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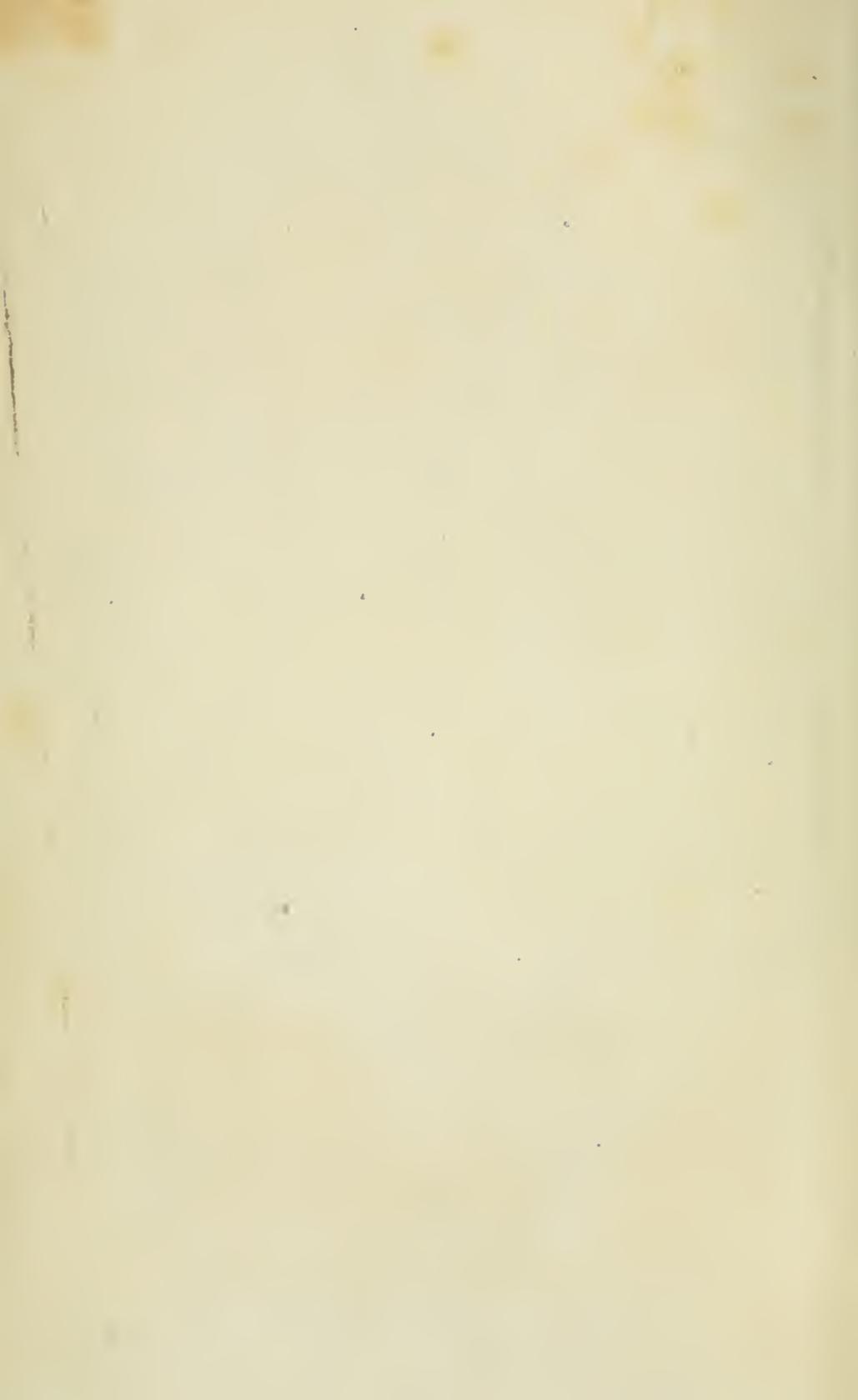
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THE

# PHILOSOPHY

OF

# EVANGELICISM.

Robert <sup>✓</sup>Brown

*SECOND EDITION.*

LONDON :  
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW,  
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## PREFACE.

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THE point sought to be established in this Essay is—that Christianity, considered as the doctrine of “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” is a primitive element in the world’s moral constitution.

But in order to maintain that position, Christian Faith must be shown to have the same INTUITIVE ORIGIN as our other moral ideas ; and this requires a right conception of the Christian sacrifice, for unless the IDEA of it be in accord with our other moral conceptions, it cannot be the subject of a moral intuition. Hence, for the purposes of this inquiry, we must extract the Christianity on which we are to experimentalize, not from creeds or crystalised *forms* of thought, but from the living conscience, from the Christian heart. Such is the Christianity to which, in our title page, we have given the name of Evangelicism.

It has been too readily taken for granted, that the peculiarities of the evangelical system are out of harmony with natural religion. We believe the reverse to be the fact. And feeling assured that

good service would be rendered to the cause of moral and religious progress, could we establish to the general satisfaction the truth of our conviction, we ventured, in the first edition of this work, to solicit for our argument the honour of its perusal.

Having since carefully revised our first effort, and applied to it a severe censorship, re-arranging the order of thought, and eliminating everything which seemed extraneous, we again offer the argument, reconstructed and amplified, to public consideration.

Placed between two extremes, with neither of which we can entirely sympathise, there is some danger of our sharing the not unusual fate of men of no party. Strict dogmatists, whether so on conviction, or because bound by subscription to ecclesiastical formulas, are apt to turn away with repugnance from a method of investigation which partakes of the nature of free enquiry. And the lovers of free enquiry are not generally disposed to look with complacency on those who maintain evangelical opinions. Hence it is not improbable that we shall be repudiated by both, without either of them taking the trouble to look through our pages with sufficient care to enable them to give reasons for their judgment.

There lies, however, between these two extremes a large independent and intelligent middle class

who, alike heedless of ecclesiastical dictation and superior to sceptical querulousness, are earnest enquirers after truth—come from what quarter it may. To such, then, we make our appeal; and especially to that portion of the religious public which feels itself unsettled by existing controversies, and participates with us in the growing persuasion that, if we would escape an irrational Charybdis, we have no alternative but to encounter a rational Scylla.

Many attempts have been made in this direction, but, so far as we are aware, there has been in all of them a toning down of strict evangelicism to meet the supposed conditions of the question. Now, that is no part of our purpose. On the contrary, the evangel of St. Paul and of the Olden Times has, we think, been already toned down and disfigured by the Lockian transmutation to which scholastic theology has subjected it; and its restoration to its Pauline simplicity and glory is a primary step, essential to the object we contemplate.

Among the many who may deem our design laudable, it is probable that there will be not a few who, from having been long accustomed so to think, will, in anticipation, pronounce it impracticable. But let not those who concur with us in opinion that success is extremely desirable, be in haste to despair. Even a forlorn hope has chances in its

favour ; and upon such a topic nothing can be won without patient perseverance. Having taxed our powers to render a subtle argument clear, consecutive, and conclusive, whether we have succeeded or failed, its very difficulty will have charms for genuine thinkers, to say nothing of its unquestionable importance. And should we be fortunate enough to engage the co-operation of minds capable of thoroughly grappling with the subject, it will be a gratification to us, next to having our views confirmed, to see error *detected*, if error exist.

# CONTENTS.

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## CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
<i>The Nature of the Argument . . . . .</i>	I

## CHAPTER II.

<i>The Conditions of the Argument.—Premisses Assumed . . . . .</i>	25
--	----

## CHAPTER III.

<i>The Precise Question evolved, and its Answer indicated.—The Evangelical Hypothesis . . . . .</i>	55
---	----

## CHAPTER IV.

<i>The Moral Unity of Humanity, the basis of Vicarious Merit and Suffering . . . . .</i>	84
--	----

## CHAPTER V.

<i>Our Intuitive Aptitude to appropriate Corporate Merit, the Origin of Christian Faith . . . . .</i>	142
---	-----

---

CHAPTER VI.		PAGE
<i>The Law of Justification, as it emerges out of the preceding Hypothesis</i> . . . . .	184	
CHAPTER VII.		
<i>Proofs from Catholic Concurrence, and from Holy Scripture</i> . . . . .	203	
CHAPTER VIII.		
<i>The Moral Fruits of Justification. — “Ecce Homo”</i> . . . . .	232	
CHAPTER IX.		
<i>Conclusion</i> . . . . .	250	

## ERRATUM.

Page 222 line 7 : strike out comma, and read—theoretical consistency requires, &c.

THE  
*Philosophy of Evangelicism.*



CHAPTER I.

THE NATURE OF THE ARGUMENT.

OUR purpose in the following pages is to evolve from Evangelicism, as it lives in the Christian heart, what, for want of a more appropriate word, we must call its Philosophy. Although aware that systematic theologians object to the word when applied to revealed religion, we nevertheless persist in its use, not because we widely differ from their views, but simply because we cannot find any other term in the English language which would, with any degree of accuracy, convey our meaning. No doubt

we employ it in a sense different from that in which it was understood by the ancients; probably in a sense peculiarly English. Accordingly Hegel sarcastically remarks: "The *name* at least of philosophy is honoured in England. The natural sciences are, in England, denominated philosophy. Theories, especially in morals and moral sciences, which are derived from the feelings of the human heart, or from experience, are called philosophy; also those which contain principles of political economy." Hegel's notions of philosophy were more transcendental, and his sarcasm will glance off without impression; but what he says is nevertheless true. In Anglican parlance, "we speak of the philosophy of the human mind as being of all philosophies that to which the name 'philosophy' is particularly appropriated; and, when the word is used alone, this is to be understood as the philosophy spoken of. Other philosophies are referred to their several objects by qualifying terms: thus we speak of natural philosophy, meaning thereby the philosophy of nature or of material objects. We also

speak of the philosophy of positive law, understanding thereby the philosophy of those binding rules properly called laws. The terms 'philosophy of history,' 'philosophy of manufactures,' and other similar terms are used. All objects which can so occupy the mind as to engage it in an effort to classify and arrange them and reduce its knowledge to ultimate truths or principles, admit of being grouped into a branch of philosophy."

While, therefore, we readily yield to the science of mind the dignified title of Philosophy proper, we claim the license accorded to English writers of distinguishing by a time-honoured prefix that theory or hypothesis by which the facts of the Gospel history, the truths evolved from them, their relation to the earnest conscience, and the higher morals of Christianity, are collected for combined consideration, and by which, on being thus aggregately examined, they are made to reflect light upon each other and give forth certain logical results.

That ritualistic clergymen, who arrogantly assume themselves to be the

only channels through which God communicates His will and grace to mankind, should repudiate everything that bears the most remote resemblance to a philosophical investigation of Divine truth, is what one may naturally expect. But that divines who make no such pretensions should join in the outcry, is nothing better than self-immolation, inasmuch as the fabric whose pillars they unwisely bend their strength to prostrate, could not fail in its ruin to overwhelm themselves.

Others there are who, loving their Bibles (not too well), yet confounding modern methods of inquiry—that of evolving theories from facts—with the “vain systems” of apostolic times, deem it as wrong to mingle philosophy with revelation, as it would be were we to “add to the words” of the Book in the sense implied in the Apocalyptic curse. Let, however, such objections be carried to their ultimate consequences, and they will exclude all collateral sources of information, even though they confirm what the Word of God reveals. In that case, the marble records dug up from the ruins of Nineveh,

and the learned labour spent in deciphering eastern inscriptions, whereby Scriptural history is corroborated, must be pronounced impertinent intrusions upon holy ground. But if so absurd a conclusion be repudiated, what difference, we ask, is there between confirming a Scriptural fact and confirming a Scriptural principle? If it be right to do the one, is it not equally right to do the other? Can we be said to depreciate the Bible, when we assert that the doctrines it reveals are confirmed by the cravings of natural conscience and the facts of man's moral history? If it can be shown that to have the principle of an atonement living in human thought is a moral necessity, do we not thereby add to, rather than detract from, the value of a book in which it is recorded that an atonement precisely such as the cravings of man's nature demand, has in fact been offered? When the French nation, during the fervour of its first revolutionary movements, threw off all the restraints of religion and avowed national atheism, the results were such as to alarm the boldest—even Robespierre himself, who, on one

occasion when this subject was under discussion, repeated approvingly the celebrated sentiment of the infidel Voltaire, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him." This may seem a singular and striking thought, but it is in fact no new thought. The conscious moral necessity for the existence of a Supreme Being is that which has from age to age, according to the tastes of different nations, clothed with Divine attributes various imaginary forms. Paganism, in its multiplied varieties, attests the fact that society cannot exist without an object of worship. Voltaire and Robespierre did but repeat in words what Paganism had ages before declared by its acts; and the French people, in making the experiment to live without a God, failed only as all such experiments before had failed; the consequence being that, like a fabric when its foundations are removed, the whole superstructure of society threatened to crumble into ruins, and to avert such a catastrophe the conventional government of France, on grounds of state expediency, felt itself compelled to re-establish the being of a

God as an article of the national faith; thereby presenting to the world an argument for the moral necessity of the Deity more demonstrative, perhaps, than ever was urged. Now, are we to be precluded from adducing facts like these, facts which we should not improperly call great philosophical truths—are we to be precluded from adducing them, on the shallow pretence that the verities of Scripture need no such confirmation?

But we are not content with merely making a successful defence of the course of argument proposed to be pursued. We go further, and advisedly affirm that we are but following in the wake of the inspired writers themselves, and that the method of revelation, from its beginning to its close, has been a successive evolution of principles from facts. And why should it not be so? If secular history have its philosophy, why not Christian history? why not that “hour,” emphatically so designated, which crowded together in a few brief moments events of mightier import than all the events before or since during the thousands of years of

the earth's duration. The religion of Him whose coming was foretold from the beginning, was revealed to the patriarchs, indicated in the peculiarities of Israel's nationality, and typified in the Mosaic ritual; whose glory was the burden of Jewish psalmody, and the grand theme of the magnificent predictions of a long line of prophets; whose incarnation was proclaimed by angels; whose life was a series of miracles; and whose death produced an effect upon the world that has thrilled through every step of its subsequent progress—the religion of Christ—is eminently an historical religion. To elicit, therefore, the doctrines of Christianity from its facts is an undertaking quite consonant with its genius. Not that we could successfully perform such a task unaided by Divine inspiration: ours is not the province of a discoverer, but of an expositor. It took the mind of a Newton to discover gravitation, yet all that Newton knew on that subject may be easily communicated to the mind of an intelligent youth; so, although nothing short of apostolical illumination could have ori-

ginally developed the Gospel system, the connection, when once suggested, between the fact and the doctrine is obvious ; the light flung across the desert, to guide the Israelites in their wanderings, shone not more directly from the heaven-held pillar of fire, than do the sublime verities of the Christian faith flow from the facts of its Divine Author's life and death.

It must be apparent to the most casual reader of the New Testament, that the doctrines of Christianity were not all fully revealed to the minds of the apostles at once, but that they were unfolded to them gradually : it was not the sudden bursting of mid-day splendour on midnight darkness, but day's gradual dawning. Let us then, for a few moments, review the events of the evangelical narrative in the order in which they occurred, and show, as we proceed, what new sentiments each new event awoke, and what was the precise process of development.

