingly the original sin in his nature "deserveth God's wrath and damnation," we are at once transported into the beliefs of a pre-scientific age, interesting no doubt historically, but mischievous when still upheld as part of a sacred doctrine. The early discovery that the children frequently suffered for their father's sins was formulated, as might have been expected, into a threat of divine vengeance; but afterwards, as men learnt to attribute gentler and juster qualities to the Deity, the old harsh theory of transmitted revenge was abandoned. (Compare Exod. xx. 5 with Jer. xxxi. 29, 30, and Ezek. xviii. 2–4.) And now fact and sentiment are harmonized in the doctrine of Heredity—the law, that is, that all living beings naturally tend to repeat themselves in their descendants, with modifications, however, continually increasing with the greater complexity of the higher

animal organizations. The wonderful success obtained by breeders of various kinds of domestic animals is well known to all: how by selection of stock they can go on intensifying any desirable characteristics almost without limit. And, unless the qualities so produced come into conflict with others too strongly antagonistic, they will eventually take their place permanently in the organization of the animals so bred.

But generation is moral as well as physical; it has been observed (in a sufficiently large number of cases to justify us in saying that the law exists) that parents bequeath their mental and moral qualities through the physical medium. Even tendencies to drunkenness, thieving, gambling, murder, are liable to be inherited; and have been noted when, owing to the early death of the parents or the removal of the children in infancy, they could not have resulted from mere imitation or education. Similarly, there is equally good reason to believe that virtues are transmissible; that, in fact, the child, in inheriting the physical organization of its parents, also inherits all the various characteristics and inclinations natural to such organization.

Now since we know that development follows from habit—that the human mechanism *grows* to any actions steadily persisted in—we can see how it is that national customs and morality must, in process of time, create national characteristics; and this sug-

gests the incalculable value and importance of what may be termed *the organic development of virtues*—their evolution, that is, by the accumulation of slight additions through many generations. The parent acquires reasonable habits of self-control; he avoids certain vicious tendencies which might grow into dangerous instincts in his children; and the result is a slight but assured improvement, which the perseverance of generations may increase, until a wonderful advance is at length secured. On the other hand, by exaggerated efforts after personal virtue, which only end in distinct enfeeblement of his bodily powers, a parent may not merely fail to bequeath any advance to his offspring, but may even inflict on them that most terrible curse, "the tyranny of a bad organization." The great physiologist, Burdach, has expressed his belief that "heritage has, in reality, more power over our constitution and character, than all influences from without, whether moral or physical;" and if this be so, it is downright folly to attempt the moral improvement of the race whilst carelessly disregarding the most powerful factor at work. [Read by the light of our present knowledge, that was a remarkable anticipation of this policy of cautious providence in morality,—"Be not righteous overmuch . . . why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" (Eccles. vii. 16.)] It is hardly necessary to point out in detail how all pre-scientific moral systems are nec-

essarily vitiated through ignorance of this important element, the force of heredity. A new responsibility —with prior claims to all others—is thus being brought to bear on conduct; and duty to posterity, not merely to ourselves, must now fix the limits of self-sacrifice and personal religion. Parents must aim at vigor of constitution, at a healthy attention to the wants of their nature; they must seek out and enjoy the various pleasures which life offers; avoid dulness and monotony no less than undue excitement and indulgence; cultivate an abundant energy, catholic interests, and all that diversity of life and feeling which tends to the preservation of body and mind in the best state. Such is the wider scope of moral doctrine under the direction of science; very different to that strict attention to personal holiness, regardless of consequences to others, that we noted as characteristic of the earlier systems.

The good and the bad qualities of man being equally historical growths, it is by tracing the process of their development that we shall best understand how the former may be strengthened, and the latter gradually eliminated. And it will increase our reasonable hopefulness, whilst it diminishes our impatience, if we can accustom ourselves to the thought

that the operations of natural law are very slow, but for that reason very sure.

The ordinary religious conception of creation is simply childish, involving as it does an implied belief in a moral breakdown—a temporary divine failure. But we are now learning, beyond all possibility of dispute, that evil is a necessary condition of physical and mental development; that immorality is only another expression for the consequences of the partial unsuitability of the nature of man to his environment; that eventually—if time permit—man must become perfectly moral: but he will be so thanks to the harmony of his whole organization with his surroundings, and not by punishing his body, degrading his mind, and despising the world in which he lives.

It is, fortunately, possible, by studying existing savage races, to fairly appreciate the general conditions of life amongst our own early ancestors: though we must remember that modern savages are, at all events in point of time, as far removed from primitive man as we are: consequently, the comparison cannot be relied on for minor details, and should not be pressed too closely. We find, then, among the Australians (to take one of the least developed types) an entire absence of certain forms of sentiment: they do not understand such ideas as pity or generosity; they have no words to translate such expressions as sin, justice or mercy; murder, espe-

cially infanticide, is very common among them; theft, unchastity, treachery, cruelty, are all accepted as, with limitations, proper and natural; though of course tribal and family rights count for something in such matters. Nor must it be supposed that, when condemned, these vices are so for moral reasons: momentary expediency is the sole criterion. As Sir John Lubbock observes ("Origin of Civilization," p. 384): "Whilst the lowest savages have many material and intellectual attainments, they are, it seems to me, almost entirely wanting in moral feeling. . . . In fact I believe that the lower races of men may be said to be deficient in the idea of right, though quite familiar with that of law. . . . . This is a conviction altogether opposed to my preconceived ideas on the subject, and one at which I have arrived by slow degrees, and even with reluctance." So, too, Mr. Darwin notes ("Descent of Man," p. 118), "The greatest intemperance, with savages, is no reproach. Their utter licentiousness, not to mention unnatural crimes, is something astounding."

The more, indeed, we consider the customs of savage races, the more forcibly will it appear how entirely their morality is, at first, a simple question of utility: though, afterwards, when affected by tradition and custom, it often presents further characteristics not directly traceable to the criterion of

immediate usefulness. The earliest crimes to be condemned are interferences with property—personal belongings, to begin with; but naturally in time those of the tribe also:—still so far we are only in the region of purely animal instincts, as any one acquainted with dogs and horses knows. The next moral idea in order of appearance is the sense of personal rights—beyond property: of these, one of the most important finds expression in the duty of blood-revenge; another in regard for the rights of the dead. The superstitious dread of spirit retribution leads to the development of a more advanced standard of right and wrong; ceremonial observances are invented, and the savage mind learns to look upon it as a duty to fulfil the wishes of the spirits connected with his tribe: mainly from fear, no doubt, but there is also the idea of these spirits possessing certain rights, which must be respected.

In the fourth chapter of the "Descent of Man," Mr. Darwin enters at some length into the general question of moral development, and he particularly notices that the welfare of the tribe supplies the invariable criterion of conduct, and that savages naturally think but little of virtues that do not obviously affect that welfare. "The chief causes," he remarks, "of the low morality of savages, as judged by our own standard, are—firstly, the confinement of sympathy to the same tribe; secondly, powers of

reasoning insufficient to recognize the bearing of many virtues, especially of the self-regarding virtues, on the general welfare of the tribe."

We may reasonably enough conclude that amongst primitive men, subject to a keen competition for the means of existence, constant warfare with one another and with wild beasts would encourage a predatory disposition, which in turn would lead to the continuance of such antagonism: the two being mutual cause and effect. On the other hand, tribal discipline tending towards the formation of rudimentary sympathies—where the fighting is either not continuous, or is confined to a portion of the tribe, some advance in humanization is made; the old predatory instinct, though retarding progress in many ways, still playing a useful part in helping to get rid of those inferior races which are only so many hindrances in the way of "the great scheme of perfect happiness."