It is of the nature of hypothetical schemes to emerge full blown, as bright mental creations, fascinating by their poetic attractiveness, and demanding sub-

mission to an assumed mysterious authority. Practical schemes, on the contrary, rise slowly, like a vast architectural structure, the stately oak of the forest, or the massive muscular frames of animal life. Thus have our modern systems of natural philosophy slowly grown and matured, fact being added to fact as discovered, and theories permitted only so far as facts developed them. Nor is it true that Christianity can, in this respect, be cited by way of contrast. Christianity is not a new hypothesis, standing to other religious systems in a relation comparable to that in which the last theory of a new science stands to its exploded predecessors, waiting only perhaps till a further discovery of facts explode it also. Christianity is a collection of principles, old as creation, known through all time, and gathered out of the materials of which nature and history are constructed; principles without which the universe could not be held together—as essential to the condensation of the moral world as gravitation to the physical world. One glorious fact alone which had from the beginning

been a foreshadowed "mystery," required to be made manifest; and the grandeur of the New Testament revelation consists in the circumstance that, as gravitation, when discovered, proved to be the great secret, ignorance of which had kept astronomical observers in a state of constant perplexity, but by which now, all the phenomena of the heavens are easily resolved, so the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God give to old principles greater strength and beauty, present them in new relations and aspects, and bind them together into a solid, compact, and massive system of energetic truth.

The original disciples of Jesus, it must be borne in mind, were Jews, trained from childhood to the diligent reading of the Old Testament Scriptures: their minds were thoroughly imbued, therefore, with those glowing predictions of the Messiah's kingdom and glory, in which Isaiah, Daniel, and the other prophets abound. Christ was born at a time when His coming was, by all devout Jews, earnestly looked for. They knew that they lived in the days of the last great terrestrial em-

pire typified by Nebuchadnezzar's image. The Assyrian, the Persian, and the Greek empires had all vanished ; and now Rome, the fourth and the last, crushed the nations beneath her iron sway. Israel sighed for "redemption," and believed the time to be "at hand" when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands should smite the image upon its feet, and break it to pieces ; and that, while the wind carried it away like the chaff of the summer's threshing-floor, the mystic stone, well understood to be emblematic of the "kingdom of God," should become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. "I saw in the night visions," Daniel had written, "and behold one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him ; and there was given Him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him : His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." These words and the words which follow—"The saints

of the Most High shall take the kingdom and possess the kingdom for ever"—furnish a key to the right exposition of many important passages in the gospels, and the comparison of the one with the other proves beyond doubt that, in the time of our Lord, the world was authorised to expect a speedy verification of Daniel's predictions. The language of the angel Gabriel, on announcing the approaching advent of the Messiah, is fully in accordance with these brilliant hopes:—"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end." It is, many think, an error to suppose that the Old Testament prophecies respecting the Messiah are to be understood by us in a sense wholly different from their natural import, as that, instead of Christ coming back to reign among His risen saints upon the "new earth," He will remove them to some distant locality in God's universe. We are willing to admit, therefore, that

the disciples were justified in their expectations that the Messiah's kingdom would, on "the restitution of all things," be set up in its glory upon earth; but they were unquestionably very far wrong as to the time and means of its establishment. There are two classes of prophecies in the Old Testament respecting the Messiah: the one foretelling His sufferings, the other His glory. Wholly losing sight of the former in their anxiety to witness the accomplishment of the latter, "they," although their Master had, through a long space of time before His betrayal and martyrdom, warned them again and again of what was about to happen, "understood not," it is written, "what He said to them, and it was hidden from them:" in other words, their minds were so pre-occupied with the thought of their own speedy exaltation to thrones of unrivalled power, that they had no patience to listen to aught of a contrary import. So far, indeed, did they permit themselves to be enslaved by these delusive expectations, that Peter, when told by Christ of His approaching crucifixion, peremptorily replied, "This shall not be

unto Thee." In display of the vain and ruffled temper which such excited feelings are apt to produce, they were continually disputing among themselves "which of them should be greatest." Even up to their last journey to Jerusalem, no change had taken place in their views: they "expected the kingdom of God would immediately appear." When Christ was betrayed and arrested by His enemies, Peter drew his sword, probably anticipating that, like the sword of Gideon, it would strike terror into the foe, and that the armies of heaven would fight for Israel, as when, of old, they had destroyed the hosts of Pharaoh and Sennacherib. His mortification, and that of all the disciples, was apparent in the circumstance that, so soon as they saw Christ in the grasp of his enemies, "they forsook Him and fled." To what but the same mortified feeling, can we attribute Peter's extraordinary asseveration, muttered with oaths and curses, "I know not the man?" The perplexed and sorrowful mien of the travellers to Emmaus, and their desponding words, "We trusted that it had been He which should have re-

deemed Israel," afford further evidence of the extent to which their towering hopes had been prostrated. Our Lord's conversation with them on their journey, and His discourses with others of His disciples after His resurrection, were designed to unravel the mystery of His death, and explain the relation between His sufferings and His glory; but the question they put to Him on the eve of His ascension, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" shows that, notwithstanding every corrective, they were still eagerly expecting an immediate accession to personal power. There is, in fact, nothing to indicate that, up to the moment of Christ's ascension, the apostles had any definite notion of His second advent; on the contrary, from the time they were called to follow Him till He was taken up from them into heaven, the one grand idea which animated them was, that Christ, the Messiah, would then—at His first coming—personally and in the flesh, take His seat upon the throne of His father David, and reigning over the house of Israel, would, immediately and by force,

establish on earth that kingdom, whereof it had been promised they were to share the glories, and which, subduing to itself all other kingdoms, should stand for ever.

With regard to all the leading doctrines of Christianity, as eventually unfolded, the minds of the personal companions of the Redeemer appear, until the approach of the Day of Pentecost, to have remained in a state of obscurity such as could not fail to have awakened our intense surprise, had it not been sufficiently accounted for by the genius of an historic faith. In analogy with the circumstance that Christ taught the multitude by parables which they understood not till afterwards explained, His mode of instructing His disciples was, not to urge truth upon them dogmatically and authoritatively, but by hints, suggestions, and distant allusions, to prepare them to read the magnificent lessons taught in the occurrences which thereafter took place. Till after the ascension, these lessons had not been read. Hence, the memorable interval between the ascension and Pentecost, spent by the apostles in earnest prayer and anxious

conference in the upper room at Jerusalem, —during which doubtless they oft discussed the meaning of words that, when uttered, had fallen from their Master unheeded, but were now joyfully recalled,—became the period of a series of sublime discoveries. Before them stood events, the singularity and magnitude whereof indicated their extraordinary significance. There was the death of a Divine Christ, His resurrection, His ascension to heaven, and His promise to return—there were the completed witnessed sufferings and the incipient anticipated glory; but how these two were connected with each other, the apostles had not as yet divined. *The atonement was perfectly well known to them in its principle*; it was typified in the Mosaic sacrifices, and predicted in the Psalms and the writings of the Prophets; it had been pointed at by the Baptist, unintentionally foretold by Caiaphas, and remotely referred to by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself; but still, until Pentecost, it does not appear to have suggested itself to the minds of the disciples as the connecting link between Christ's sufferings

and His glory. When suggested, the revelation came not to them in a voice from heaven, in a vision, or as a mental impression to be authoritatively enunciated on their sole uncorroborated testimony; the facts evolved it. *Christian doctrine is, literally, the philosophy of Christ's history deduced by inspired intellect.* The Jews had "looked for" the "redemption" of their country as the result of the physical destruction of their enemies: now it was seen, from the manner in which they had treated their Messiah, that they were their own greatest foes, and that Israel's national redemption must be preceded by her moral redemption. Thus, the first great truth lay upon the surface—

MORAL REDEMPTION THROUGH A SUFFERING MESSIAH. Was the world to be subdued to the Messiah's sway? The disciples had thought that this was to be effected by Israel's sword, as the Canaanites were driven out of the promised land by the swords of their ancestors; but soon they perceived that a moral submission could only be brought about by the energy of truth, of which truth the unvarnished tale

of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection must needs be the burden. The vitality and force of this tale are evinced by the breadth it occupies in the world's history : for we take it to be a proposition needing little argument to demonstrate, that no historic character can long continue famous without substantial cause ; and that, in every instance, there must have been a depth and energy in the spirit of the living subject, equivalent to the effects His memory has produced. Jesus had died avowedly as a sinner : He had been treated as a sinner by men, arraigned for blasphemy and condemned for sedition ; He had been treated as a sinner by God—witness His agony in the garden and His dying cry, “ My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me ? ” · Yet, He had not deserved thus to die a sinner's death : but was innocent before both God and man, as His divinely spotless life and His resurrection from the dead alike declared. Hence He must have died vicariously, “ the just for the unjust : ” the principle of sacrifice was written upon His cross as legibly as had been Pilate's superscription.

At once, all the oblations of the patriarchal and Jewish rituals rushed upon the prepared memories of the apostles, as significant types and brilliant illustrations. An echo was heard to the sacrificial and atoning character of Christ's death, in every page of the inspired book: our first parents had received an announcement of it immediately after their fall; Abraham had anticipated it in the virtual sacrifice of his son; the destroying angel had prefigured it in the slaying of Egypt's first-born; Moses had had reference to it in the institution of the paschal offering; the high priest's entrance into the holy place, every year, with the sprinkled blood, had foreshadowed Christ's entrance, with His own blood, into heaven; Isaiah had written of Him as if with the pen of history, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed; all we like sheep have gone astray, but the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all;" and innumerable other passages in the Old Testament, enigmatical till ex-

plained by the event, were now seen, like so many rays of dazzling brightness, to be all concentrating their splendour upon one point—the Cross. Hence the Cross became the sole theme of apostolic glorying—their mount of observation—the standpoint from which, as through a telescope of gigantic powers, the moral heavens were explored.

If we are correct in the view we have just taken of the method by which the truths of revelation were made to assume their ultimate shape, the principle of analogy requires that we apply the same method to the development of religious truth since the book of revelation closed. No one conversant with the writings of the fathers, and with the theology of the present day, can fail to discern a striking difference between the two. There is an indefiniteness about the earlier theology which makes it difficult to ascertain what the opinions of the post-apostolic Church were, on many questions now deemed extremely important. And, on the other hand, the vivid and almost pictorial exhibitions of Christian conviction and emotion

thrown off spontaneously by men of no learning other than the learning of the Cross, is a modern phenomenon not to be accounted for except by the circumstance that the Christian heart has unwittingly become an object of analytic study as well as the written revelation, and that there exists a Divine philosophy which, without being formally recognised, reads aloud its advancing lessons to the world.

Entertaining these opinions as to the growth of revelation in ancient times, and as to modern religious development, we justify the method of thought we propose to pursue in these pages by these, the highest examples. No doubt it is possible to overstep the line. We have an instance of it in rationalism. Free enquiry, if erroneously conducted, may lead many from the truth instead of to it. But that fact, instead of being an argument against free enquiry, affords the strongest argument in its favour. Why allow to an enemy the free use of the best constructed and most formidable weapons, and deny the use of them to ourselves? Because enquiry is free, must be free, will be free,

our proper course is in the exercise of a like freedom, to scan the range of universal knowledge and ascertain whether the facts of the moral world are not such as demand revelation for their complement; and whether especially the Cross of Christ is not an object which the earnest conscience pursues while unknown, and grasps when recognised, as inartificially and tenaciously as the understanding follows and clings to truth.

## CHAPTER II.

THE CONDITIONS OF THE ARGUMENT.—  
PREMISSES ASSUMED.

VERY argument has its agreed conditions, certain facts or principles assumed to be true, and upon which the fabric of deduction is made to rest. And it is of the utmost importance that these premisses be well settled, both because a perfect knowledge of their import is essential to the understanding of the inferences to be drawn from them, and because also we do not wish to have it thought that our reasoning has failed if we do not demonstrate that which it was never designed to demonstrate, but which has been regarded throughout as mutually admitted. We will therefore state explicitly the truths we take for granted.

If we in any respect take for granted what an objector does not admit, all we can do is to refer him for proof of our premisses to other sources of information, since any attempt to carry the discussion further back than we propose to carry it, would add bulk and prolixity to our volume without any appreciable increase of its worth.

I. First, then we wish to have it distinctly understood that we do not deduce our moral ideas from their supposed or proved expediency ; but that man's moral nature has, in our judgment, original faculties which give forth their convictions in anticipation of experience, needing only the occasion to invite their expression. We adopt, in a word, the theory known as the Platonic theory,\* the results of which

\* "Plato was the founder and chief of the Idealist or Spiritualist school, against the Materialistic or Sensational, which, under the auspices of the Sophists, is asserted to have been generally prevalent; and was the champion of the intuitive or *à priori* character of moral truth, against what is regarded by most of the Platonic critics, as the low and degrading doctrine of Utility."—MILL on *Grote's Plato ; Dissertations*, vol. iii., p. 293.

Dr. Abercrombie thus sums up with admirable brevity and distinctness. "There are," says he, "certain first principles of moral truth which arise in the mind by the most simple process of reflection, either as constituting its own primary moral convictions, or as following from its consciousness of those convictions by a plain and obvious chain of relations. These are, chiefly, the following:—

"1. A perception of the nature and quality of actions, as just or unjust, right or wrong; and a conviction of certain duties, as of justice, veracity, and benevolence, which every man owes to his fellow men. Every man in his own case, again, expects the same offices from others; and on this reciprocity of feeling is founded the precept, to do to others as we would that they should do to us.

"2. From this primary moral impression there arises, by a most natural sequence, a conviction of the existence and superintendence of a great moral Governor of the universe, a Being of infinite perfection and infinite purity. A belief in this Being, as the great First Cause, is derived by a

simple step of reasoning from a survey of the works of nature, taken in connection with the axiom, that every event must have an adequate cause. Our sense of His *moral* attributes arises, with a feeling of equal certainty, when from the moral impressions of our own minds, we infer the moral attributes of Him who thus formed us.

“3. From these combined impressions there naturally springs a sense of moral responsibility or a conviction that, for the due performance of the duties which are indicated by the conscience or moral consciousness, man is responsible to the Governor of the universe; and, farther, that to this Being he owes, more immediately, a certain homage of the moral feelings, entirely distinct from the duties which he owes to his fellow-men.

“4. From this chain of moral convictions, it is impossible to separate a deep impression of continual existence, or of a state of being, beyond the present life; and of that, as a state of moral retribution.”

“These,” continues Dr. A., “are First Truths, or primary articles of moral belief,

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which arise, by a natural and obvious chain of sequence, in the moral conviction of every sound understanding. For the truth of them, we appeal, not to any process of reasoning properly so called, but to the conviction which forces itself upon every regulated mind. Neither do we go abroad among savage nations, to inquire whether the impression of them be universal ; for this may be obscured in communities, as it is in individuals, by a course of moral degradation. We appeal to the casuist himself, whether in the calm moment of reflection, he can divest himself of their power. We appeal to the feelings of the man who, under the consciousness of guilt, shrinks from the dread of a present Deity and the anticipation of a future reckoning. But chiefly, we appeal to the conviction of him in whom conscience retains its rightful supremacy, and who habitually cherishes these momentous truths as his guides in this life in its relation to the life that is to come."

In unison with the same moral theory is the following quotation from Dr. M'Cosh's " Method of the Divine Govern-

ment," p. 312, which we adduce because of the accurate and precise distinction he therein draws between the reason and the conscience :—

“ While the reason and its fundamental principles are in many respects analogous to, yet they are at the same time independent of, each other. The reason does not feel that it is called to justify itself to the conscience, nor is the conscience required to justify itself to the reason. Each has its own assigned province, in which it is sovereign and supreme. A thousand errors have arisen from imagining that the conscience should give account of itself to reason, and that the reason should give account of itself to the conscience. Each in its own sphere is independent, and it cannot in that sphere interfere with or clash with the other.”

Nor are the intuitive origination of our moral ideas and the independence of conscience the only elements in our assumed theory. We crave permission to add as a third, that whenever in regard to any moral or religious truth, in the course of this discussion, we propose an appeal to

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conscience, it is to be understood that we refer exclusively to a conscience which, as Dr. A. well says, "retains its rightful supremacy." It could never be supposed that we would submit any grave moral question to the chance test of every conscience. Some consciences are perverted. Were we to base our argument as to the effect of religious truth, upon its reception by any individual conscience, the result might be as fallacious as the judgment of an enfeebled individual intellect. The conscience selected might happen to be a callous conscience, seared and diseased. To draw general inferences from the effect of moral truth upon a seared conscience, would be as absurd as to estimate the value of reasoning from its effect upon an insane or idiotic understanding. When expression is given to general propositions, we must be understood to speak, not of insane minds, not of hardened consciences, not of diseased moral constitutions, but of the human faculties as existing in the state indicated by their average expression. In the operations of the intellect there is such a thing as common sense, which

means the average judgment of civilized and intelligent men; so there is, among that portion of mankind raised above the lowest barbarism and profligacy, an average standard of conscientiousness. Were it otherwise, were there no common sense and no common conscientiousness—no generally recognized standard of what is right and what is wrong—wisdom, folly, vice, and virtue, would all be huddled together in one undistinguishable mass, and the hourly demands upon us for judicious action and moral behaviour, in ordinary life, would find our minds in utter bewilderment. Is it not a maxim so well established as to have become proverbial, that truth is mighty and must prevail? Why must truth prevail? Because, however individuals may err, and even masses and races for a while, there is such an adaptation between truth and the ordinary standard of human intelligence, that time and consideration alone are required to secure its eventful triumph. Were there no common notions of truth and no common conscientiousness, the universal practices of sages, moralists and

divines, including that even of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and His inspired apostles, would be condemnable, inasmuch as their appeals imply, not that men are wholly ignorant of their duty, but, that having an adequate knowledge of what God required from them, they have notwithstanding wilfully disobeyed. Evidently, the remonstrances and warnings of Scripture imply their aptitude to rouse the conscience, or why else were they uttered? And does not the fact, that these remonstrances and warnings are addressed to men of all nations and times, prove that the consciences of mankind have kindred aptitudes, and approximate to one standard? A lie wherever propagated carries on its forefront a mark of infamy; murder, robbery, adultery, perjury, dishonesty, hypocrisy, have, in all ages, been abominated; however fertile these crimes may have been for a while in isolated communities, there never has been a period in the world's history in which the voice of the aggregated human conscience has not been lifted up to condemn them. Having reference then to this average

condition of the faculty of conscience, it may be safely laid down as an indisputable axiom, that there is, between the human conscience and guilt or innocence, an adaptation which induces results, not vague and uncertain, but, fixed and definite. The effect of guilt to excite, through the conscience, mental disquietude and even anguish, and the effect of innocence to scatter serenity and kindle joy, are scarcely less certain and uniform than the beautiful uniformity of nature's physical laws.

II. Another truth assumed to be granted to us is, that a rightly constituted and earnest conscience will aspire after perfect rectitude, just as a well ordered intellect will aim at perfect knowledge. And as God is our ideal of perfect rectitude, to pursue it is in effect to strive after conscious harmony and friendship with God.

But does not all human experience teach us that the more earnestly we, apart from the reconciling efficacy of evangelic truth, struggle after identity in moral character with the All Perfect One, our distance from Him becomes, to our own minds, more apparent ?

Probably, to this proposition objection will be taken. "What!" some will say, "if a man live a virtuous and holy life, does there not arise in his mind—he knows not how, or why—a pleasing persuasion that he is accepted of God? Does he not feel conscious that as his character improves he rises in the Divine regards?"

That he does rise in the Divine regards we freely admit ; but that, irrespective of the work of Christ, he acquires increased confidence before God, we emphatically deny. He cannot for this plain reason—the better any man is in fact, the less has he of self-esteem. No doubt, as between his present self and his former self, or as between himself and others, he has correct notions of relative virtue ; but as between himself and his God, the higher he rises the lower he sinks—as the star highest in the heavens is reflected deepest in the lake's bosom. Nor is this apparent anomaly difficult to understand ; for, in proportion as the character improves, the ideal standard rises higher. Nay, more ! Not only does the ideal standard rise higher in equal degree with the practical

improvement ; it rises beyond. So that although, while judging ourselves by a low ideal, we thought well of ourselves ; judging ourselves now by a lofty ideal—more lofty in proportion than before—we necessarily come to a more severe conclusion ; we never deemed ourselves so vile.

Let us illustrate this by the example of the artist. When young, he showed the natural bent of his genius by his love for sketching and painting. His friends praised his performances, and he was pleased himself—extravagantly pleased. Many years have now passed over his head, during which he has seen, read, and travelled much, and studied all the best works of the best masters. The paintings of his youth, which then afforded him such delight, are now in his estimation nothing better than paltry daubs. But this is not all. He is now an eminent artist. His productions sell at high prices. All the world praises them. Do they afford to his own mind the same amount of satisfaction which they afford to others ? or even the same amount of satisfaction which his early efforts afforded him at the

commencement of his career? By no means—nothing he does fully satisfies him. What is the reason of this? Because—as is always the case with improving minds—his critical powers are ever in advance of his powers of execution: his taste is so pure and refined, that nothing short of absolute perfection can yield him unadulterated pleasure.

Thus it is with the advanced Christian; and thus it is that we account for the harsh judgments St. Paul sometimes pronounced against himself. “Unto me,” says he, “who am less than the least of all saints,—” Was he really less than the least of all saints? Unquestionably he was not, nor could he himself have pronounced that judgment had he been deciding between himself and others. But judging himself in the presence of God, his eminent piety awoke in him so lofty an ideal that no language in which he could speak of himself was too humiliating.

But the objector will reply that, although identity in character may be impossible between an erring mortal and the perfection of Deity, there may still be conscious

friendship. True, there may. But friendship requires a basis. What is that basis? Let us try to find it.

You feel a sense of guilt, and you present your prayer to Mercy. Now, on what ground is it that you expect Mercy to interpose? Is it on the ground of your merits or of your necessities? It cannot be on the ground of your merits, for we have already shown that it is of the very nature of genuine contrition to destroy our self-esteem, and that the better we are in fact, the more unconscious do we become of having any merit on which to rely. The tears of a genuine repentance are like the lenses of a microscope, beneath whose scrutiny the smooth complacencies of the most lauded reformation exhibit a startling ruggedness. Stripped, then, of every plea of merit, you appeal to Mercy solely on the ground of your necessities: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!"

Observe that all this while, when you are disclaiming merit and consider your repentance valueless, God does not consider it valueless. He would not pardon

your sins without repentance. And here lies a great truth too often forgotten. Most of scholastic theologians write down the contract on both sides as if it were identical. But the elements of a contract, in which two parties are engaged on opposite sides, are necessarily different in the one mind from what they are in the other. Each looks into the other's mind—the rebel into the mind of his sovereign, the sovereign into the mind of the rebel—and that which each sees in the mind of the other contributes to excite counter-working motives of action. God looks into our minds and sees repentance; there-upon His mercy kindles. We are to look—not into our own minds, to reflect upon our repentance; for any such introvision, like the cold wintry blast, would blight the tender flower—we are to look away from ourselves, exclusively into the mind of God, and see only His mercy.

Then, mark the result! We have said that in the proportion in which a man grows better, he becomes more humble; and we have assigned as the reason, that his ideal of the good increases beyond his

practical attainments. But we admit that another consequence flows contemporaneously from the same cause. His loftier ideal of the good brings with it, also, a more vivid apprehension of the Divine goodness—God's mercy and paternal love. So that, although he despairs in the presence of the Divine purity, he, in the presence of the Divine love, ventures to *hope*.

We are anxious to make clear our admission that these two consequences, flowing from the same cause, always accompany each other. They are complementary colours, and will both be either very faint or very vivid. If we have a high conceit of our own virtues, we shall have but a low conception of the Divine mercy. On the other hand, if, through deep penitence and advanced moral purity, we have impressive views of the holiness of God, kindling our fears, we shall have at the same time impressive views of the love of God, bidding our fears be gone; just as the same drops of rain that form the dark cloud, form also the bow that stretches across it in unparalleled beauty.

At this point arises the great question

—the question between Theism on the one hand, and Christianity on the other. Theists contend that an enlarged apprehension of the love of God is the only thing requisite to give to the conscience peace ; while Christians contend that it is not enough to contemplate the Divine love, unless we can recognize in its exercise a co-operation with righteousness. With which party does the truth lie ? Which of these views is correct ?—correct, we mean, as a matter of fact and experience. Can the earnest conscience be satisfied with a salvation coming from mercy only, irrespective of whether mercy is or is not exercised in righteousness ?

One thing is quite obvious. The love of God would afford us no solace, if it were known *not* to be associated with righteousness. Such a love would be regarded as the weakness of an over-indulgent father, and would provoke our contempt rather than engage our confidence. So that were we left wholly ignorant of the means through which mercy had been reconciled with justice, we should be bound to presume that it had been so

reconciled, otherwise we should be unable to confide in it.

But the human mind, in its higher religious exercises, is not prone to take up with assumptions. The question, "Why such love to me?" rises to the lips instinctively. We want to know *how* God can love, pardon, and save such rebels. It is not sufficiently satisfactory to be told that such is His sovereign pleasure, such the plentitude of His mercy; it is not the habit of moral agents to conceive of God—the highest of moral agents—acting without a reason. If He love, He must have a reason for loving. Unless He had a reason in His actions, His acts would have no moral character; but in thinking of the acts of God we cannot conceive of them as without moral character. Whatever God does, must be done righteously. It cannot be otherwise. He cannot act capriciously. It is not enough to say that God wills. To say that God wills to save this man, but refuses to save that man, is to say that which instantly raises a host of objections. You immediately ask, why the preference? why this man saved,

and that not saved? When speaking of others, it is sufficient to reply, "God saves this man because he is a good man, and He does not save that because he is a bad man." But when the question is respecting one's self, how then? I cannot conceive that God loves me because I am good—for the reasons already repeatedly given. I may be good in fact, but the better I am in fact, the less confidence I have in my own goodness. In this dilemma, I must turn away from self, and find elsewhere a reason for God's love to me—a RIGHTEOUS REASON.

III. Our third axiom is that the reason thus found wanting is discoverable in the history of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That there is some moral element in the doctrine of the cross, possessing an adaptation to give peace to troubled consciences, is proved by the testimony of all true Christians of every age, clime, and degree. What so many concur in testifying, we are prepared to accept as a demonstrated fact; and the fact thus proved we shall best express by quoting the familiar words of a quaint old writer, whose name

need not be mentioned, so universally is his book read:—"Now I saw in my dream that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back. He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that, just as Christian came up with the cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Thereupon was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart—"He hath given me rest by His sorrow and life by His death." Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. This done, Christian went on singing. . . ."

In thus quoting the words of a man

whose popularity as a writer on Christian experience exceeds probably that of any other, we adduce in effect a catholic testimony in favour of the fact he records—the power of the cross to give the conscience peace. That which renders Bunyan's book so popular, is the circumstance that it narrates, in simple, striking language, what its readers have realized in their own experience. The extract quoted is eminently of this description. It utters what thousands have felt. And unless we are prepared to treat the general testimony of mankind with contempt, we have in this way given to us a most significant moral phenomenon. Account for it as you will, the cross has an aptitude to pour the balm of consolation into distressed consciences.

Unless the anxieties and thanksgivings of the Christian world be resolvable into imagination and fanaticism,—a conclusion to which no candid and truly philosophic mind can come,—the number of successful experiments evidencing the peace-giving power of the atonement upon the conscience, is not to be reckoned by hundreds

or thousands merely, but by myriads. Persons of both sexes, of all ages, of every clime, of every grade in society, of mental and moral constitutions as widely different as any two of the human race can be, and of every degree of intellectual and moral condition, have, on their consciences being aroused, by faith sought refuge in the atonement, and all alike have experienced its power. Hence, the imagination has been taxed for metaphors to express the sentiments with which the cross is regarded. It is that to which the awakened spirit turns instinctively, as the flower to the light; it is the oak, which the ivy clasps with its tendrils; the bridge thrown across the gulf, whereby we pass over; the city of refuge, where alone we can be safe from the avenger; the ark, riding high amid the deluge of waters; the light upon our pathway, flashing as from heaven's opened gates; the golden streams of the aurora, cheering the darkness of a Greenland winter; the polar star to the pathless ocean's voyager; the point whither, like the tremulous needle to the north,

“ The hope of the spirit turns, trembling ;”

land-marks, guiding the storm-assailed vessel into port; bread to the hungry; water in the desert; the mystic sympathy, whereby loving spirits beckon their comrades to the skies; the rock, whereon, amidst the roaring surge of the tempest, our fearless hope is founded; the impregnable fortress, that defies, alike, the battle and the gale; the dawning day, before which the stars fade "in the light they love." Of all the emotions of the human heart, to none is Tennyson's metaphor so beautifully applicable, as to love kindled at the cross; no love so spirit-actuating, none so self-sacrificing, as love to Christ:—

“ Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all  
the chords with might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed  
in music out of sight.”

And yet, the imagination of Paul was, on this theme, loftier than the Laureate's. Such, according to Paul, is the spiritualizing effect of Christian love, that its subject dwells no longer upon the earth: translated beyond the ken of mortals, he "sits in heavenly places with Christ Jesus," he has his "conversation in heaven," his

“life is hid with Christ in God.” The mystic solitude in which the Christian is thus made to hide himself, is a metaphor ineffably sublime and awful. Imagine the solitudes of the Alps, the Andes, or the Himalayas—those spots of solitary grandeur, where human foot never trod, and nought is heard save the occasional avalanche, adding, by its sullen roar, intensity to the supervening stillness! Amid such scenery, how man feels his own littleness! how vivid our impressions become of the Infinite!\* Yet this imagery is feeble, compared with the apostolic idea of being “hid with Christ in God.”

This hiding in God—this absorption of the human in the Divine—this conscious oneness with heaven, with the holy, the pure, the perfect,—is worthy to be, and, with elevated minds, *is*, the apex of the pyramid of human hopes. But how is this apex to be reached? The contemplation of God as infinite love, is clearly insufficient to bring about a mental union, unless accompanied by a conscious friendship; and how can a mind consciously

\* Talfourd.

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unholy sympathise in friendship with the Holy One, otherwise than through the mediate conception of an atonement? The atoning idea and none other has been found by experience adequate to wake up within us the sense of union with God. An objective atonement really sufficient to satisfy the requirements of God's moral government, and the conception of such atonement living in the human conscience as a counterpart of its grand archetype, constitute the chain which bind God and man together,—the cement, whereby the vast spirit-fabric is reared, and its parts indissolubly united. Thus held in divine contemplation, the devout spirit, like the eagle alighting upon the rock to eye the sun, becomes fascinated, fixed and

. . . “centred there,  
God *only*, to behold and know and feel,  
Till, by exclusive consciousness of God,  
All self annihilated, it shall make  
God its Identity.”