As Mr. Spencer remarks (and we would call particular attention to this quotation), "Only by giving us some utterly different mental constitution could the process of civilization have been altered. Assume that the creative scheme is to be wrought out by natural means, and it is necessary that the primitive man should be one whose happiness is obtained at the expense of the happiness of other beings. It is necessary that the ultimate man should be one

who can obtain perfect happiness without deducting from the happiness of others. After accomplishing its appointed purpose, the first of these constitutions has to be moulded into the last. And the manifold evils which have filled the world for these thousands of years—the murders, enslavings and robberies, the tyrannies of rulers, the oppressions of class, the persecutions of sect and party, the multiform embodiments of selfishness in unjust laws, barbarous customs, dishonest dealings, exclusive manners, and the like—are simply instances of the disastrous working of this original and once needful constitution, now that mankind has grown into conditions for which it is not fitted—are nothing but symptoms of the suffering attendant upon the adaptation of humanity to its new circumstances" ("Social Statics," p. 451).

It is a necessary corollary of the theory of the evolution of man, that his Moral Sense, or Conscience, was not one of his original endowments, except in a very rudimentary form; much indeed as it may now be observed to exist in some of the higher animals,—dogs, elephants, monkeys, and others. A rude experience would impress on the earliest men vague and inaccurate notions about the effect of their conduct upon themselves and their

fellows; and thus empirically learning what behavior was desirable and what to be avoided, and correcting their first misapprehensions by growing experience, their reasoning faculties would in this way be constantly employed about simple questions of right and wrong; to which add the general approbation and disapprobation that would soon be attached to these lines of conduct respectively, and we can understand how there would necessarily arise a primitive conscience. Even at the present day this sense is entirely dependent on experience—(if we include under that term inherited qualities and the effects of tradition on the mind)—and is in consequence constantly varying, and in need of a frequent revision "up to date." It is therefore probably an error on our part to suppose that our moral sense is of the same age or even general order as our intelligence; it apparently came into existence much later in the process of evolution, and is the result of the action of social conditions upon our physical as well as intellectual nature. Or, we may say, conscience is the organized product of the continued appreciation by men of what appear to be the proper rules of conduct for them to follow; and, as a general rule, it is strong in proportion to the length of time that any one moral or religious system has continued in force without much change in its leading principles.

Possibly in the case of a solitary savage, enough

experience might be gained to form the bare rudiments of a conscience; but nothing more, since the opportunities for its exercise, and therefore development, would be so extremely rare. And undoubtedly it takes many men—a society—to study complex distinctions of right and wrong, and so build up by slow degrees a satisfactory moral sense. It is only on the assumption of such a historical origin and growth of these sentiments that we can account for the fact of men so differing—even to absolute contradiction—in their moral ideas. As Mr. George Grote explains this point: "Amongst different societies, all rude and ignorant, in the early processes of association out of which ethical sentiment was first constituted, mistakes as to the real causes of happiness and misery would be innumerable, and each society would make a different mistake. Differences would hence arise in the original constitution of ethical sentiment, as conceived by each community; and such peculiarities, when once conceived and incorporated with the general body of ethical sentiment, would be transmitted from generation to generation, by the omnipotence of inherited tendency, early habit and training"("Fragments on Ethical Subjects," p. 19).

Mr. Spencer writes very similarly on this question; he says—"I believe that the experiences of utility organized and consolidated through all past genera-

tions of the human race, have been producing corresponding nervous modifications, which, by continued transmission and accumulation, have become in us certain faculties of moral intuition—certain emotions responding to right and wrong conduct, which have no apparent basis in the individual experiences of utility" (From a letter to Mr. Mill).

But, it may be argued, *separate* moral aversions and approvals may very possibly result from the experience of bad and good consequences arising out of different lines of conduct; still these should not be confounded with Conscience, or the *general* feeling of moral obligation. For a complete answer to this objection the reader must refer to the "Data of Ethics," chap. vii. 124–129; here it must suffice simply to point out that this general sentiment may be accounted for in precisely the same way as all our abstract ideas. What, for instance, do we understand by the idea of color, or of number? Surely without previous experience of special numbers and colors we could not gain the corresponding general ideas; we pass to the abstract by means of many examples of the concrete. And so too is it with the history of the genesis of the moral sense; we find in savages, firstly, special aversions and approvals all based on expediency; then on these a traditional morality is built up, and by force of custom is

adhered to, though not unfrequently entailing loss and suffering. And it is to this complication that is due the apparently forcible argument that, since we find men, even savages, doing *to their own disadvantage* what they feel to be right, conscience cannot be merely the result of experience, but implies a certain divinely given intuition. The mistake, however, arises from not pushing the inquiry back far enough, and asking what the origin of these notions of Duty apart from Expediency really are ; and the clue to the solution lies in the fact of the tyrannous power of customs—especially those that are religious—and inherited tendencies.

[These considerations, it will be observed, also explain the origin of the general idea of *virtue*, a term implying that its practice is sometimes attended with present drawbacks and difficulties, or it would mean no more than the simple appreciation of an immediate utility. But if we obey the general laws of conduct, deduced from a wide experience, without stopping to consider our personal and proximate happiness or misery, our action is virtuous, not being influenced by direct self-consideration.]

Even in our own case, and still more so in the past and among savages, motives such as an imagined divine or human approval or disapproval, prevent men from attending mainly to the intrinsic nature of their actions, apart from any fictitious,

non-natural consequences. It follows that local and transient varieties of theology and fashion have been, almost without exception, the chief factors in determining the accepted code of morals. Consider, for example, the effect on the early Israelites of their belief that Yahveh demanded the extermination of their enemies, and was offended by the slightest mercy shown to the conquered; thus consecrating revenge and cruelty, "a policy of blood and iron," and connecting pity and forgiveness with the thought of divine displeasure. Or, again, try to imagine how hard it would be to induce most nineteenth-century ladies to disobey the orders of fashion—in dress or otherwise; and then reflect how readily they will sacrifice the health and happiness of their children to their own personal appearance; how they enjoy scandal and malice, or will commit a score of dishonorable trifles, if only these are not sins against their established deity. Can it be denied that Custom makes conscience, and sanctifies or condemns conduct; for even when its faithful followers have rare twinges of uneasiness, need we attribute these to anything more than a remnant of inherited feeling, and (perhaps) early education, not yet completely eradicated?

What a curious compound, then, is this conscience that we have apotheosized; a variety of physically registered experiences bequeathed to each man by

his ancestors, brutal and human alike, the further influence of a miscellaneous collection of more or less intelligent traditions, occasionally in opposition to the inherited instincts; and a haphazard individual experience, unceasingly qualifying our theoretical opinions: such make up the guide, to follow which with implicit trust seems to most people the only right thing to do! Is not all history—Church history in particular—one reiterated warning of the danger of listening to an *ignorant* conscience? Can any conceivable benefit to morality justify, for example, the ghastly catalogue of crime, summed up in the two words—Religious Persecution? Led by these barbarous efforts after right into constant wrong, ought we not to submit with humility to reason: if what we felt to be right turns out evil, must not feeling be modified, that we may change our course? Do not let us go on making a divinity out of our blunders, in obedience to these custom-made emotions which simply by alteration of our habits and surroundings we can change almost indefinitely; but honestly recognize that, only so far as we *know*, have we any right to claim a moral sense at all. As Mr. Matthew Arnold lately wrote—"*Fidelity to conscience!* cries the popular Protestantism of Great Britain and America, and thinks that it has said enough. But the modern analysis relentlessly scrutinizes this conscience, and compels it to give an ac-

count of itself. What sort of a conscience?—a true conscience or a false one? 'Conscience is the most changing of rules; conscience is presumptuous in the strong, timid in the weak and unhappy, wavering in the undecided; obedient organ of the sentiment which sways us and of the opinions which govern us; more misleading than reason and nature.' So says one of the noblest and purest of moralists, Vauvenargues; and terrible as it may be to the popular Protestantism of England and of America to hear it, Vauvenargues thus describes with perfect truth that conscience to which popular Protestantism appeals as its supposed unshakable ground of reliance. Is it not then downright folly, whilst our knowledge of what really constitutes morality is in its present rudimentary state, to needlessly obscure the situation by imputing a quasi-infallibility to this variable, prejudiced guide? Rather let it be tested by the facts of history or by common sense, and then allowed the moderate influence that is its fair due, but no more.