But although it is chiefly on the testimony of the Christian Church that we would rely for the proof of the fact

now assumed, there are other evidences strongly confirmatory and exceedingly valuable; chiefly so because they point to the prevalence of an instinct in universal humanity which, though not developed except in cultivated moral natures, is yet everywhere latent.

That distinguished biblical scholar, Sir John David Michaelis, for example, begins a discussion on the early notions of sacrifice with the remark,\* “Almost all nations have been unanimous in the idea of bringing to the Deity offerings, particularly with the shedding of blood, as a means of obtaining pardon of sin and a restoration to favour. This awful idea, which is the almost universal impression of the human race, even seems to be a product of what the Romans called *sensus communis*—a natural dictate of the sound understanding of man.”

For a similar testimony we refer to the celebrated Madame de Stael.† Speaking of Count de Stolberg’s *History of the Reli-*

\* *Vide* Dr. John Pye Smith’s *Discourses on the Atonement*, p. 221.

† *De L’Allemagne*, pt. iv., ch. 4.

gion of Jesus Christ, "The Count," she remarks, "considers sacrifice as the basis of all religion, and the death of Abel as the first type of that which forms the groundwork of Christianity. Whatever decision may be come to upon this opinion," she continues, "it affords much material for thought. The majority of ancient religions instituted human sacrifices; but even in this barbarity there is something remarkable: it evidenced the want which the mind felt of a solemn expiation. Nothing, in fact, can obliterate from the soul the conviction that there is a mysterious efficacy in the blood of the innocent, and that heaven and earth are moved by it. . . . There are, in the human race, certain *primitive ideas*, which appear, with more or less disfigurement, in all times and among all nations. These are the ideas upon which we cannot grow weary of reflecting; for they assuredly preserve some traces of the lost dignities of our nature."

It is not easy to say to what extent the words distinguished by italics, in the following quotation from Goethe's *Wilhelm*

*Meister*,\* express the personal opinions of the author. If they do not belong to himself and to the philosophical circle of which he was the observant centre, they, at all events, disclose the belief of a portion of the German mind. We claim, however, the right to think that the concluding sentiment is Goethe's own; and penned by so accomplished an analyst, only ignorance and presumption will treat it otherwise than with profound attention. "Now, gracious Father, grant me faith! —so prayed I once, in the deepest heaviness of my heart. I was leaning on a little table, where I sat; my tear-stained countenance hidden in my hands. O, that I could but paint what I felt then! A sudden force drew my soul to the cross, where Jesus once expired; such as leads our soul to an absent loved one: and that instant did I know what faith was. When the first rapture was over, I observed that my present condition of mind had formerly been known to me; only I had never felt it in such strength; I had never held it fast, never made it mine.

\* Vol. ii., p. 133 (1839).

*I believe, indeed, every soul at intervals feels something of it."*

Testimonies concurrent with the preceding might be adduced in great numbers were it necessary. But as we are not at present engaged in discussing the why and the how, but, as preliminary thereto, are only postulating the fact, it appears to us quite enough to have proved historically that humanity, at least a vast portion of it, *seeks* a refuge from its fears in sacrifice and *finds* it in Christ.

These three, then, we adopt as admitted truths, namely — 1. That our primary moral conceptions are intuitive; 2. That under their influence, when the conscience is aroused to activity, we long for harmony with moral perfection—conscious reconciliation with God; 3. That, as a fact in the history and experience of human hearts, faith in Christ inspires this conscious reconciliation.

We desire to add, in order to prevent misconception, although it is not a truth which can with any consistency be used in argument, that in our view the intuitions of man's moral nature have their

origin in the influence of the Holy Spirit ; that as “ we live and move and have our being in God ” physically, so do we live morally in Him ; and that the constant recognition of this idea is essential to prayer, and essential therefore to the growth and vigour of the “ life of God in the soul.”

## CHAPTER III.

THE PRECISE QUESTION EVOLVED, AND ITS ANSWER INDICATED.—THE EVANGELICAL HYPOTHESIS.

HE preceding chapters have placed before us this state of facts: 1. A difficulty—the earnest conscience struggling in vain to reconcile itself with its own moral ideal of the Supreme. 2. The Christian sacrifice interposed. 3. The difficulty thereby practically solved. We have now to analyse this operation—how has the result been brought about? in what way is it that the conscience, unable to gain quiet from within, has gained it from without? What is there in the history of Christ crucified to give peace to the troubled conscience?

1. The first question we have to settle is, whether the process is intellectual or moral? So far as regards the Gospel history and the doctrines revealed on the sacred page, the becoming acquainted therewith is, of course, purely intellectual. Whatever moral influences may operate to stimulate the intellect and predispose it to give attention to and believe the Bible, the faith itself is simply a reception by the understanding of truth externally presented. But this is not the faith that gives to the troubled conscience peace. Another element is necessary; and it is about this other element, the element that transforms speculative faith into saving faith, historical faith into religious faith—it is about this we have to inquire. What about this element? is *it* intellectual or moral?

That it cannot be merely intellectual is evident from the circumstance that there already exists an intellectual element, which proves insufficient, and which requires to have added to it an element of a different kind before it can accomplish the desired end. Besides, the result contem-

plated—namely, peace of conscience—is a moral result, and moral results, it is obvious, cannot be arrived at except by moral means. That which gives peace to the conscience must be some consideration acting upon man's moral nature, and producing upon it the same effect which innocence would have produced had innocence existed.

2. Then, if the element sought after be moral, the next question we have to ask is, whether whatever is moral in the practical operations of the human mind is not of necessity a development of moral character, an intuitive and spontaneous efflux from the depths of the spirit? We cannot conceive how it is possible for this to admit of the least question. Take, for illustration, any act of justice: the character of the act is not derived from its external circumstances. The same circumstances might exist, apart from the agent's mental state, and the act performed under them might have no virtue whatever. One man pays to another a sum of money—a just debt—unwillingly and under legal compulsion. There is no virtue in that.

But, if the payment be made under no pressure other than that of a sense of justice, there is at least a modicum of virtue. Whence, then, does the virtue in such a case spring, and how does it reveal itself? Is it not the spontaneous efflux of the mind's moral condition, coming out of the darkness into light, just as the generating seed bursts spontaneously from beneath the soil?

Our moral intuitions, like the instincts of animal life, do not, at the moment of spontaneity, exist in the mind as axioms capable of being framed into propositions and categorically expressed. The exercise of our moral functions undoubtedly implies an intellectual appreciation of antecedent relations; but there is a palpable distinction between the circumstances that awake an instinct and the instinct itself, between the state of facts preliminary to an intuition and the axioms and principles of which, on analysis, the intuition is found to be composed. It is to the latter we apply the remark, that, at the moment of spontaneity, they are obscure, and can be discovered only by reflection after the

intuition has realised itself in action. Logical truths may be detected in the mind in the very act of conception, and may be made to express themselves at once; but "our intuitive apperceptions" steal through the mind "in the depths of the consciousness," too subtle to be arrested in their transit. "The primitive light," says Cousin, "is so pure that it is unperceived; it is the reflected light which strikes us." The bee builds its cell, the beaver its hut, without first contriving those nice adjustments and entering upon those abstruse calculations which their works yield to a scientific analysis. There was no pre-arranged scheme in the mind of the operator; he went straight to the execution of his appointed task, and performed it by instinct; yet, when complete how wonderful the structure, how complicated its principles, and how admirably adapted to its end! The mother flies to protect her child. There is no time for thought: the object is accomplished before the mind is conscious of having been called into exercise. Maternal instinct is not resolvable into rapid ratiocination: it

bursts from the heart complete: you cannot trace the process of its mental production: its moral beauty is first seen in the concrete, and any examination into its nature and relations must commence with the contemplation of the instinct in action as a perfected fact. A good man performs an act of justice or benevolence. There may have been much anxious consideration respecting the preliminary circumstances that prompted the action; but its performance specifically as a display of virtue was never the subject of a moment's premeditation: the virtue was displayed and its end achieved before its character was pronounced. The external act was the spontaneous product of a virtuous nature and the mind sought no reason for doing it beyond the conviction that it was right.

3. Then, if moral and intuitive, the third question we have to consider is, whether the act of the mind through which an evangelical peace of conscience is obtained does not imply a perception in the external truth of something whereof the mind has already intuitively formed a

vague image? "Why is it," asks Socrates, "that when we seek for some thing we do not know, we yet know that we are seeking? and how comes it that we are able to recognise it when found?" These, says Mr. Mill,\* "were not quibbles of captious sophists, but difficulties really embarrassing to those who were trying to understand their own mental operations. Why, asks Socrates, does truth (so hard to find), when found, approve itself to us, often instantaneously, as truth? He can think of no explanation but that we had known it in a former life, and need now only to be reminded of our former knowledge in order to its instant recognition. Modern thinkers who have stopped short at Plato's point of view, resolve the difficulty by pronouncing the knowledge to be intuitive."

We confess ourselves unable to suggest any mode of solving this very ancient and difficult, yet most important and interesting, question, other than that which is ascribed by Mr. Mill to modern thinkers.

\* *Dissertations*, vol. iii., p. 350.

And yet it is not confined to modern thinkers. St. Augustine uses language which will allow of no interpretation other than that Divine truth is in his judgment self-evident, and faith therein intuitive. Referring to an inspired medium of revelation—a prophet or apostle, Augustine says,—“If he were to speak in the Hebrew tongue, it would strike my senses in vain, nor would any of his discourse reach my understanding; but if he spoke in Latin, I should know what he said. But how should I know *whether he spoke the truth?* And even if I knew this, *should I know it from him?* Surely *within, inwardly in the home of my thoughts, truth* (which is neither Hebrew, nor Greek, nor Latin, nor barbarian) without the organs of mouth or tongue, without the sound of syllables, *would say, He speaks the truth; and I, rendered certain immediately, should say confidently to that man, Thou speakest truth.*”\*

\* “Intus utique mihi, intus in domicilio cogitationis, . . . veritas . . . diceret, Verum dicit; et ego statim certus confidenter illi homini dicerem, Verum dicis.”—*Aug. Confess.* xi. iii. T. i. p. 232.

How, except intuitively, can we conceive of our moral judgments coalescing with revealed truth? And, that they do coalesce in all matters relating to the moral law, is most certain. The moral principles of the Bible are not accepted by us purely on the ground of biblical authority. They recommend themselves to our acceptance by their exact conformity with our loftiest moral conceptions. We have already the image of them in our minds—"the law written on the heart"—and they accord with that image, drawing forth our intuitions by virtue of such accordance, and adding to them definiteness and strength.

Now we say that what occurs with regard to legal truth occurs equally with regard to evangelic truth. When the Enochs and the Abrahams of the patriarchal age kindled the fire upon the sacrificial altar and watched its fumes ascending with their prayers, they gave symbolic expression to an intrinsic moral conception. And thus it is in the present day, practically, with true Christians. Prompted by an instinctive perception of the cross as

adapted to their wants, they flee to Christ and find their refuge in Him first, and the analysis of their faith and the history of its rise and progress is the result of subsequent reflection.

Accordingly, Dr. Newman, in his work on *Justification*, published while he was a clergyman of the Church of England, somewhat quaintly, but very tersely, thus writes: "True faith is what may be called colourless like air or water; it is but the medium through which the soul sees Christ; and the soul as little rests upon it and contemplates it as the eye can see the air." To the same effect are the practical exhortations of those earnest preachers and writers whose theology is at the opposite pole from Dr. Newman's, and who have, in fact, hardly anything in common with him, except identity of opinion on this one truth. The gist of their appeals is *not*, "Here is the proposition which you are required to believe, and the evidences whereby it is sustained: examine and seek to understand them, then believe and be justified." On the contrary, their uniform language is:—"Never heed definitions,

take no thought as to exact logical distinctions : if the house were on fire would you stay to examine the architecture of the building before you escaped from its smouldering walls ? Run, haste, flee ! the storm of heaven's avenging wrath is bursting on the city, flee to the mountain lest you be consumed !”

4. What, then, is the next step in our analysis ? Accepting the position already taken—that the act of the Christian believer when he receives Christ is, in regard to its saving element, a moral and therefore intuitive act, we recall attention to the difficulty which, in the contemplation of the anxious conscience, the story of the cross appears adapted to solve. The difficulty being felt in the conscience, it is more easy to understand how the conscience may be able to divine a mode of solution. The point to be met is this : “ I cannot conceive of my being placed on terms of friendship with God on other than righteous grounds ; and yet I cannot discover any such grounds within myself.” Does the conscience under such circumstances, when in a healthy and active

state, give up in despair; or despairing only of relief from within, does it not look abroad for help? Abandoning the subjective, has it not recourse to the objective? The history of religious externalism, the rites and ceremonies of both true and false religions, and men's aptitude to place even undue confidence in such rites, evidence the tendency of the mind to go out of itself for consolation.

It is not through choice, but of necessity, that the conscience seeks repose from an objective source.\* Defeated in the at-

\* "It was a fearful struggle; until at length, being brought to my wit's end, I relinquished it in despair, saying, It is of no use my trying further, I cannot help myself; if I must perish, I must. . . . Then as I sat, feeling so helpless and undone, the thought occurred to me, 'You are in God's hands, and He loves you with boundless love; your sins have been put away by the death of Christ, and cannot prevent the exercise of His love towards you. You can do nothing for yourself, but such love will do for you all that you need.' No sooner had this thought occurred than the spell which had bound me was broken. At that moment I passed out of darkness into marvellous light."—The Rev. WILLIAM LANDELS' *Gospel in Various Aspects* (1866), p. 169.

tempt to find within itself a righteous ground for heaven's approval, it is driven to seek it in something out of itself. After long wandering, like the unclean spirit, through the graveyard of its own performances, and after discovering in its imperfect repentance and inadequate obedience only the sepulchres of so many holy but unfulfilled vows, it leaves *perforce* this scene of inward desolation and goes abroad in quest of its spirit-home. And in thus going out of itself in search of repose, what do we see but an imitation, by the conscience, of that which every day's experience teaches us to be necessary on the part of the intellect? When the vagaries of the hypochondriac disclose the introvision which has been the cause of his mental ruin, to what does the skilful physician direct attention as the only possible means of cure? The mind, too long occupied with its own thoughts, is to be compelled, by dis severance from its old habits, by change of scene and cheerful companionship, to go out upon the objective world and derive thence the repose which it to itself denied. So with

moral hypochondria. It cannot be cured by introvision. The guilty conscience can never erect a structure of peace upon a subjective basis, or, in other words, we cannot be self-justified. The basis of peace of conscience, in order to be solid and substantial, *must* be objective.

But, to say that the grounds of justification are necessarily objective, and that justification is necessarily by faith, is merely to adopt two synonymous modes of giving expression to the same axiomatic truth. That which is objective spiritually can be apprehended only by faith, just as that which is objective physically can be apprehended only through the senses. Faith is, in the evangelical scheme, exactly what seeing or feeling is in the philosophy of perception; the one is the medium of connection between the outward world and our knowledge of it, the other is the medium of connection between an objective atonement and a subjective justification. Faith is spiritual perception. Every theory, therefore, which destroys the objective character of the atonement,

is as fatal to the doctrine of justification by faith as was the ideal theory of Berkeley to the reality of perception. Justification by faith cannot co-exist, as a Christian doctrine, with a non-objective atonement.