It is, however, far easier for us to admit the immorality of our own nature than that our most cherished moral and religious beliefs are no less in want of fundamental correction; of all the lessons to be learnt from history, this is the hardest to bring up to mastery point, and put into actual practice. We read of the reform and change of doctrines in

the past; people who held the doctrines before those changes were as confident about their creed as we are about ours, and, for all their confidence, were wrong. Let us repeat,—ideas are not necessarily right or wrong because they seem so to us: the tendency to think so should be got rid of at any cost; and this can only be done by a wide and continued study, familiarizing us with the practically endless historical and geographical variations in morality and religion. But this is one of those questions where the feelings are so strongly enlisted that argument has nothing like its proper force: the orthodox of every generation will for some time to come continue to regard their creed as a religious summit, and not merely a stage on the way upwards; and it is only by a radical change in our mental organization, to be got by persistence in scientific habits of thought, that the personal equation in this matter can be reduced to a more reasonable influence. Yet, that scientific study will have this result, there is no cause for doubt; and already may be observed an increasing preference for belief in facts that can be proved, as compared with belief in doctrines that from their very nature do not admit of proof.

Before continuing these notes any further, it may be as well, for greater clearness, to state the two

propositions for which arguments have now been advanced :—

(I.) That morality can only proceed from experience, or from deductions based on experience; and that its original recommendation is that it is advantageous.

(II.) That the so-called moral sense has its root in our intelligence and social instincts: that, when rightly trained, it approves of what is found to be indirectly, no less than directly, desirable for the higher civilization of mankind; but, wrongly trained, as we learn from history, it can be brought to approve of almost any abomination under the sun, if duly sanctified by custom.

It must be remembered, however, that the force of such arguments depends chiefly on the convergency of an enormous number of facts, all pointing to the same conclusions. If the few mentioned here are not sufficient to carry any persuasion with them, the reader should bear this in mind, and seek elsewhere for more proof of the same description. He will find that little can be advanced to even apparently contradict the general theory of moral evolution; and a faithful study of the historical evidence can hardly fail to end in his perception of the satisfactory manner in which this theory includes and explains all that can be brought to bear on the question.

A point of still greater divergence between the doctrines of science and religion is found when we turn to the problem of the nature and functions of Evil; the common sense of religious thinkers having been hopelessly hampered by the misleading assumption of its introduction into an innocent world by an enemy of the Creator. Science, on the other hand, sees it to be an indispensable factor in the divine method, without which, and the consequent sorrow and suffering, the whole notion of progress would become absolutely inconceivable. We now recognize that, *as suffering*, evil has always existed, where there have been living things to feel pain and to die; *as immorality*, it only came into existence when man became intellectually capable of distinguishing between conduct that was advantageous to his family or tribe (or still earlier, perhaps, to himself), and the reverse—in other words, between right and wrong. Before this stage, there was no such thing as *sin;* but afterwards it existed necessarily, and must continue to do so, until such perfect harmony between man and his environment is established by mutual modifications, that all temptation to act wrongly will disappear, or become so slight as to be an insufficient motive to crime. Meanwhile, we must not forget that most of our vices exist, because they were so many advantages to our semi-brutal ancestors, in whose lives cruelty, selfishness, deceit, sensuality,

were profitable accomplishments. It is, after all, only the happy result of evolution that has changed these qualities into detestable and degrading vices.

Let us begin our notes on this point by taking one or two familiar and simple cases of desirable evils. The great value and moral justification of *War* is that it starts the process of civilization: the less savage tribes unite more easily, and destroy the wilder and inferior races—inferior, that is, as material to be worked up by evolution. "Civilization begins, because the beginning of civilization is a military advantage." Then, too, war calls for and creates certain primitive qualities, excellent as moral commencements; such, for example, are courage, obedience, loyalty, the habit of discipline. These are necessary for human development, until man has had time to shake off enough of his brutal ancestry to be ready for the later and more complex virtues. "The savage virtues which tend to war are the daily bread of human nature," as the author of "Physics and Politics" epigrammatically remarks; and elsewhere he adds that the continued wars of early times "are by their incessant fracture of old images, and by their constant infusion of new elements, the real regenerators of society." So too, Mr. Tylor points out ("Anthropology," p. 430) that under the patriarchal system "people of few wants may prosper in time of peace, in the kindly communion which is

possible where there are no rich and no poor. The weak point of such a society is that it can hardly advance, for civilization is at a standstill where it is regulated by ancestral custom administered by great-grandfathers. Everywhere in the world, in war some stronger and more intelligent rule than this is needed and found. The changes which have shaped the descendants of wild hordes into civilized nations have been in great measure the work of the war-chief."

But probably not many persons now deny the desirability and utility of war: the mistake is made in not completing the general conclusion from such an example, and acknowledging it as a clear instance of the necessity for temporal and occasional evil. Another specimen of nature's plan of doing evil that greater good may follow is shown in *Slavery:* no refinement or increase of knowledge is possible without leisure, and in early societies slavery alone can give man that valuable boon, by creating "a set of persons born to work that others may not work, and not to think in order that others may think." Who will say that this was not a most useful piece of injustice? In fact, if we take as our standard of goodness that which will be so to the ideal or ultimate man, we must admit that the natural morality for any locality at any time has always been, and still is, a judicious mixture of good and evil. Thus,

to refer to our example, the warlike state naturally engenders callousness to suffering, creates hatred, deception, cruelty, by the exercise of these qualities towards enemies, besides fostering a sense of pleasure and exultation when victory is won: and yet, without war, the co-operative virtues on which civilization is based could never have acquired any prominence or strength. What the higher religions have simply regarded as so many "sins," science sees to be necessities of the plan of creation. Those religions have always been theoretical protests against this painful order of things: they have endeavored to produce an artificial morality that would defeat the method of nature—and so to reach by a supreme effort that highest life, which is the still distant goal of civilization, and which will only be gained when man's whole organization has become completely evolved.

Another important consideration is this: that not merely do many qualities — once desirable — pass away, or eventually become evil, with a change of environment, but others are so opposed to one another that they cannot flourish simultaneously in the same organization, individual or social: and further, some most excellent virtues are apparently inseparable from accompanying defects. The balance of human character, involving physiological and psychological difficulties that are only now beginning to be

appreciated, is a far more delicate and complicated matter than the great religious reformers had any reason for supposing it to be. It would seem that as, in process of time, men become acquainted with other ethical systems than that developed in their own tribe or nation, a great collection of beautiful moral thought is the result, and its applicability to all times and every country and nationality is taken for granted. Utopian schemes are consequently propounded for the guidance of the daily lives of semi-savages, without a doubt as to their practicability. But the better we learn to comprehend what man's nature and powers really are, the less we shall be tempted to put any reliance on such methods of reform,—the more patient shall we become in our expectations of further progress.

As good an instance as can be given of the decay of a preliminary virtue,—one of the higher savage moral ideas,—is the gradual loss of courage, or rather promptitude, in dangerous and disagreeable situations. Action on such occasions is now handed over to paid deputies: soldiers, firemen, and policemen, for example, come between us and the ordinary opportunities for exercising the old pluck, and civilization and constant peace are pretty sure to ultimately effect its permanent destruction. A typical illustration of this change occurred not very long ago, when some fifty people in Kensington Gardens

watched a little child drown in two feet of water: no doubt, after sufficient time had elapsed, the majority regretted their inactivity, for it would be absurd to suppose that their conduct showed cruelty, or indeed anything more than the civilized loss of an old quality. Impulsive action was a most excellent *primitive* virtue; life's problems were then very simple, and physical energy was absolutely essential for success. But as men grow more deliberative in discussion, they become less energetic in action: our lost promptitude was a correlative of savage eagerness and violence, and our regret at the consequent change in the manly character may be justly moderated by the reflection that much evil has disappeared at the same time. The constant physical activity of primitive life involved another drawback in general torpor of thought; while with us, on the other hand, increased intellectual power goes with the diminished bodily vigor: so we must not complain if the limited forces of the human organization cannot turn us all into so many admirable Crichtons.

The modern view of this question is very adequately expressed in a leader of the *Daily News* (Sept. 14, 1881) on the subject of a fatal quarrel that occurred at a fashionable watering-place. What happened was this: X, before a number of men in a public smoking-room, spoke contemptuously of

the ladies who had been present at an hotel ball. Y (doubtlessly imbued with an antiquated chivalry) expressed his disagreement with, and anger at, what X had said. The quarrel grew. X swore at Y, and struck him. Whereupon the ladies' champion knocked his opponent down, and he (being in a bad state of health) died very shortly afterwards. The coroner's verdict was manslaughter, and the newspaper's as follows: "The only moral to be drawn from this whole miserable story is an obvious one. Men ought to be polite and courteous: they ought not to make disparaging remarks about ladies in public rooms; but if they will be guilty of discourteous and offensive comment, other men, not personally responsible for the maintenance of decorum and order, had much better let them alone. . . . We shall never have any sound code of good manners until the man who chooses to be ill-mannered is understood to have harmed himself only by his bad behavior, and is regarded as a person whom his irresponsible neighbors are to shun and not to punish."

Probably only a few old-fashioned conservatives could be found to deny that this is very sound and excellent advice. But most certainly such self-restraint, and this habit of quietly reflecting—"It is no business of mine"—is precisely what is best calculated to destroy the old warlike promptness.

No man can serve two masters—we cannot have the old virtue and the new. As Mr. Tylor philosophically remarks ("Primitive Culture," vol. i. p. 26): "The onward movement from barbarism has dropped behind more than one quality of barbaric character, which cultured modern men look back on with regret, and will even strive to regain by futile attempts to stop the course of history, and restore the past in the midst of the present."

The other point, namely, that of the taint of viciousness temporarily inherent in certain desirable qualities—generally intellectual virtues—it is not perhaps advisable to discuss at any length, but the following thoughtful piece of criticism will illustrate our meaning with sufficient plainness: "There is one strange, but quite essential character in us, ever since the Conquest, if not earlier—a delight in the forms of burlesque which are connected in some degree with the foulness in evil. I think the most perfect type of a true English mind in its best possible temper is that of Chaucer; and you will find that, while it is for the most part full of thoughts of beauty, pure and wild like that of an April morning, there are even in the midst of this, sometimes momentarily jesting passages which stoop to play with evil; while the power of listening to and enjoying the jesting of entirely gross persons, whatever the feeling may be which permits it, afterwards

degenerates into forms of humor which render some of quite the greatest, wisest, and most moral of English writers now almost useless for our youth. *And yet you will find that whenever Englishmen are wholly without this instinct, their genius is comparatively weak and restricted*" (Ruskin, "Oxford Lectures on Art," p. 15).

It would certainly seem as though, owing to correlations of organization with which we are as yet unacquainted, sundry ancestral traits could not be got rid of for some time without an accompanying loss of what we ought not to part with. And again, when considering "class" moralities, we are often met with a suggestion of a similar idea: would not the work of artists and certain literary men, for example, suffer if they were themselves as rigidly pure as so many St. Anthonies; and are they not perhaps truly moral in continuing in that state most favorable for their natural mission? Or to take the case of the very religious—those who make their religion a matter of every-day life, not a mere Sunday ornament: do we not invariably find them rather deficient in intellectual virtues—a little bigoted and narrow in their sympathies at times, thanks to their "Hebraizing," as Mr. Arnold has christened the process of sacrificing all other sides of one's nature to the religious side? Morality can hardly be an exception to the general law that governs all mental

and physical qualities—the quantity of power available being strictly limited, extra-efficiency in one point can only be gained at the cost of weakness somewhere else.

In further explanation of this necessity for compromise, and of the purely relative and transient nature of the distinctions between morality and immorality, as popularly conceived, we must refer to the discussion of the question elsewhere—see, for instance, Spencer, "Psychology," vol. ii. pp. 570–577; and Darwin, "Descent of Man," p. 618 *et seq.*

But perhaps the plainest example of the temporary necessity for what is religiously known as sin, is shown in the scientific explanation of nature's intentions with regard to the delicate question of sexual relations. We have already noticed in the former chapters that the views of the higher religions on this point were markedly ascetic,—teaching as they did that the natural desires are hostile to man's nobler life, and accordingly to be destroyed by recourse to the severest measures, if necessary. Christ was not a physiologist, or he could not have admitted such a profound error as an essential part of his doctrine; we should, moreover, remember that he looked for a speedy termination of the Æon, and

therefore naturally regarded the whole question of the propagation of the human race with somewhat prejudiced eyes. So, too, Buddha's views are accounted for by his theory that all the desires of life and its pleasures are but so many causes of sorrow and suffering, and that their complete elimination from man's nature constitutes his only possible salvation. But, notwithstanding the fascination they may theoretically have for us, we must condemn such standards of purity as impracticable and contrary to nature; whose purposes would be entirely defeated if a feminine chastity could be thus successfully imposed on men.

If the reader will turn to Mr. Darwin's "Descent of Man," chapters viii., xx., xxi., he will find there ample reasons for concluding that the physical basis for many of nature's most admirable and varied modes of education is this very condition so hateful to the ascetic spirit. He will see how, through sexual selection, this has led to the development of beauty and many ornamental accomplishments; and that we are justified in describing this instinct as the probable foundation of art and refinement: whilst the contrast between man's and woman's natural feelings with regard to all sexual questions ultimately gave rise to chivalry, politeness, and even delicacy,—and hence is no unimportant factor in the polished charms of civilized life. Let us recall the beautiful words which

the Poet Laureate puts into the mouth of his ideal King, telling us how he made his knights swear—

> "To love one maiden only, cleave to her
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her; for indeed I knew
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thoughts, and amiable words,
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man."
>
> (*Idylls of the King*: "*Guinevere.*")

But has not this process of "courting" a purely physical origin; is it not rendered possible only by the simple fact that "in all animals the males have stronger passions than the females," and hence the former woo, the others require to be wooed; and have we not in this beautiful plotting of nature for human happiness those very possibilities so dreaded by religious reformers? As M. Renan suggests ("Dialogues Philosophiques," Certitudes, p. 26), nature seems to have entrusted the sentiment of purity to the care of woman, the animal passion to that of man: the proper compromise beeween these two bringing about the desired end, the rich and wonderful complexity of feelings we call love. There is a profound natural justice then in the anger and contempt with which we regard the woman who betrays her sacred trust, and sins against what is

rightly included under the term "womanliness"—purity, modesty, gentleness; and hardly less reasonable is the more moderate ridicule and pity shown for the man whose "manliness" is too strongly modified by those very qualities.