In the rite of sacrifice, this element of objectivity is beautifully symbolised. The reeking knife, the streaming blood, the struggling victim, the blazing altar, the smoking sacrifice, the ascending cloud—all direct our thoughts to a medium of Divine satisfaction away from ourselves, and indicate the existence of a central point of harmony where, midway between ourselves and heaven, God and man may again be at one.

Hence no scheme of atonement which represents the Christian sacrifice otherwise than as objective, is worthy of the name of a gospel. The assigning of objectivity to the basis of our hopes of salvation, gives to orthodox evangelicism its distinguishing feature. All systems which imply that the meritorious cause wherein we are to confide for Divine acceptance is something subjective, resolve themselves

necessarily into a modification of the anti-Pauline doctrine of salvation by works. The distinction between a subjective and an objective ground of trust, runs parallel with the distinction between justification by works and justification by faith. He who would be justified by works finds the fancied grounds of his trust within himself, or in the *ego*; while he who has sought them there in vain, and is driven to the alternative of seeking them beyond himself, or in the *non-ego*, adopts thereby the principle of justification by faith.

5. But if an objective basis be necessary to the repose of the conscience, equally necessary is it that such objective basis exist within the range of our human sympathies. Though non-subjective, in the sense of its being apart from the individual mind, it must still have in it some element with which our consciousness may so combine as to give us, in view of the atoning act, a sense of *moral identity*. To evolve this element it requires that we associate with the atoning act the idea of corporate responsibility.

It is a patent fact, that individuals in this world do not suffer in exact proportion to their own personal sins. The vices of parents oft entail their consequences less severely on themselves than on their children. The unrighteous acts of persons in power bring down upon a nation or community calamities which fall, sometimes, most fiercely upon the very individuals who were the most earnest in deprecating the acts that occasioned them. National punishments are always indiscriminating; as all history testifies. The upright and the wicked share alike the miseries of mortality: and, not unfrequently, the good are doomed to endure sorrows from which the bad escape. Since, therefore, it is quite manifest that men, in this world, are not dealt with equally, it behoves those who place every individual man in a separate individual relationship to God, and who assert that God deals with men only *as isolated individuals*, to apply themselves to the consideration of the question whether, on this hypothesis of *individuality*—in responsibility, guilt, and punishment

—the anomaly of not always visiting equal guilt with equal punishment does not necessarily involve injustice, and whether, therefore, the theory of isolated responsibility is not self-destructive. But the topic of corporate responsibility will be dealt with in a subsequent chapter, and we now only refer to it in order to intimate that it supplies the bond of sympathy between man's moral nature and such an objective basis as the conscience, in the absence of a subjective basis, perforce seeks to rest upon.

6. That it is capable of supplying this bond of sympathy will be apparent, if we examine the connection which subsists between conscious corporate responsibility and self-sacrifice.

Much has been said and sung in praise of suffering virtue. But simply to say that virtue appears to the greatest advantage in circumstances of suffering, is to express but a fragment of the true idea. Nor is it enough to say that virtue shines the most resplendently in acts of self-sacrifice. In order to a full conception, it requires that we exalt the idea of simple

suffering into that of the penitential sustenance of judicial suffering, and that we conceive of self-sacrifice as the voluntary and resigned endurance of individual chastisement for general crime. This voluntary acceptance it is, of the punishment due to human guilt, that gives to self-sacrifice its highest moral beauty.

Take an illustrative example from the records of primitive Christianity:—"When the Decian persecution and its attendant tumultuary movements had filled Alexandria with such slaughter as to breed pestilence from the bodies of the dead, the Christians, instead of sullenly permitting the physical calamity to avenge their cause, assumed the duties of public nurses, and performed the loathsome tasks from which Pagan priests and magistrates had fled." Here, the pestilence was the self-inflicted and, we may fairly add, judicial punishment — not the less so because the natural consequence of the acts—of those infuriated priests, magistrates, and people who, by persecuting its disciples to the death, had sought to destroy the Christian cause. Mark then the element,

which so powerfully kindles our admiration at the lofty virtue of the persecuted! They returned good for evil; but that was not all. They became mediators, instead of avengers; another step in the ascent, but still short of the summit. They voluntarily subjected themselves to the sufferings and dangers which their persecutors had invoked upon their own heads, becoming, as their substitutes in a fatal social duty, vicarious victims for the sins of their enemies, and themselves enduring the punishment with which heaven had visited their quarrel!

How strange that the darkest shades in human history should thus bring out to our admiring gaze the most beautiful touches of virtue's pencil! The fretted stream murmurs its most soothing melodies when dashed by impeding rocks; "the willow must be shaken with the wind, before its leaves glitter like plumes of silver;" the atmosphere requires a dense dark cloud of vapour as a groundwork on which to sketch the matchless glories of the iris; the ocean must be so enraged by the storm as to fill the palpi-

tating heart with terror, ere it can impress us with its own grandeur: so human virtue is in her highest perfection when we behold in her the embodiment of the prophet's words of mournful beauty: "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!" Such virtue was displayed by Moses when, interceding with God for Israel, he asks that his own name might be "blotted out," rather than the name of Israel should perish; and by Paul when, in the bitterness of his grief for Israel's unbelief, he wished to be himself "accursed," if he might thereby save them. The truth is, that the benevolent sympathy through which we become identified with others' sorrows is an extended consciousness,\* and, when

\* "It would be a convenient distinction if the term "*self-consciousness*" were always employed whenever we wish to express the mind's cognizance of its own operations. This would help to remove *the false notion* that we can appeal to consciousness for nothing beyond them."—MORELL'S *Hist. of Mod. Phil.*, vol. ii., p. 15.

directed to moral subjects in the spirit of self-sacrifice, is more than a consciousness of woe; it is the consciousness also of the general guilt; so that conscience, in these its more refined exercises, outstretches the *ego*, and, comprehending first an inner and then a wider circle, enlarging its sphere as it improves its culture, embraces at last, in its best estate, all the sins of all the world. Thus had our Saviour identified Himself with the guilt of humanity when He suffered, in Gethsemane and upon the cross, beneath the overwhelming weight of our "curse." "He who knew no sin was made *sin* for us,"—not a sin-offering only: He became "*sin*" that He might be a sin-offering. He became "*sin*," in the sense of so thoroughly identifying Himself with human guilt, that He felt, morally and conscientiously, all its judicial bitterness.

"Is it not the fact," says Maurice, "that if we have the consciousness in however slight a degree of evil in another man, it is, up to the same degree, as if the evil were in ourselves?" Have we

not a feeling of personal shame? And “supposing the offender to be a friend, or a brother, or a child, is not this sense of personal shame, of the evil being ours, proportionably stronger and more acute?” Then, if it be possible for us to have the *consciousness* of one other man’s sins, why not of all men’s sins? “Suppose this carried to its highest point, cannot you apprehend that Christ may have entered into the sin of the whole world, may have had the most inward realisation of it, not because it was like what was in Himself, but because it was utterly and intensely unlike?”

Although we have employed the word “sympathy” after the example of the author whose words we quote, it will scarcely convey a correct idea without some explanation. Perhaps it will be understood if thus stated: out of the combination, in a highly cultivated moral state of the mind, of its sympathies and antipathies, a third sentiment is capable of being evolved, called also, for want of a distinctive name, “sympathy,” but at once attractive of the individual and repellent

of his crime. The most familiar examples of this are to be found when persons, standing to each other in endearing relationships, have diverse moral characters. The more endearing the personal relationship and the more diverse the character, the deeper will be this compound sentiment. Take, for instance, the case of a child who has suddenly betrayed evidences of a great moral turpitude by the public commission of some shameful crime. To designate the feelings of the anguish-stricken father by the paltry name of "pity," would be a miserable misnomer. A worthy father identifies himself with his child's crime, and feels as much shame and distress as if the crime had been his own. But the depth of this feeling will depend upon two things, the extent of his love for his child and of his hatred to the crime. If the moral character of the father be no better than that of the offender, his feelings of self-loathing will be no deeper than those of the offender. Exactly in proportion to the superiority of his character, will be the profundity of his woe.

May we not venture to say that a sentiment so compound is inadequately expressed by the word "sympathy," and that, instead of saying "sympathy with others' sins," we should more accurately convey the idea by calling it "*consciousness of others' sins?*" A phraseology this, too, in strict accordance with the most approved psychological nomenclature! For, as is now generally agreed, consciousness is not one specific faculty, but "the common condition under which our faculties are brought into operation," nor is it limited to the region of "self," but is comprehensive also of "not-self." So that it is not more psychologically accurate to say, that we are painfully conscious of our own guiltiness, than to say, of one under the circumstances just described, that he is *conscious of*, and in his moral feelings suffers for, the guiltiness of another.

7. Next, there arises this question: Christ having identified Himself with humanity by becoming an element in its constitution, and thus necessarily participating in its conscious condemnation and

woe, do we not, by virtue of a law of that same constitution, participate in His merits? The danger being common, is not the deliverance common also? And Christ having entered into our consciousness of danger, may we not, by virtue of that power of reciprocation which is another law of our moral being, enter with Him into the consciousness of redemption?

But this topic also will have to be enlarged upon in a subsequent chapter.

8. Thus have we traced, through seven successive stages, the rise and progress of that intuitive conviction by which the work of Christ becomes realised to the conscience and personally appropriated, and whereby guilty fear is made to yield to peace and joy. We have not sought to resolve into articulate propositions the truth, the mind's consciousness whereof produces such results. To give an outward form and intellectual exposition of any primary moral principle is most difficult, if not impossible. Who can describe what justice is, and why the consciousness of being just diffuses inward satisfaction?

For the same reason it is impossible to describe, except vaguely and approximately, what it is in the work of Christ that satisfies one's conception of a "fulfilled righteousness." Hence we make no attempt to bridge across the abyss that yawns between human guilt and Heaven's justice, as it exists in the Divine government objectively. The attempt to do so is one of the prevailing errors of systematic theologians, and one of the chief sources of the disfavour with which theology, as a science, is at present regarded. The objective treatment of the Christian sacrifice is impracticable, inasmuch as the relations it involves are such as human reason cannot fathom, and the effort leads to the crystallizing of doctrines which are true only as fluent and living. Christology, like morals, can only be treated successfully by being approached from the subjective.

To affirm that God's love and justice were at variance, and that wisdom interposed the expedient of Christ's sacrificial death by way of harmonising jarring attributes, may be a pardonable method of

suggesting a procedure in the Divine administration which baffles the intellect, and of which our only notion is the photograph thereof written upon the conscience. But beyond uttering it as a distant suggestion of the inexplicable, theology ought not to venture. Gravely to hazard the theory, that the Almighty Governor of the universe deemed it necessary to vindicate the righteousness of His government by requiring the Christian sacrifice as a utilitarian expedient, and as a warning to other intelligences, is to rush where angels fear to tread. It is an attempt to soar beyond the legitimate bounds of religious thought. The most elaborate juridical theories, although couched in the language of forensic reasoning, are in reality nothing better than metaphorical amplifications of the conscience's intuitive difficulty, and have as little title to rank with the logical operations of the intellect as the significant dream of the South Sea warrior who, when in a state of great mental distress, saw his sins crossing his path in the form of an impassable mountain, upon which,

from an outstretched finger, a drop of blood fell, and the mountain was dissolved. To get beyond this, we must penetrate the recesses of the Christ-mind; and that we cannot do.

“ It needs, to tell the triumph Thou hast wrought,  
An angel’s deathless fire—an angel’s reach of  
thought.

“ It needs *that very angel* who, with awe,  
Amid the garden shade,  
The great Creator in His sickness saw,  
Soothed by a creature’s aid,  
And agonised, as victim of the law  
Which He Himself had made;  
For who can praise Him in His depth and height  
But he who saw Him reel in that victorious  
fight? ”\*

\* Newman’s *Dream of Gerontius*.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MORAL UNITY OF HUMANITY, THE BASIS OF VICARIOUS MERIT AND SUFFERING.



THE theory to be developed in the following chapter may be thus briefly stated:—

1. Some of the evils which afflict humanity might obviously have been averted by moral rectitude, and of these it may be affirmed on the testimony of experience, as also of all on scriptural authority, that they are at once the fruit and punishment of sin. Yet it is equally undeniable that personal wickedness is not always visited upon the head of the particular offender: sometimes, at least in the present life, he escapes altogether; and oft the sorrow he has invoked falls upon others more heavily than upon himself. But the inequality thus notoriously existing in the individual relationship does

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not exist in relation to the world at large. As between God and total humanity, embracing all time, rewards and punishments are administered with judicial strictness : mankind, as a whole, suffer the fitting punishment of their aggregate guilt ; and are rewarded, as a whole, in exact accordance with their aggregate obedience. The hypothesis justified by these and similar facts is that the race is an organic unit, standing to God in a corporate moral relation ; and that pain and sorrow, although awarded to the race-unit judicially, as the equivalent of its deserts, are thereafter distributed among the members of the race on other principles, *i.e.* according to laws shaped out of the conflict between good and evil, and which have the triumph of good for their ultimate end. One of these laws is, that the highest natures suffer the most keenly. We see this daily in the pangs consequent upon refined sensibility and tender affection ; and if the action of the law be more silent, it is certainly not less real, in the anguish produced by deep moral sympathy. To this cause is obviously to be

attributed the mental agony of the world's Redeemer. Because our Lord Jesus Christ was the highest moral exemplification of human nature, He became necessarily, through the operation of the law we have referred to, the Man of Sorrows. And in the chain of sequences thus subjected to intellectual examination, we have the rationale of the Christian Sacrifice.

2. Again: because humanity is a unit and stands to God corporately in a relation of merit or demerit, Christ, as one of the brotherhood of humanity, elevated it to His own position in the Divine regards. Standing before God as the King and Representative of the race, He, by virtue of the moral sympathy which pervades the human brotherhood, entered into the consciousness of their guilt as if it had been His own; and the sentiments with which it affected Him—the Son of God—in the presence of His loving Father, brought the repentant human into absolute and conscious reconciliation with the Divine. By virtue of the same moral sympathy through which Christ entered into the

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consciousness of our guilt, all who seek to imbibe the spirit of Christ enter into the consciousness of His righteousness ; and in this we have the rationale of justification by faith, or peace of conscience through trusting in Christ.

We repeat that our object in this chapter is to develop the idea of mankind's moral unity. With the questions of the origin and antiquity of the race we do not intermeddle. All we require to have admitted to us is, that ever since the commencement of history mankind have been, and are now, a distinct, well-defined species, possessing, among other distinctive features, moral agency and responsibility ; and that the world is under moral government. Let our readers grant this, and then take issue, if they will, upon the question whether the only kind of moral responsibility existing is that which is personal to each man ; or whether, besides that, there does not also exist, as we affirm there does, a corporate responsibility of entire humanity.

There are two modes of working out

this problem. The one is by the inductive process — collecting facts and evolving thereout the principle they embody. The other is to assume the principle, and test its truth by inquiring how far it accords with life's actual phenomena. We will adopt the latter method ; both because it is the approved method of conveying that which induction has already been made use of to discover, and because it allows of greater concentration of thought — a condition which, even if space were no consideration, it is desirable to observe.

Our hypothesis, then, is, that humanity stands to God in a relation of corporate responsibility, and is capable of corporate merit or demerit, and of its conscientious conviction ; and that the happiness or misery of the world, as a whole, is determined by its corporate moral character. The antagonist proposition is, that each human being is responsible for himself only, and that to hold him responsible, in any way, for the voluntary acts of another would be unjust, and at variance with our primary moral convictions. We hope to be able to demonstrate that the latter por-

tion of this adverse statement is as unsupported as its commencement ; and that mankind's intuitive moral convictions support the view we advocate.