We regret having to touch upon a question perhaps wisely relegated by English feeling to the class of subjects not fit for popular discussion; but on no other point does religious theorizing so strikingly conflict with modern doctrine: nowhere do the teachers of antiquity, in spite of all their enthusiasm and confidence, so fail to give even an approximate account of the Divine purpose and method. Much that was, and still is, indispensable to these, they have, following the custom and doctrine of their times, called sinful; and in their hasty distrust of the "natural man," they would have lopped and trimmed humanity into premature tameness and infirmity,—careless of the rich variety of life and character that is the result of nature's far-seeing compromises.

Closely allied with the above question, and equally opposed to pre-scientific teaching, is the modern doctrine of the essential healthiness of pleasure. "Sentient existence can evolve only on condition that pleasure-giving acts are life-sustaining acts;" or in other words, "The evolution of life has been made possible only by the establishment of con-

nections between pleasures and beneficial actions, and between pains and detrimental actions" ("Data of Ethics," pp. 83 and 150). No argument is necessary to demonstrate such an obvious truth in the case of animals and the lower races of men; but as the human organization becomes more evolved and complex, this simple law requires some modification, since the higher sentiments yield pleasures that may often entail bodily suffering, as well as pains that may follow the gratification of the lower desires; and, moreover (perhaps owing to its being enjoyed with more developed faculties), deferred pleasure may prove far superior to immediate gratification. For it is certain that, from the mere fact of self-restraint having been practiced, and in addition to the enjoyment of longer anticipation, an increased feeling of satisfaction is generally experienced: not only on the occasional principle of "getting disagreeable things over," but also from a belief (probably acquired in childhood through the frequent inculcation of prudence) that the same pleasure is more enjoyed if postponed for a time.

To refrain from self-indulgence is of course, within proper limitations, an important factor in education. It is not so unquestionable, however, that the self-control which springs directly from the fear of Divine displeasure or that of our fellow-creatures is of a very high order of morality: at all events, so far

as such restraint is only the result of calculations as to any purely extrinsic consequences of our action. But that the general bent of nature's method is anti-ascetic we may best learn by the consideration of certain average cases: for instance, however much we may despise and condemn the gourmand who makes a deity of his palate and appetite, we fall into the error of asceticism if we let our contempt carry us past the physiological fact that "the pleasure which accompanies the taking of food goes along with physical benefit; and the benefit is the greater, the keener the satisfaction of appetite." And however much we may deplore that root of many evils, the love of money, we should remember that we owe most of our present material civilization to it; and that certainly the religious indifference to earthly possessions, if generally felt, would have tended more perhaps than any other conceivable cause to have kept the world in a condition of stationary simplicity and ignorance. Or, to take another example, can we deny a balance on the right side, as the outcome of the animal passions and sentiments, when we reflect that it is to them that we owe love and marriage, the manifold duties and pleasures of parentage, and the founding of happy homes—in one word, the most steadying and civilizing influences that can be brought to bear on the conduct of life? We may mourn over the abuse of

these instincts, and yet what would the world be,—indeed could the world exist at all,—without them?

Never was a more monstrous blunder made than in the tacit assumption of asceticism that we are "so diabolically organized that pleasures are injurious and pains beneficial": whereas the very converse is nature's law; and for "pleasures" we should substitute "excess," adding that pain is beneficial only so far as it tends to deter men from such excess. But though the slowly, silently growing common sense, that is destined one day to revolutionize all our religious ideas, generally accepts the newer doctrine, still the old continues to bear fruit in many a broken-down constitution, the result of a careless disregard of the necessary conditions of health. Men and women who suicidally overwork themselves in "a good cause," who sacrifice themselves to ill-advised efforts after impossible reforms, are yet glorified as heroes. Not (let us repeat) that inclination should not often yield to a sense of duty: but the duty must be real, not imaginary; and the natural compromise has to be made at a very different point from that selected by religion, a point of far less asceticism.

"Difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death," have been too much the self-indulgence of noble minds, and have often tempted them, without compensating advantage to any human being, out of the safe mean

that nature always favors. But science teaches moderation and foresight, and that all individual impulses to excess must give way to the interests of the race: such is her more provident, if less attractive, morality. Moreover, whether we consider the methods of personal purity taught by Christianity, by means of actual bodily mutilation, if required; or the indiscriminate almsgiving approved of; or the non-resistance of evil enjoined; or indeed any of the ascetic characteristics of this religion, we are always met by the reflection that the great object in view of all such action was *the perfection of the agent himself.* We need but recall some of the passages given under the heading of "Other-worldliness" in the last chapter to prove this: are not sufferers invited to rejoice when ill-treated and abused,—mindful, apparently, only of their own greater purity, not of the consequent degradation and doom of their persecutors? Indeed it is not too much to say that the result to the sinner was lost sight of, or absorbed, in the joyful satisfaction of being sinned against. Reconsider these two passages, the one from the Talmud, the other from the Gospels:—

"One day, Rabbi Lazar, going into his house, said, What news? They answered, Some came hither, and ate and drank, and made prayers for thee. Then, saith he, there is no good reward. Another time going into his house, he said, What

news? It was answered, Some others came, and ate and drank, and railed upon you. Now, saith he, there will be a good reward."

"Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and reproach you, and cast out your name as evil for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."

Still, however egoistic this may be, we must not be so unjust as to regard it as therefore essentially selfish, in the worst sense of the word. The mischief that this self-abnegation would inflict on others, the fact that the supposed advantages were won at the cost of others' future suffering, was one of which all men in those days were unfortunately ignorant; that the children of the ascetically inclined will be unhealthy and feeble, that indiscriminate charity creates idleness and pauperism, that evil-doing is only encouraged by success, are modern discoveries.

And what do we now know is the great law under which development and progress have gone on in the world? Surely "the Survival of the Fittest," implying as it does the extinction of the less fit, has little in common with the unlimited benevolence in-

sisted on by Christianity? "The law that each creature shall take the benefits and evils of its own nature, be they those derived from ancestry, or those due to self-produced modifications, has been the law under which life has evolved thus far; and it must continue to be the law, however much further life may evolve. Whatever qualifications this natural course of action may now or hereafter undergo, are qualifications that cannot, without fatal results, essentially change it. Any arrangements which in a considerable degree prevent superiority from profiting by the rewards of superiority, or shield inferiority from the evils it entails, any arangements which tend to make it as well to be inferior as to be superior, are arrangements diametrically opposed to the progress of organization and the reaching of a higher life" ("Data of Ethics," p. 188; cf. p. 198).

Thus, then, the unpractical character of the Christian rules of life, *taken in their original and genuine sense*, is plainly shown: if really accepted by men, they would have put an end to this process of natural selection, by substituting for its necessarily severe competition an excessive yielding to others on the part of the best members of the community. Even as a temporary policy such a self-abnegation theory is undesirable, owing to its inevitable failure as a method of reform; as Mr. Spencer points out (*Idem.* p. 196), an accepted sacrifice tends as much to culti-

vate egoism on the part of the receiver as it does generosity on the part of the giver; and a constant self-surrender leads to the encouragement of an intolerable greediness, instances of which must be only too familiar to all. Moreover, for an advanced race of human beings such rules are simply impossible, implying as they do either the continuance of evil, or that for all men to be altruistic, all will have to be egoistic at the same time—willing alike to sacrifice themselves to others, and others to themselves. [This criticism, of course, must not be understood as referring to the later modifications of Christian doctrine, —which, after all, are little more than a clumsy compromise, a sort of half-way stage between religious and scientific morality,—but to the original theories of Christ and his fellow-countrymen; with whom the doctrine of extreme humility and self-abnegation unquestionably held a most prominent place.]

It may occur to some readers that these remarks are by no means sufficiently appreciative of the quality to which Comte gave the well-chosen title of "Altruism": if so, they will do well to consider the point whether this virtue, invariably and necessarily, implies anything more than the gratification of a more advanced condition of feeling than directly egoistic pleasures can satisfy. Take, for example, the typical saying "It is more blessed to give than to receive:" that this may originally have had reference to

the principle of deferred gratification, or other-worldliness, we should probably be justified in assuming; but we may also regard it as a statement of the simple fact that, for men of finer and more complex natures, the pleasure of giving is more intense than that of an equivalent receiving. Think of the proud and happy satisfaction that accompanies the self-sacrifice of deep affection, the misery and bitter repentance that so often follow thoughtless self-assertion; or consider the most perfect devotion of all—that of a mother for her child—and then say if altruism may not often be nothing more than the self-indulgence of a loving nature.

The true morality is found, as usual, in a compromise; altruism is excellent in moderation—but so also is egoism; and deficiency or excess in either, being a source of weakness and therefore ultimately self-destructive, tends to disappear. (See "Data of Ethics," pp. 196 and 204.)

All the religious systems we have touched on in these Notes date back to times when men were ignorant and credulous; they therefore call for much belief and little knowledge; and as time passes and more knowledge is acquired, the old creeds, as we have seen, are occasionally disproved or found wanting. They were but the substitutes that human curiosity demanded when it could not get facts; and were therefore, *per se*, almost certain to be essentially wrong.

To sum up the case of the particular religion with which we are chiefly concerned, we find its pre-scientific character everywhere apparent. A system is surely irrational that encourages men to attempt a morality far beyond their powers, beyond what the race has even yet been bred up to; for the moral faculties are more liable to a disastrous breakdown than even the intellectual, and with worse consequences; moral straining not only hindering, but absolutely reversing, the process of moral training. The acute nervous anxiety and excitement that always occur when religious feeling exhibits marked activity are also most undesirable in their effects. "We are bound," said the leading medical journal a short time ago, "to point out that great and grave mischief may be done by undue excitement. Whatever suspends the control of the judgment is abnormal, as an exercise of cerebral function. When, therefore, the emotions supplant or obstruct the influence of the reasoning faculty—when a mind is, so to say, lifted or carried 'out of itself' by the operation of any 'feeling,' it is in peril. A particular powerful state of ecstasy or rhapsody, or a frequent repetition of excitement of the class which enthrals the mental senses, may quickly, and must in the long run, enfeeble the mind. Beyond question, devotees and enthusiasts of the extreme class, those who see visions, dream dreams, and hear voices, are in an

abnormal and distinctly morbid condition. What is called 'communion'—in the spiritual sense, in which the mind is alienated from the body—is one stage on the way to mental derangement. A large number of good people undoubtedly go that stage, and return with impunity, but there is always risk in the mental exploit" ("Lancet," Dec. 7, 1881). The writer is referring to modern Revivals, but what he says is equally applicable to much that we read of in the New Testament itself, as well as in the history of the early Church.

Let us also ask, what would the man be like who faithfully practiced the ideal virtues Christ taught? Would he not have a tender conscience more fit for a life in Utopia than the world's rough work; would he not shrink from seizing opportunities—advantages that told, ever so little or indirectly, against another; would he not be generous to a fault, careless of wealth and position, unmindful of men's good opinion: —and is this the only, or general, type of man that the world's progress calls for? Do we not see that it is rather the pushing, even grasping, men of business, who, in helping themselves to their substantial ends, best serve nature's purpose, by thus advancing the material welfare of humanity; and so assist in establishing that mechanical prosperity on which alone a lasting moral and intellectual civilization can be based? Is not the whole tendency, then, of

human evolution to produce something essentially different from the Man of Sorrows—the ideal which Christianity sets before us? And, however much some might like, or fancy they would like, to substitute his morality for that of nature, the thing is impossible. We are too apt to insufficiently consider the fact that time and place are, next to the action of heredity, the most important influences in determining character; and that consequently in the wholly different environment where health and happiness will be secured by an almost perfect adaptation of man to his surroundings, the chief characteristics of our religious Ideal could have no visible existence, and would soon disappear for want of opportunity. Or, perhaps, the point will be put more plainly if we say that the ultimately ideal man will in no way resemble Christ, since his virtues will be those of the mind rather than those of the heart. The character of Christ presumes an environment of evil; suffering, and injustice, in alleviating which his pity can find work to do; bigotry and cruelty, to which he can oppose his self-abnegation; misery and poverty for his loving charity to relieve,—and so on. Remove these conditions, and the physical organization which accompanies the virtues they call into action will perish from atrophy, or—speaking more accurately—will be modified into that essential to the higher intellectual virtues.

Moreover, whether as effect or cause of his character, Christ (as we have seen) unhesitatingly accepted the ascetic doctrines of his time; contempt for this world and its pleasures, power, and wealth; purity carried to a suicidal extreme, and similar ideas. Fortunately, human nature has been too strong for such views, or we should have been far less advanced in civilization, intelligence, and morality, than we are. Modern progress probably owes much less to religion than the latter is disposed to claim; for in her conservatism and tender regret for the past, she has almost invariably opposed the increase of political freedom, the teaching of science, the speculations of liberal philosophy—and these are the very groundwork of our present position.

That the practical policy of Religion can only be temporarily efficient is then suggested by the following considerations: (1) by it the social, as well as the self-regarding, virtues are based on enthusiasm, or feeling, which is merely one of their most uncertain and variable factors; (2) in ignorance of man's true origin, the authors of this policy have assumed the potential existence, in the organizations of all men, of qualities which, even now, only a few have partially acquired—thus giving rise to what may be not unfairly termed premature and unsound forms of virtue; and (3) they have not shown any adequate

conception of the useful functions of evil and the correlation of human qualities, but have taught that a man could acquire any combination of virtues which might be selected, and that all evil was deadly. We now see, however, that certain characteristics, in themselves vicious, have been requisite for the attainment of a higher state; and that certain virtues (mainly intellectual), and desirable physical qualities, even yet are often necessarily accompanied by others which religion can but regard as sinful.

Many examples might be brought forward to show that the theoretical virtues of religion require diluting, as it were, with a little evil before they have any immediate practical value. What is the process with regard to Truth, for instance? We only tell men the truth when we are not afraid to trust them with it: savages *cannot* be truthful—faith in man as a general rule of life would in their case be suicidal. Nor, even among civilized nations, has the occasional necessity for falsehood and deceit by any means disappeared as yet: take, for example, the often-quoted cases of deceiving sick persons or would-be criminals: their use of the truth would be a harmful one,—they cannot therefore be trusted with it. And here, in passing, we should not fail to note that careful attention to the result of our actions on others—rather than to a supposed bad effect on our own characters—which is distinctive of the

modern method of regarding such questions. Nor, again, can it be denied that there is such a thing as a decent, amiable deceit;—much of what is popularly termed "washing one's dirty linen at home" would come under this heading. It may well be a wife's duty to deceive: ought her children to know that their father is a drunken brute, or her friends that she suffers from his cruelty—if she can hide it from them? And which would be the more admirable, she who sacrificed the truth on such occasions, or she who did not? Thus, then, we acquire a flexible, in place of a rigid rule—(for surely it is pharisaical to pretend to ignore modifications which all but the very superstitious practice)—"never tell a lie" has to give way to "hardly ever tell a lie"; and so morality becomes intelligent, not childish—practicable, not merely a graceful theory.