I. First, then, is it or is it not a law of humanity that virtue and happiness are indissolubly associated ? We assume that it is. That they are not indissolubly associated in individual examples is too clear for argument ; consequently, it is not in the individual example that this law of humanity is exhibited. But although no fact can be more certain than that, in individual cases, virtue and present happiness are frequently dissevered ; if the principles we contend for be sound, it will follow from them that, in proportion as we deal with masses, instead of with individuals, we shall approach nearer and nearer to a constancy of relation between happiness and virtue ; until at length, by eliminating disturbing influences, we reach a sufficient aggregate whereby to demonstrate their co-existence as a universal law.

Let us refer, by way of illustration, to the law which regulates the earth's irriga-

tion. We know that the earth is as much dependent upon the rain for its vitality as upon the heat of the sun, and that these must be supplied in proportionate degrees: and we know also that the moisture drawn up by evaporation from our rivers, lakes, and oceans is in proportion to the application of the solar heat—demand and supply being thus made self-regulative. Yet this general law, which, in its aggregate operation, is strict as any mathematical corollary, becomes in the distribution of its results apparently most capricious—the shower often descending on soil already saturated, while, elsewhere, the parched ground gasps for it in vain. In like manner, while it may be quite true that, as a general law, moral evil is the cause of physical evil, and that the world's miseries, in the aggregate, are in accordance with its moral condition, it may be, and is, equally true that heaven's blessings and curses descend upon the just and unjust with as apparently little relation to their individual object, as in the case of the capriciously descending shower.

This, then, being a state of things war-

ranted by our principle, to what extent does it coincide with actually existing phenomena? Is there anything to justify the conclusion that, although, as we well know, prosperity does not always follow in the wake of individual moral worth, the companionship of these two is more and more constant in proportion as we deal with increasing aggregates?

In order to obtain a satisfactory answer to this question, we have but to ascend from the individual example of suffering virtue to the condition of virtuous men *as a class*. What is the universal testimony of the civilised world with regard to the relation between happiness and virtue? Do not all human laws, all religious teaching, all our untainted literature — our novels, our dramas, as well as the graver pages of avowed moralists—affirm, without a dissentient voice, that, however it may be with individuals, virtue as a rule produces happiness, and vice leads as certainly to woe?

Again, is it not the fact that nations have ever become great, powerful, glorious, and free in proportion as they have main-

tained truth and justice and repressed crime? It is needless to burden our pages with historic examples; for, unless the world's history have forced this fact upon the attention of every ordinary student, it will be useless to dwell upon it. We want evidences so clear as to be indisputable; and we apprehend that the one we now adduce is of that description. All history demonstrates that, however virtue may suffer in the cases of individuals and of small communities, or as a temporary exceptional incident, there is an indissoluble conjunction observable between national morality and the national weal.

But if virtue and happiness be invariably combined in aggregates, why not also in individuals? To this question we have already suggested the answer; and, in answering it now more fully, we hope to give point to the argument.

Each individual is not, to the extent commonly supposed, a microcosm—a little world in himself, embodying in his own limited experience all the principles found in operation in the world at large. The

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relation between humanity and God, out of which arises the unvarying union of virtue and happiness, is not a relation made up—like a bundle of equal-sized rods—of a number of similar individual relations. Humanity is not an arithmetical addition of integers, but a body constituted, after the fashion of the human body, of adapted members. Hence the law applicable to humanity as a whole is true, in its rigid strictness, in relation only to entire humanity, and but partially true when applied to sections; gradually dwindling into inappropriateness when applied to individuals. As applied to individuals, it is like a shivered mirror sparkling brilliantly in some of its fragments on which the light fortuitously falls, but in others deprived of all reflective power. The consequence of this disseverance is, that between the parts of the whole in their relation both to God and to each other, new laws come into operation. Let us look, for illustration, to the incidents of an Alpine tour. As between the tourist and general laws, the exercise and scenery produce ecstatic enjoyment. But

this is true only of the man as a whole : how does the case stand in reference to particular parts of him, after a few hard days' toil? His feet are sore, his joints ache, his face is blistered, his eyes are inflamed. So, while in relation to humanity as a whole, the law immutably prevails that virtue and joy walk hand in hand, yet, inasmuch as it is to the whole only that this law is applicable, and not to its detached parts, it is quite compatible with our general proposition that, as in the case of the fatigued pedestrian, there co-exists with exalted general joy very much of particular sorrow.

Remarkable is it that, in the writings of ancient sages, passages oft occur which show extraordinary depth of thought, and make us wonder that these have not ere now become household words, instead of being buried still in musty volumes, unnoticed and but little known. So early as in the fifth century before the commencement of the Christian era, Heraclitus taught that "the only way to attain truth was to abjure all separate reason, and to

follow the common or universal reason.”\*  
“Each man’s mind,” he said, “must become identified and familiar with that common process which directed and transformed the whole.”

Again, the speeches of Glaukon and Adeimantus, in the second book of Plato’s *Republic*, disapprove the unjust life, not because it is a calamity to the evil-doer—a result which they appear anxious to discover and cannot—but because it is an evil to others. “According to them, all mankind, even those who most inculcate justice, inculcate it as self-sacrifice, describing the life of the just man as hard and difficult; that of the unjust as pleasant and easy.”† At a later date, the Stoic Epictetus wrote what we shall translate freely, although doing nothing more than convey the spirit of Stoicism and the purport of the original:—

“A man,” says Epictetus, “is part of a commonwealth: what, then, doth the character of a good citizen promise? It promises to hold no private interest ad-

\* Grote’s *Plato*, vol. i. p. 36.

† Mill’s *Dissertations*, vol. iii., p. 306.

verse to the general good; but to do as would the hand or foot, which, if they were possessed of reason, and could comprehend the constitution of nature, would never act as members of the body except with a reference to the whole. If the members of the body are to be considered as so many unconnected individuals, I will allow it to be natural for the foot to assert its right to be always clean; but, if you regard it as a foot, and not as an unconnected agent, circumstances require that it should walk in the dirt, tread upon the thorns, and sometimes even be cut off, for the good of the whole. So, if you were an unconnected individual, completely severed from human society, it might be natural that you should live to old age, and be ever healthy and happy; but if you are to be regarded as a component part of social humanity, then it is fit and natural that you should, for the sake of the whole, be at one time sick; at another, take a voyage to sea and encounter the storm; at another, suffer hunger and thirst, or endure adversity and insult; and probably, at last, die before your time."

Men that could write thus must have had in their minds the entire hypothesis we are now seeking to unfold: so that, instead of being novel, as some might imagine, it may boast an origin antecedent to and coeval with the dawn of the Christian era. While modern thought looks upon the sufferings of virtue as an anomaly, a mystery, something to be reconciled with justice only on the supposition of a future recompense, ancient sages, with a wider range of vision, more correctly regarded it as a natural and necessary result of man's social and moral unity in a world in which virtue has to do battle with evil.

Nor were Christianity's earliest propagators less decidedly of the same opinion. It would require but little effort to prove that the most subtle and sublime doctrines which St Paul enunciates are spontaneous evolutions of his cardinal maxim, that "we are members one of another." We have an example of this in Ephesians iv. 25, where, in harmony with the doctrine of the Stoics, who, as we have seen, "grounded the obligation of morals on

the brotherhood of the human race," Paul enforces the virtue of truth-telling by the argument that lying is socially suicidal. And every reader of his epistles knows how earnestly and frequently he inculcates upon Christians the duty of being personally self-denying and kind one to another, because, like the members of the human body, they are "one in Christ," with a common feeling of sympathy, so that no one part of the body ecclesiastic can suffer without the rest suffering with it (1 Cor. xii. 26; Eph. v. 30, &c.).

II. Again, were it to be granted that all the events that happen in the world, including the voluntary acts of moral agents, are evolved one out of the other, and so mutually dependent as to become in effect a continuous chain of necessary sequences, the result, of course, would be that a unity would be established which could not fail to render humanity one great responsible whole. But a concession so extensive as this we do not require. The acts of voluntary agents, it may be said, introduce new elements into the series—forces which may operate either in

accordance with or adverse to the original direct force. The stream glides on, but not between banks that exclude the access of foreign waters: at frequent intervals, quiet streamlets from the neighbouring plains, and, now and then, gurgling mountain torrents, pour their liquid treasures into the mighty reservoir; and on it goes with these additions, rushing, foaming, sometimes between a narrowing deeper channel, then widening into a vast shallow estuary.

But, notwithstanding all those vicissitudes, does not the stream still continue one? So, humanity is not less one because at every new birth, and on the putting forth of every self-determined volition, there is added a new element of strength. However independent the new element may have been in its origin, it no sooner mixes with the flowing tide than its independence ceases. Thenceforth it is hurried on or retarded, lifted or submerged, according to the exigencies wherewith it has become conditioned.

Few are the sins—if, in truth, there are any—which are the exclusive product of

an individual mind, and which have been in no way contributed to by others. There are, first, in the catalogue of contributory causes, those hereditary tendencies for which parents, and no doubt more remote ancestors, are responsible. Then there are habits formed in early life; and for these not only parents, but other members also of the domestic circle, including nurses and governesses, are more or less accountable. Then there is the instruction received in youth; and here is brought in the mighty power exerted over the youthful mind by schoolmasters and schoolmistresses: to all which are to be added the influence of juvenile associations, and the inducement and pressure of ten thousand varying circumstances, leading onward to the particular act complained of, as their all but necessary climax. Hence there is no denying that every man's moral character is modified, if not absolutely formed, by his associations. And as little, therefore, can it be denied that no moral action, good or bad, is the sole product of one mind. But if this be so—if every voluntary act of every

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individual be more or less contributed to by others—how can it possibly be maintained that responsibility is ever individual only, and never corporate? On the contrary, what action is there that is not corporate? Does the murderer in the dead hour of night steal into the quiet chamber of his sleeping victim, and, prompted by the greed of gain, stab to the heart the unconscious father, and rob his orphan children of their only means of support? Ask where that villain was born, in what den of infamy he first drew breath, where he was educated, and by what steps he has been matured into the hardened criminal you now witness? We may find that his grandsire was a clergyman; that his father, strictly educated in childhood, rushed in youth into the vortex of prodigality; that his mother was a ruined beauty; that, untrained to industry, he began life as a timid pilferer, but that, rendered bold by successful thieving, he dared the law, was caught in its meshes, and was converted by imprisonment among felons into a reckless ruffian. We see thus how many acts of individuals have contri-

buted to give existence to the character we now contemplate, and, by creating the agent, to produce his crime. It would be mere evasion to say that the crime is only the crime of him who premeditates it, and that the unintentional contributors thereto have no share in its guilt. That may be so for purposes of punitive justice before an earthly tribunal; but our present inquiry has reference to the proceedings before a Divine tribunal. Even human laws attribute to offenders the criminality of results in which their conduct necessarily terminates—holding that every man must intend that which is the inevitable consequence of his actions. We ask no more than that this well-settled principle be ceded to us. However untraceable for practical ends, there has been in the case supposed a slow but sure progress from act to act through at least three generations of voluntary agents tending directly to terminate as it has done. But are the immediate actors the only culpable parties? What are we to say respecting the more remote events by which they in their turn were influenced and determined? What

do we see but a series of concentric circles spreading wider and wider over the troubled waters—as when a projected stone having disturbed the centre, thence to the far-distant shore not a drop remains unmoved by the eddying wave.

To make this point clearer, we will again review the case of any great criminal. How has that man been made a criminal? He was born in abject poverty, and his early days were spent in familiarity with scenes of brutal sensuality. Whose fault was that? Surely not his: he could not help the circumstances of his birth. The associations of his boyhood repressed the misgivings of his moral nature, and he was taught, both by precept and example, that it was a clever thing to steal without detection, and that stealing was some men's legitimate calling. To that example he yielded. We admit that he willingly and sinfully yielded: our object is not to excuse him, but to inculcate others along with him. Then the police were set upon his track. He was put into prison, tried, sentenced, punished. Branded as a criminal, to him reform was next to impossible.

He was known as a thief, and could get no industrial employment. Becoming through necessity a thief by profession, he was again caught, transported, and ere long came back a returned convict, hardened in crime, desperate. Does he at length, going from bad to worse, stain his hands in blood? What wonder if he do? And whose is the crime? Not his alone, but that of society together with him — society which predetermined his early circumstances, which neglected him, despised him, would not give him work, and compelled him to steal to support life. And yet, after hounding him on to a felon's death, society hangs up his dead body on the gibbet, and, instead of feeling afflicted with its own share in the guilt, ostentatiously points him out as a warning, a beacon—a beacon to whom? To men who, like himself, are driven on time's lee-shore by circumstances which not they single-handed, but society alone, can control.

It has been observed by a scientific writer of eminence, that there is not a single event which takes place in the

world—be it only the flight of a bird through the air, or the tread of a camel across the desert—but leaves behind it permanent results, extending through all time. Thus there are fossil remains that have had impressed upon them the wash of the wave, the raindrops, the footprints of animal life—insignificant events once, when they happened myriads of ages ago, but how significant now in the hands of our geologists! As in these examples, so in everything, nature treasures up to this hour, imprinted upon her in ineffaceable lines, all the events of her past history. Nothing that ever happened has been obliterated, nor can be. Mundane affairs always record themselves: they write their own tale, photograph their own image, exist still in the altered form they gave to physical nature at the moment they occurred. Now, if this be an allowed scientific truth, how beautifully does it coincide with and confirm another truth equally indisputable! As no occurrence in nature is ever effaced, so neither is any human action. There is not a single word spoken, nor a single work performed

—nay, not even a single thought entertained, nor passion indulged—but it leaves itself indelibly written on the individual man, on humanity as a whole, and oft on physical nature herself, through all succeeding time.

This truth, though perhaps startling, is so self-evident that it scarcely needs enlargement in order to its more distinct utterance. We have only to ask, What is the effect upon the world's history of any great event—say any great battle, such as Waterloo or Solferino? Do not such great events manifestly impress their image upon all humanity's future? But what is a great battle composed of? Is it not the aggregate of individual movements, so that every individual movement comprehended in the general idea forms a letter in the inscription engraved thereby on time's tablet? Or let us select for illustration some well-known historical era: let it be the revolutionary struggle in our own country during the latter half of the seventeenth century. Let us mark the successive stages of that struggle, and observe how one begeth the other. First,

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there was the despotism, the absolute Church and Divine-right pretensions, and the total want of trustworthiness of the First Charles. That gave rise to the sturdy Puritans—men of the Hampden stamp—to Cromwell and his troop of yeomen; stern in principle, religious in their language and feelings, but conventional in their practice and visionary in their hopes. Then came the Civil War. What followed upon that? Can the religious character of a nation be maintained at a high level amid the excitement, storms, and passions of civil warfare? Impossible! Consequently, when the nation became involved in the wars of the Commonwealth, its high Puritanic tone subsided; and those who had, at the commencement of their public life, been good and spiritual men, became, in the fierceness of the conflict, unspiritual, formal, hypocritical. Then, out of this backsliding and hypocrisy sprang a reaction—for what was it but the disgusting hypocrisy of the latter days of the Commonwealth that provoked the reckless licentiousness of the Restoration? That again, in its turn, awakened

a reverse reaction ; and the extreme elements were at length tempered down into the revived English moderate and practical spirit of the Revolution of 1688. Thus in each of these great national changes one produced the other ; not as mathematically as any physical cause produces its appropriate effect, but in the strict order of moral causation. And so it has been—although not always so easily to be traced—throughout all preceding and all subsequent ages of the world's history, and in all nations. Has not the character of the present generation of mankind been formed elementally by the last ? And was not the character of the last generation formed, in many of its leading features, by the generation which preceded it ? and so on in retrogression : and do not we who exist together in the generation that now is, contribute to influence and modify the characters of each other ? If this be so, about which there can be no doubt, we have only to carry out the same idea more in detail, and it must necessarily issue in giving operative force to each individual, however obscure,

and to each individual's every act, word, thought.