It is indeed easy to see that the earlier religious estimate of sin and the feeling of remorse are rapidly undergoing a substantial change: in fact, the modern-manly school of morality rather shrinks from unqualified holiness, perhaps tacitly recognizing that it is not essentially human, and is apt to be somewhat uninteresting, owing to its so frequently being accompanied by physical or intellectual weakness. Our favorite heroes nowadays are, as a rule, sinners—of the careless, not the mean type, be it understood: *Angli, non angeli*—we like to take our sentiment

rugged and unpolished, if we may so express it, in dramatic contrast to our easy, every-day life; hence we now find such a character as the reckless, swearing, quarrelsome hero who managed the engines of the "Prairie Belle" more pathetic in his self-sacrifice —more to our taste, at all events—than any number of saintly martyrs. Deep down in the average heart lies the conviction that such sin as his is very human, and all sanctity a little angelic and beyond us—as yet; and that the former probably has some intimate connection with physical energy and courage —those ancestral traits we still love so well. If, again, we take historical examples, is it not evident that the falsehoods with which Peter began his independent career, the murder which preceded Paul's conversion, left undoubted results for good in both those leaders of men? arising certainly from earnest repentance—but then, repentance implies sin. The fact is, sins that are simply relics of the old savage or animal ancestry breaking out—sometimes unconsciously, sometimes under strong compulsion—in a man, and not the outcome of an essential baseness in his own life, are not unfrequently signs of an inherited organization of considerable force and character. [This possible superiority of the repentant sinner over those whose very weakness perhaps has saved them from trial and failure, did not escape the notice of Christ and the Rabbis—as a reference to

the quotations under the heading of *Repentance* in the last chapter (see pp. 86, 87) will show]. It follows that we are not so very unreasonable in our leniency towards these outcomes of primitive passions, after all; for they would seem to be indispensable factors in some of the most beautiful characters in history —the Davids, and Pauls, and Magdalenes. And if at first sight it appears to the reader that the logical, and immoral, deduction from this is "Go and do likewise," let him remember that we are here speaking of acts which are the spontaneous expression of a strong animal nature,—but that deliberate, *unnatural* sin could never have any other consequence than degradation, with very poor chance of recovery.

Thus, then, the conviction seems forced upon us, that though the ethical doctrines of all the higher religions have had a true local and temporary value, it is a mistake to imagine that their principles are therefore applicable, without radical change, to all times and places: for this would be equivalent to regarding what is merely a stage of our moral development as identical with its ultimate form. The imaginary hopes and fears of these religions constituted a most useful class of provisional arguments and restraints, by the help of which the conditions needed for a still higher evolution might be reached.

For man to become moral—that is, to learn to invariably guide his conduct by reference to its natural consequences—it is requisite that he should for a time believe in the existence of more extended, non-natural results of his actions, such as political or ecclesiastical terrorism invents and employs as motives.

This being one of the chief conclusions to which these notes tend, Mr. Spencer's clear explanation of the point may be very usefully quoted: "The truly moral deterrent from murder is not constituted by a representation of hanging as a consequence, or by a representation of tortures in hell as a consequence, or by a representation of the horror and hatred excited in fellow-men; but by a representation of the necessary natural results—the infliction of death-agony on the victim, the destruction of all his possibilities of happiness, the entailed sufferings to his belongings. Neither the thought of imprisonment, nor of Divine anger, nor of social disgrace, is that which constitutes the moral check on theft; but the thought of injury to the person robbed, joined with a vague consciousness of the general evils caused by disregard of proprietary rights. Those who reprobate the adulterer on moral grounds, have their minds filled, not with ideas of an action for damages, or of future punishment following the breach of a commandment, or of loss of reputation; but

they are occupied with ideas of unhappiness entailed on the aggrieved wife or husband, the damaged lives of children, and the diffused mischiefs which go along with disregard of the marriage tie. Conversely, the man who is moved by a moral feeling to help another in difficulty, does not picture to himself any reward here or hereafter; but pictures only the better condition he is trying to bring about. One who is morally prompted to fight against a social evil, has neither material benefit nor popular applause before his mind; but only the mischiefs he seeks to remove and the increased well-being which will follow their removal" ("Data of Ethics," p. 120). In one word, restraints that are permanently moral refer to the intrinsic effects of actions, not to their extrinsic or accidental effects.

A striking parallel to the moral education by means of terrorism, necessary to the advance of humanity out of barbarism into civilization is suggested by the recent discovery that the brains of habitual criminals of the violent class present certain singular points of resemblance to those of carnivorous animals. This is not only interesting as explaining the probable cause of their persistent brutality, but also as indicative of the right method of dealing with such persons—namely, by vigorous corporal punishment. All who have had anything to do with the training of animals know that it is absolutely

essential at times to be "cruel only to be kind" in a way that would horrify theoretical tender-heartedness. We may, then, justly recognize and be grateful for the good work done by the religious imagination in supplying such powerful and well-adapted motives, which cannot in safety be entirely abandoned, until there has been generally reached that high level of intelligence to which we may reasonably look for the sound and final basis of virtue. But notwithstanding this, gratitude for the past or even present value of an institution should not blind us to the fact of its merely temporary utility and probable future harmfulness; for harmful it would be, if this policy were accepted as suited to all stages of the moral development of the race. Its result in the past has been an uncertain morality, gained by the partial sacrifice of many valuable characteristics essential to the completeness of human nature. But the wider the distance between man and his brutal ancestry grows, and the better the laws of organic heredity and development are understood, the more will the need for such rough processes of improvement tend to disappear, the more reverent and artistic will our modes of education become.

If space permitted, it would be interesting to dwell on the subject of the probable new fields of

action for moral principle in the future. For example, when heredity is better and more widely understood, the inadvisability—to use the mildest possible term—of no small number of the marriages that are now permitted, without a protest being ventured, will be evident to any who choose to think about the question. Love obedient to the teaching of Science—that will be curious, at first! But many a child martyr has yet to suffer and die under our present superstitions; many a careworn father will sink beneath the burden and anxiety of a sickly or too numerous family; many a young mother, wholly unfitted by nature to become such, will yet be sacrificed to the doctrines founded on ignorance and credulity, now all-powerful in these matters, before the truth prevails. And though there is some perception already of the more reasonable morality that is slowly growing into power, it is a significant fact that its possibilities are steadily ignored, or even condemned, by the orthodox, who, in their attention to dovelike simplicity, would seem to have forgotten the wisdom of the serpent—notwithstanding its no less authoritative recommendation.

To the effects then, mental as well as physical, social as well as individual, of a system of ethics based on unprejudiced deductions from our constantly increasing knowledge of nature's laws, we may look forward in confidence and hope. Ignorance and

temptation, those two principal causes of sin and suffering, are now subject to a more persistent and systematic attack than ever before : that the former retreats as science advances is of course self-evident ; and that acceptance of the truly moral doctrine of causation will necessarily tend to diminish the latter is hardly less so. For whilst religion, by her theory that forgiveness can be won by earnest repentance, offers some slight encouragement to the sinner, who is thereby led to hope that he may (by good luck or good management) enjoy the pleasures, and yet avoid the penalties, of his self-indulgence—science sternly forbids any such expectations. With a perfect indifference to all offences against a merely ceremonial or artificial morality, she combines the rigid doctrine that every real infraction of nature's moral precepts must be followed by punishment,—as its inevitable consequence,—of which no repentance can take the place, no *forgiveness* obviate the necessity.

But more than this, the doctrine of evolution is that the continued process of civilization will result in the creation of a race for which what is truly immoral—intrinsically bad—will not have the smallest attraction, being indeed repugnant to all highly evolved natures. "Even in our own time we may hope to see some improvement ; but the unselfish mind will find its highest gratification in the belief

that, whatever may be the case with ourselves, our descendants will understand many things which are hidden from us now, will better appreciate the beautiful world in which we live, avoid much of that suffering to which we are subject, enjoy many blessings of which we are not yet worthy, and escape many of those temptations which we deplore, but cannot wholly resist" (Lubbock).

Still we must not forget that it is in our power to retard the good time coming, by carelessness or inaction, even more, perhaps, than by a continuance of blundering and earnestness; for certainly we need our faith and energy no less, when following the guidance of science, than when under the more stationary rule of a religious creed. "Progress is not automatic, in the sense that if we were all to be cast into a deep slumber for the space of a generation, we should arouse to find ourselves in a greatly improved social state. The world only grows better, even in the moderate degree in which it does grow better, because people wish that it should, and take the right steps to make it better. Evolution is not a force, but a process, not a cause, but a law; it explains the source, and marks the immoveable limitations of social energy. But social energy can never be superseded either by evolution or by anything else," (Morley, "On Compromise," p. 161.)

And now to bring this desultory glance over the situation to an end, with the expression of the hope that our readers may have gained some little food for curiosity and thought, and will carry away with them no mere feeling of suspicion or even dislike for the doctrines here sketched. And if we ask ourselves once more that often-repeated question of the German Rationalist, "Are we yet Christians?" may we not fairly say that history and science unite in answering thus: So far as conduct is concerned (and that, according to Mr. Matthew Arnold, is three fourths of life), the great majority of us never have been Christians, or anything at all resembling them, and never can be. But, in the future, morality will become more like what Christ taught, though without the basis he assumed, and not attained in the manner he indicated; and this superficial resemblance it is that causes so many still to cherish the belief that the world is steadily growing more obedient to their great Master. Humanity will be easily moral in those yet far distant days, it is true, but it will be so by keeping to the natural track; for goodness is a question of organization, and will be safely, permanently won, only when the indispensable physical characteristics shall have been at length evolved.

Let us, then, abandon the pretence of following our old guides. The churches do but formulate their ignorance both of the starting-point and of the

goal of morality : dead to the needs and hopes of the present, their theories are of interest now only as historical relics. Instead of these let us frankly accept the teaching of the last and greatest of God's prophets, Science, who alone can tell us truly what we ought to do, and what we may become. And one thing we may learn certainly and at once ; to put away, as an error of the past, all asceticism and distrust of human nature. Thus, ours will be a faith and reverence deeper than that of the old religious spirit, with its bitter and impatient cry, "*Who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?*" For, as we look round us, in admiration and gratitude, on the already wondrous results of the Divine Process of Evolution, we shall feel a new and confident hope of the ultimate perfection and happiness of our race,—even in this, its earthly home.

APPENDIX.

I. *SHORT SUMMARY.*

In these days of many books, and of much strange and revolutionary thought, it is a common complaint amongst those who are not what may be termed readers by profession, or gifted with retentive memories, that they can remember little or nothing accurately of what they read, notwithstanding, it may be, a very genuine interest in the subjects treated of. For the help of this large class of intelligent seekers after truth, and to save them not only loss of time, but often real dissatisfaction or even distress, a simple plan might frequently be adopted by authors—namely, to give a final summary of their work in a series of brief statements of the main points they have tried to establish: such ultimate retrospect being a comfortable support for the memory, and supplying certain definite conclusions to be carried away.

In these Notes the points for which attention is principally asked are as follows:—

I. The general purpose in view has been the criticism of Christian Ethics by the light of the Theory of Evolution.

II. Two hypotheses are assumed:—

1. That all moral ideas, even though appearing new, are in reality only the natural consequents of previous ideas in the same order of thought.

2. That the growth of morality being thus continuous, and mainly dependent on social and material surroundings, it is irrational to attribute directly to any teacher developments which first become manifest long after his time, in a totally different environment.

III. Some proof has been advanced on behalf of the following propositions :—

1. That Christ's moral teaching included no ethical novelties, but that his originality consisted in the fact that he established the essential difference between formal and natural morality, and so was the great Religious Liberator of mankind.

2. That, considering the beliefs and practice of his time and country, it is preposterous to explain away his recommendations of asceticism, indiscriminate almsgiving, non-resistance of evil, and other customs then accepted as moral duties, as being merely intended *metaphorically*. [In proof of this point, the charity enjoined by the Rabbis, and the austerities prevalent among that parallel sect to Christianity—the Essenes—may be more particularly borne in mind.]

3. That much of Christ's doctrine was necessarily of only temporary and local value; but that the Church has greatly hindered the progress of knowledge and scientific morality by insisting that her founder's teaching is final on all points.

4. That science is now proving the origin and nature of man to be entirely different to those assumed by religious teachers, and thereby contradicting much that is essential to their doctrines.

5. That our views with regard to the nature and functions of evil are consequently undergoing a radical change; that we are now learning to look upon it as an indispensable factor in the divine process of evolution, and not simply in the light of so much direct opposition to the Creator's intentions.

6. That, owing to the limited and slowly progressive powers of man, another fact—the correlation of qualities—has to be taken into account in our estimate of human possibilities; and this all the ancient religious teachers, from their necessary ignorance of physical science, were unable to do.

II. *LIST OF AUTHORITIES.*

The author desires to acknowledge his indebtedness to most of the following works: more especially to those by Professor Max Muller, Professor Kuenen, Dr. Monier Williams, and Professor Le Page Renouf, with regard to Chapter I; and to the writings of Mr. Herbert Spencer and Dr. Darwin in Chapter III; —which is indeed little more than an attempt at a simplified version of some of the views so ably advocated in the former writer's admirable work, "The Data of Ethics." Wherever a quotation has been made in the preceding pages, it has always been indicated in the usual manner; though often without any reference being given, as in many cases this could not be of any possible value, and would therefore only be the cause of unnecessary length.

More particular attention should be called to those works marked with an asterisk; whilst for readers who only desire a short course of study which shall include the greater part of the facts and arguments sketched in this volume, the *numbered* works may be especially recommended—to be read in the order thus suggested:—

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Max Muller . .	* "Introduction to the Science of Religion." (1)
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Greg . . . * "Creed of Christendom."
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* "Articles on Eternal Punishment": *Contemporary*, April and May, 1879.

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* "Sociology."
* "Data of Ethics." (12)

Darwin . . . "Origin of Species."
* "Descent of Man." (9)

Lubbock . . . "Prehistoric Times."
* "Origin of Civilization."

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PASSAGES FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT QUOTED OR REFERRED TO.

This index is chiefly intended to assist readers, as far as is possible, in satisfying themselves that no important point in the reported Ethical Doctrine of Christ has been overlooked in these Notes. In referring to a particular passage, however, it should be remembered that the Gospels abound in duplicate and parallel sayings, and that accordingly the omission of any special verse or verses does not necessarily imply that the teaching they contain has itself been passed over.

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