What we are in danger of, whenever we thus treat of great public events, is the forgetting that, instead of being simply events, they are really the composite acts of many individual actors; and that to analyse the act and apportion to each actor his separate part is not only practically impossible, but theoretically inconceivable. This mingling of minds to produce one act gives to every separate link in the chain of events a corporate character; but when, in addition thereto, each stage of progress, instead of continuing a separate link, intermingles with its successor like a dissolving view dying away in that which follows, the character of the final result becomes in a still stronger sense corporate. We call it an event, thus concealing from ourselves its true origin; but, instead of an event, it is a voluntary moral act. Whose act? A national act. But a nation is a section of humanity formed and influenced in its national character and acts by antecedent and contemporary nations: everything national is world-wide—

human—having entire humanity for its base.

The conclusions to which the preceding reflections have led us would be equally well arrived at by contemplating the history of any great reformer, statesman, or warrior. How are such men created? Without denying that individual attributes of character place the last stone on the edifice, we are surely safe in asserting that its foundations were laid and the superstructure reared in influences that have probably struggled for centuries against difficulties, and reached at length their full development in the age that gave birth to the master-mind with whose name their triumph is now historically associated. To assert that he was their author is to reverse the order of causation. As when the argument pursued for some time by one skilled in eloquence prepares his auditory for the last stroke, and the oration, wound up at length by a powerful appeal, falls with resistless force, scattering the difficulties in the way of immediate action and arousing to high resolve; so is it when nations, prepared by all their past

history, are aroused to strike off the fetters that enslaved them—the relation of by-gone centuries to their final uprising being in nothing different from the relation that subsists between the orator's previous arguments and his last appeal.

And let it be observed, all that we have said is not less applicable to the corporate character of virtuous actions than it is to that of vicious ones. No man has the right to attribute all the merit of his virtue to himself. And it is strongly corroborative of this assertion that no thoroughly good man attempts it; and that, if any one having good points in his character make too strong a claim to be praised for his goodness, this assertion is universally felt to be a weakness. Ask any virtuous man what he considers to have been the origin of his virtue, and he will unhesitatingly enumerate a multitude of influences which have contributed to his character's virtuous formation; and, after concluding such enumeration, he will be found unwilling to appropriate even the residuum of merit to himself: he ascribes it to a source that is Divine. What is the inference to

be drawn from such facts? Is it that virtue has really no human habitat, and that man is nothing more than a piece of soft clay which unseen powers mould as they will?—or rather, is it not a more rational conclusion that, the Divine power which creates virtue has a dwelling-place in humanity, and that it is by virtue of this embodied power (which, like vegetable life, has its seat, not in this branch only, nor in that, but in the entire tree), that the branches all retain moral life, and at least the power of production, while here and there the pendent fruit indicates spots where, on particular branches, the power resident in the whole tree has been specially put forth?

III. But it may be said, and said with truth, that, wherever there is moral responsibility, there will be the intuitive consciousness of merit or demerit; and that if each of us be really implicated in mankind's corporate acts, our consciences ought to give us some intimation thereof. We grant that such should be the case; and we contend that it is so as an actual fact. But it is not such a fact as will at

once force itself on every one's attention. It lies hid. Even the sense of personal demerit exists only in minds that have some degree of moral culture. Higher culture awakens a keener consciousness of evil; but it requires a higher culture still to inspire a sense of responsibility for the vice around us. Only the highest culture can make the whole truth unmistakably perceptible.

If good men suffer for the crimes of the bad, it is tolerably clear that the moral administration under which such things happen sees no injustice in it. And yet there would be injustice were there no other law of humanity but that of personal reward for personal merit, and personal punishment for personal demerit; for that virtue does so suffer is beyond dispute. All suffering that has a human origin, and which any conceivable progress would correct, springs, by the very terms of the supposition, from moral evil; and yet virtue so suffers. To attempt to get over the difficulty by misrepresenting the future state as a scheme for correcting earth's present errors, is to reduce the moral

government of the universe to a level with that blundering procedure from which not even English judicature has been wholly free, but which nevertheless fails not to call forth strong expressions of public condemnation. To recall a man from transportation who has been punished wrongfully, and to compensate him for the wrong done to him, is felt, however liberal the compensation given him, to be at best but very wretched justice. It is an insult to the Divine government to suppose that such is the kind of justice *it* administers. In opposition to such a notion, we have contended that the sufferings of virtue happen as a consequence of the law of humanity which attaches reward and punishment to mankind's corporate character; yet even this can only be true in combination with its sister-truth, that such a law is a just law, and ought to commend itself to our consciences as just.

To say that virtue suffers *through* evil, but not *for* it, is to make a distinction without a difference, and affords us no help. All moral rewards and punishments are in pursuance of a law that works out its end

in a chain of natural sequences. Whether there be direct visitations from heaven, we neither affirm nor deny: all we say is, that if they happen, they are the exception and not the rule, and that no such direct visitation is required for the purposes of our argument. Nor is it necessary that we give in our adhesion to any particular theory in relation to the origin of moral evil, and as to the distinction between it and natural evil. Take even the lowest ground, and assume the only difference between natural evil and moral evil to be, that the latter is a wilful violation of the dictates of nature, and that the former is nature's revenge. Adopt, we say, even this view, and let it be allowed that all punishment of evil is self-inflicted and corrective; it is not deprived by that circumstance of its character as punishment. We would refer, for example, to those visitations of cholera which we had in this country a few years ago. Is it not notorious that in many towns and localities the virulence of the disease was attributable to drunkenness and sensuality, and to the debility and filth consequent thereon?

Who, under these circumstances, would hesitate to pronounce it to have been vice's punishment? But, although vice might give existence and impetus to the plague, it did not assign bounds to its ravages. Once abroad, the pestilence fell upon the moral equally with the immoral; upon the thoughtful and frugal equally with the reckless spendthrift; upon the pious and benevolent equally with the profane. Was that which was, strictly speaking, punishment when it fell upon the immediate culprits, any less a corrective or a punishment—we may call it which we like—when it fell more widely? If viewed in the light of a corrective, does not its wider extension teach us that the virtuous are as much bound to aid in the work of progress as are the vicious? And if viewed in the light of a punishment, it but teaches the same lesson—that the virtuous owe a duty to their vicious neighbours for the neglect of which they suffer. Again: do not the calamities of war originate in some act of injustice and wrong? In such cases, war is crime's punishment; yet who suffer? Not always the most criminal, nor gene-

rally so ; it is oft the innocent on whom vengeance falls most terribly. We mean the personally innocent ; for, corporately, all may be said to be implicated. Do you ask where is the justice of such a procedure ? We answer that, on the principle of national responsibility, there is no injustice to be complained of. The crime being national, the punishment is also national ; the offence being corporate, the blow is also corporate. The hand steals, the back is smitten : there is unity in the culprit, and so long as the whip falls upon the unit, justice is indifferent as to the precise spot where it cuts most severely.

Once admit the principle we have just stated, and the consequence follows, that if our consciences are unaffected by corporate demerit, it is not because the demerit does not exist, but because our moral nature is imperfectly cultivated, and is not therefore sufficiently active and sensitive.

But there is no need for us to leave the argument here. Examples exist of various kinds, illustrating the aptitude of man's moral nature to be affected, both painfully and joyously, by the moral character of

acts which are not the product of his own mind, and in which he is in no other way interested than through the operation of his human sympathies. To some of these examples we will now advert.

The earliest combination of two or more individuals is into that of the family: the next is that of the tribe or clan. But, in modern times, the clan has given place to the town, and towns corporate form one of the most expressive forms of social organization. We have in a municipal borough something far beyond the mere dwelling together of a numerous body of inhabitants. Besides propinquity of residence, there are mutual concert and combined action for the general welfare. There is discussion in order to agreement; the minority yields to the majority, to effect unanimity: and so soon as the decision thus come to has been affirmed under the corporate seal, the act is no longer the act of a few, but the act of the many, the corporate act of the whole borough. Now, wherever questions of right or wrong, justice or injustice, apply to the acts of individuals, they apply

equally to the acts of corporations ; and, although it is proverbially more difficult where responsibility is divided to bring home charges of injustice, the sense of moral obligation is not less existent and ought not to be less active with regard to corporate acts than with regard to personal acts.

Again : because corporate life in a municipality illustrates forcibly what we mean when we breathe corporate life into entire humanity, we will on this point invite attention to the following extract from the works of Mr. W. E. Gladstone, whose acute mind and varied learning and experience give to his authority, on such a topic, accumulated value :—“ Wherever common life,” says he, “ in any form is established, then, in the same proportion as it prevails, there must be an actual surrender of the individual will : what is thus sacrificed is thrown into a common fund, and unity of being, instead of diversity, is to the same extent established. This joint or common life is what is ordinarily intimated by the phrase—the personality of societies ; a phrase appli-

cable whenever the community of law, sentiment, and interest, belonging to the common life, assumes the determinate form of incorporation. The personality of societies is not a mere metaphysical or theological abstraction, nor a phrase invented for the purpose of discussion, but a reality." Mark these words! "The personality of societies is not an abstraction, but a reality." "There are," adds Mr. Gladstone, "qualities in a combination which arise out of the union of its parts, and are not to be found in those parts when they have been separated and are singly examined."

Ascending from the incorporated town, let us see how this "personality of societies," as Mr. Gladstone calls it—or, as we prefer calling it, this organised unity—is exemplified in a nation. A nation is far more than an aggregate of individuals, speaking the same language and dwelling within a certain circumscribed territory; and patriotism is something more than mere local affection. What is patriotism? Why do we love our country? The idea of country is not completed by a geogra-

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phical description of it. Country is something of which each feels himself to be a living member. It is the land of our fathers; the land for the liberties of which our fathers fought and bled; the land whose soil they tilled, whose institutions they contributed to rear: so that its glories are interwoven with their memories. We have, with the land of our birth and of our hereditary and personal dwelling, an intermixture of being: it has become part of ourselves: we should not have been what we are but for its modifying power. Hence we cannot be severed from our country without the severance of bonds of strong sympathetic interest. It seems even to have a common national consciousness in which we participate, coincident with our individual consciousness; so that, when a nation acts through its duly-constituted authorities, its national acts so thoroughly implicate all loyal subjects that we are honoured or disgraced, and feel ourselves honoured or disgraced, accordingly as the acts of our rulers are or are not wise, just, and prudent acts. Here we pause to ask, What stronger proof can be required of the

aptitude of man's moral nature to be affected by corporate good or evil, than is furnished by the existence of so fine a moral sentiment as that of national honour?

Bearing in mind that we are still considering how far the cultured conscience of humanity is affected by the general guilt, let us suppose the case of some great public calamity calling forth a nation's humiliation. How do good men pray in such times of national penitence? Although without any special consciousness that the guilt is their own, do they not assume that they are in some way implicated in it? Now upon what principle do they assume this? Is it not upon the principle that, since they are involved in the national punishment, and, since punishment implies guilt, they conclude that they must, in the judgment of heaven, be somehow implicated in the guilt also; and that therefore penitence and prayer not only befit their lips, but ought to be kindled also in their hearts? With what contempt should we look on the man who, in the time of national humiliation, laid the sin

wholly at the door of his neighbour, and asked God's mercy for others, but disclaimed all need of it himself! And yet all this proceeds on the assumption that there are national sins and national punishments, and that, if the sin be national, the consciousness of it should be national also —national in the sense that every individual conscience should share the general burden.

This tendency in the human mind to appropriate to itself the attributes of those with whom we have common action, shows itself in various other ways. The incumbent of a large church, comprising many men of great rank, wealth, piety, activity, and benevolence, assumes, and has conceded to him, a *status* derived, not from himself, but from his position and associations. A member of an old-established and wealthy firm of merchants carries with him throughout all his transactions, the *prestige* of his house. The youthful heir of a distinguished family is revered, not so much for his personal qualities as for the long line of traditionary honours he represents; and it is thence, rather than

from his individual resources, that he derives the air of reticent self-respect and easy confidence which gives character to his demeanour, both in public and private life. But here we would introduce another thought. In all cases there must be, on the part of the individual who appropriates the attributes of others, a corresponding spirit. The clergyman over an influential congregation, should he conduct himself personally in a manner unbefitting his high position, would be even more dishonoured than one more culpable but less prominent. The active partner in the well-known firm must be himself superior to everything mean and suspicious; otherwise his representation of the old name will expose him to reproach, instead of yielding him honour. The youthful heir must needs conduct himself wisely and well, or his family honours will redound to his personal disgrace. In each of these cases the individual acting must breathe the spirit of those whom he represents, as the zephyr breathes the fragrance of the fields over which it has passed on its way to us. Hence two things are to be ob-

served. There is in the human mind an aptitude to appropriate the meritorious claims of those with whom we are in any way identified ; and yet this appropriation can never be made successfully unless we aspire personally to share the same attributes.

To make this plainer :—The facility men have in combining for a common object, and in appropriating to themselves personally the honour or disgrace of their combined success or failure, is so familiar to every mind that our difficulty will be, not to prove its existence, but to prove that sentiments so ordinary can be made illustrative of so weighty a theme. In the gymnastic exercises of youth—for instance, the cricket-match or the boat-race—how thoroughly each member identifies himself with the traditionary honours of the club and with its last hard-earned victory ! and if, peradventure, ill-luck betide them, it is not those only whose blunders have caused the misfortune that are annoyed at the disgrace—the disgrace is felt by the whole club, and not least by those who outdid all their former efforts in striving to prevent

it. And again, do not our military officers foster an honest pride in having their names associated with a regiment that has fought many battles and gained high distinction? Possibly not a man now survives who was present at the corps' earlier conflicts, yet that does not prevent the appropriation to the existing body of all the regiment's historic feats of valour. And should the body at any time tarnish its fame, who are they that will feel the dishonour most acutely? Not the cowards that turned their backs on the foe, but the men that fought most bravely. Now the correct analysis of this complexity of sentiment depends upon our distinguishing between a man's individual consciousness and the common consciousness which centres in the unity whereof he is a member. In his common consciousness he is overwhelmed with disgrace at the failure of the united effort, while in his individual consciousness he is satisfied that he personally did his own separate duty. Or *vice versa*, in his individual consciousness, he feels ashamed that he did his own part of the work so ill, and did not contribute,

as he ought to have done, to the victory that has been achieved, but rather hindered than promoted it; while, with all this ground for self-reproach, he enters so thoroughly into the spirit and common consciousness of the united body, that he shares fully the general joy at their combined success; participating in the benefit, but giving all the honour to those to whom it is due.

Out of this combination of the individual with the common consciousness arises, we submit, the right to express, and the true force of, public opinion. What right have individuals to pass judgment on the acts of their fellows, if it be not that all such acts have a public, a world-wide significance? It is because they are allowed to have such a significance that the right to judge them is on the one side upheld and on the other side yielded to. And, when exercised widely, how powerful! Few are the individuals that can resist long the force of public opinion persistently expressed. Even nations are compelled to yield. But why is this? The force of public opinion is not derived from its

involving any threats of coercion, but solely from its coincidence with truth and justice. If not so coincident, it will prove but a passing breath, idle and inoperative; if coincident, resistless. Then whence its power? Is it not because public opinion, rationally vindicated and persistently expressed, is felt to indicate the doing of that which the public welfare demands, and because no individual conscience can long resist the obligations of the one to consult the safety of the many, the duty of a part to promote the welfare of the whole? It is a common consciousness of the right, into which, although resisted for a while, we at length imperceptibly glide.

Leaving this class of cases, we next pass on to others still more significant. Suppose a parent to have flagrantly neglected the moral education of his child, and that, in consequence of such neglect, the child has grown up in infamous profligacy, and is at last condemned to an ignominious death for some horrible crime: ought not such a parent to be distressed in his conscience by his child's guilt? ought he not to enter into the guilty one's moral

state, and feel his child's guilt as if it were his own guilt? Nay, if the parent be not wholly insensible to his moral obligations, is it not probable that his conscience will be affected even more painfully? Although only contributing by a neglect of paternal duty, he cannot but identify himself with the criminal through his whole career; and we are but speaking the language of every day's experience when we say that, all things else being equal and both consciences being alike aroused to healthy action, the parent's anguish of conscience will, in such a case, exceed that of the child.

But in this case, it may be said, the parent himself personally contributed to the crimes of which the remembrance afflicts him. Take, then, another example, one in which there is no obvious contribution—that of a child strictly and judiciously educated. Assume that such a child, like too many, forgetting the lessons of childhood, has, in after life, wandered from the right path, and buried himself in reckless debauchery. At length, having advanced step by step in crime, a crisis is reached.

Some base action exposes him to the vengeance of the law, and then follow disgrace, too late repentance, utter ruin. Does the agony of the father in such a state of circumstances amount to nothing more than affectionate sympathy—mere pity? Is there not a burning sense of personal shame, a hanging down of the head, a hiding from the world—the same consciousness of evil committed as if he, the father himself, had been the criminal? A less reputable father would probably repudiate his child in the hour of his woe, would even attempt to disown him, and join ostentatiously in the outcry against his atrocious wickedness: but in proportion as the parent's principles are high and stern, and his parental love deep, he will bleed in silence.

In all instances of this kind two elements exist which, though both in the abstract good and joyous, become in their concrete combination the source of deepest anguish. The one is love to the object; the other, horror at his crime. Reduce either of these, and you mitigate the sympathetic distress: intensify both, and you

create at once *the highest form of virtue and the most excruciating mental agony.*

In order the more prominently to exhibit this remarkable phenomenon, let us imagine a case in which a love transcending all human love embraces, not kindred and friends merely, but the entire race, and in which the hatred of evil is such as can exist only in a moral nature absolutely perfect. Let such an one be an embodied element of humanity, thoroughly human in all his relations and sympathies, and there will stand before you a being who, although a faultless model of virtue, is at the same time the victim of immeasurable sorrow. Such is the picture presented to us in the Christian sacred books of the world's Redeemer. How much more natural and real than modern portraits!

Referring to the example of the father suffering through the crimes of his son, it would be contrary to ordinary modes of thought to represent the good father as being punished for the vicious son's crimes. But we must not conceal from ourselves that such is the conclusion to which our argument tends. To put it abruptly thus,

however, without explanation, would be suggestive of error. It is not that the father, as an individual, is punished for the son's individual offences; but that the son's vice and criminality are corporate, and their punishment corporate; and that, in the harmonious operation of the principle which visits corporate offences with corporate punishment, suffering falls most heavily on those whose moral characters are most exalted, and whose sympathetic apprehension of human evil is in consequence thereof most acute and afflictive.

IV. We are precluded, by the conditions of this discussion, from calling to our aid authoritatively any facts of which the evidence is dependent upon religious beliefs; yet the fact of the existence of such beliefs ought not to be excluded from an inquiry in which generally-received opinions may be adduced as indicating mental tendencies. If large portions of mankind, of various religious creeds, concur in the belief that communities and nations are blessed or accursed because of the merit or demerit of individuals, does not that fact indicate that the

moral system which permits such a result offers no shock to mankind's moral sentiments?

To begin with the oldest instance—that of the Old Testament Adam: his moral turpitude, it is said, involved in ruin the whole race. Whether this be the record of a fall from a higher moral state, or of humanity's first emergence from the innocence of indifference into moral consciousness, the adoption, as an article of faith, of the idea that Adam's guilt was the world's guilt, and that too by nations advanced in civilisation and moral worth, tends to prove that it involves nothing revolting to the general conscience. The same may be said of the second command in the Decalogue—"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation."

Of a similar description was the Jewish persuasion, that the Jews inherited the land of Canaan as a reward bestowed upon them by heaven for the righteousness of their father Abraham; and that Sodom would have been saved from destruction had there been but ten righteous

men within its walls. Nor are these solitary instances of moral judgment. They are types of two classes of thought common in all ages. Children inheriting from pious fathers the gifts of Providence, instinctively attribute their well-to-do condition to God's regard for those whose memories they revere, and thus do homage to the principle that they are themselves blessed for their fathers' sakes. Nor could many men of modern times, crossing the Atlantic in a passenger-vessel, and exposed to imminent danger in a hurricane, repress the hope that the presence of ten righteous persons in the vessel, bound on some mission of mercy, might avail with heaven on behalf of all.

Again, to turn to other examples, showing the prevalence of similar views among the cultivated heathen. The Phenician sailors, of whom we read in the book of Jonah, made no complaint against the justice of heaven because the storm sent after Jonah threatened their destruction. If natural conscience had rebelled against such a visitation, we should have expected them to blame the gods, instead of supplicating

their clemency. Homer records it as a fact that the Greeks, on their voyage to Troy, were visited with a plague by way of punishment for the crime of Agamemnon; and he does not complain of it as an act of injustice: quite the contrary. The piety of Chryses, he tells us, undid the evil caused by Agamemnon, and made the gods propitious. The self-sacrifice of Curtius was to the Roman mind an adequate reason for averting a great public calamity. And examples of the like kind might be added without number, justifying the conclusion that the human conscience in its free exercise does not narrow its regards to its own individual acts, but looks abroad upon humanity.

V. We have now, we trust, said enough to vindicate our theme. There is, we say, a moral unity of the race—a corporate responsibility of entire humanity, as well as a personal responsibility of each individual. As the human body is one, though consisting of many parts, so is humanity. The mischievous tongue offends, the whole man suffers the punishment; the hand labours, the whole body participates in the

reward. Hence flow, among others, the following corollaries :—

(1.) Philanthropy is too often represented as disinterested condescension; and many a kid-gloved pedant, simpering platitudes, fancies himself a superior order of being whom the vicious should look upon at a distance and admiringly obey, while he deigns to favour them with his pity and precepts. Worse than useless are all such labourers in the cause of moral progress. He only is worthy of the name of a philanthropist who, identifying himself with degraded and endangered humanity, becomes one of the crew of the tempest-driven barque, labouring as such for the rescue of himself and all on board. Feeling the danger to be a common danger, he throws his whole soul into the struggle, losing all thought of superiority otherwise than as it imposes the duty of more earnest effort; and, instead of wasting his energies in sentimental pity, reserves them for a toil, which, while it has others for its direct object, is felt by him to be not the less necessary to his own deliverance. “Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel!”

(2.) The redeeming principle, through the operation of which the world is to be morally renewed, is inadequately described as the surrender of the personal will to God. Something more is demanded from us than personal rectitude. Were isolated responsibility the law of humanity, personal rectitude might be enough; but that, we have seen, is not the case. We have not fulfilled our obligations by being personally holy. Nor can we, indeed, be personally holy unless engaged in efforts to regenerate the world. And, in order to that, there must be enthusiasm—the enthusiastic denunciation of sin, enthusiastic efforts to reclaim. But why enthusiasm? Simply, because without enthusiasm the world cannot be aroused from its slumber.

(3.) We learn also from the preceding course of argument how it is that virtue, in its relations to the world, is often called to suffer. Between a great living unit and the living elements of which it is composed there are sure to exist points of resemblance: one of these offers a solution of the question. To what end does virtue suffer? Why, we ask, in reply, is the in-

dividual man so constituted that any disturbance in the harmony of his physical system causes pain ; and that his moral nature is affected painfully by the consciousness of the existence within him of moral evil? Is it not that he may struggle against the evil, and eject that which occasions pain? Suffering virtue, then, stands in the same relation to the entire race as that in which our painful consciousness of evil stands to the individual. It is the better part of mankind's corporate moral nature, urged by the lash and the spur to a more earnest striving against wrong: it is a pledge of the existence in humanity of a power of self-renovation, and the application of a stimulus to its more active exercise. Should virtue ever cease to suffer in a world in which it is mixed with vice it will be because the moral life of the world is low, and its vital powers paralysed and morbid. Enthusiasm and martyrdom are co-relative: enthusiasm begets martyrdom and martyrdom rekindles enthusiasm. The more vigorous humanity's moral life, the more acute will be its martyr-sufferings, until they terminate in

the accomplishment of the purpose for which their existence is designed—earth's purification from evil.

(4.) Further: it is a question much agitated whether religion must not have a purely moral origin, and whether it does not introduce an incompatible element when the historical and political element is added to the moral. This supposition of incompatibility arises out of the error we have been combating—that of looking upon mankind as nothing more than a congeries of independent personalities, having no other relations than between the soul and its God. If, however, humanity be regarded as an organic unit, each part having moral relations with every other part, the political element must necessarily be introduced as that by which alone the moral can become intercommunicable, and thus made to permeate the mass. In ordinary life the intuitions of one conscience, any more than the judgments of one intellect, have not enough of authority to command the attention essential to public culture. They must first be catholicized and made vener-

able and authoritative, by historic evidence of their power to advance the general weal. Hereupon rest the foundations of that divinely established common-wealth—the Church or “kingdom of God.”

(5.) We have only to add in conclusion, as our last and principal corollary, a repetition of the propositions enunciated at the commencement of this chapter and toward the elucidation and proof of which our whole argument has tended, viz :—that out of the principles we have enumerated there naturally arises a theory which, embracing the facts of the Gospel history, gives to them a significance in accord with all surrounding social and moral phenomena. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as one of the brotherhood of humanity, suffered in accordance with the law which so distributes the punishment of the world’s guilt that it falls heaviest upon the holiest. That is one feature of the scheme. Another is—that the perfect righteousness of Christ became, by virtue of His human brotherhood, mankind’s rightful heritage. Through Christ, the world, corporately, stands reconciled to

God : and the righteousness of Christ, which, in that sense, is already ours, becomes ours distributively and consciously, when, so far as, and so long as, we seek to imbibe His spirit and tread in His steps.

## CHAPTER V.

OUR INTUITIVE APTITUDE TO APPROPRIATE  
CORPORATE MERIT, THE ORIGIN OF  
CHRISTIAN FAITH.

AVING arrived in our last chapter at the conclusion that it is in harmony with the world's moral constitution for mankind to have each a corporate interest in the virtues and merits of other members of the race, the question next arises—How are the fruits of that merit to be individualised and appropriated?

The answer to this question has been already indicated. Our analysis of the process whereby a guilty conscience arrives at a state of peace pointed to the existence in the human mind of an intuitive aptitude to conceive of and appropriate human merit whenever common, as a personal

right. This thought we are now to amplify and make more distinct.

It will of course be understood that it is not every appropriation of merit which will quiet a guilty conscience. As a matter of fact and experience, nothing, we know, can bring about this result except such an appropriation as fills up our ideal of the righteousness which a perfectly holy God demands, in order to our acceptance with Him on righteous and meritorious grounds. That nothing short of absolutely perfect obedience can perform this condition, is self-evident; and that no such perfect obedience can be rendered by any human being who is not Divine as well human, must be equally obvious. These are not positions artificially framed to suit revealed facts, but corollaries imperatively drawn from the conscience's axiomatic requirements. Unless so drawn, we admit them to be valueless.

1. History records the existence among mankind of a continual struggle to find among the race persons whose lofty virtues might be pleaded with heaven as having a representative value. Hence every na-

tion has its adopted patron saints, whose virtuous mediation is popularly regarded as having had an extraordinary—yea, even a superhuman efficacy. Men of eminent piety and virtue, and especially those who are known to have sighed over the sins of the world and to have painfully devoted themselves to its amelioration, have ever been put forward by mankind as occupying a midway position between themselves and heaven—the world's mediators.

Now, why do we give utterance to these thoughts? Certainly not with the design of ascribing an effective atoning value to imperfect human virtues. We express them simply to show that, even if the Scriptures did not reveal the fact of a Divine incarnation, there is in human nature a predisposition to expect it; and that it is not in their personal deservings mankind naturally trust for reconciliation with God, but in the merits of a representative mediatorship which, for the purpose of enabling them to conceive it successful, they invest in their imaginations with superhuman attributes. In these human hopes and aspirations, we per-

ceive the significant shaking of the leaves at the tops of the mulberry trees—the rustling of a Divine activity. Why do men thus grope out of themselves in search of an objective basis of rest? Because the impossibility of finding peace within themselves impels them to do so. And whence the notion that a superhuman mediation is necessary? It is a dictate of our moral nature, the oscillation of the needle, when freed from constraint it tremulously seeks repose.

This groping after an unknown, or an imperfectly known Christ, is, in reality, the germ of the doctrine of justification by faith; so that we may say without exaggeration, there is no true peace of conscience in the world except that which is derived upon principles of which justification by faith is the Christian formula. The relations between man and Heaven alter not with times and climes. Man stands to God in the relationship of a redeemed sinner, whether born in the first century of the world's age or its sixtieth, whether in the unknown regions of Central Africa or in Britain. Sincere religion, wherever it

exists, must, of necessity, consist of the same elements; the only difference being that thoughts and feelings which, in gloomier lands, have but a stunted growth, yield, under a sunny evangelical sky, a luxuriant frondescence, and clothe the landscape with joyous beauty. Hence, it would be a mistake to describe experimental Christianity as peculiar phenomena of the human mind, never exhibited except under one phase of religious truth: its true character is that of a bolder development of phenomena, which are always, to some extent, exhibited whenever and wherever religious truth, natural or revealed, exerts its power.

A passage from the writings of the Rev. Robert Hall\* will give fuller expression to our views upon this point, and, at the same time, supply the weight of his authority in favour of their truth:—"It is," says he, "expedient to distinguish between the *fact* and the *doctrine* of the atonement. The aspect of the atonement, considered as a transaction, is towards God; considered as a doctrine, towards man.

\* *Works* (1839), vol. iii. p. 147.

Viewed in the former light, its operation is essential, unchangeable, eternal—‘He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.’ Considered in the latter, its operation is moral, and therefore subject to all the varieties incident to human nature. The cross, considered as the meritorious basis of acceptance, the only real satisfaction for sin, is the centre around which all the purposes of mercy to fallen man have continued to revolve: fixed and determined in the council of God, it operated as the grand consideration in the Divine mind, on which salvation was awarded to penitent believers in the earliest ages, as it will continue to operate in the same manner to the latest boundaries of time. Hence it is manifest that this great transaction could admit of no substitute. But that discovery of it, which constitutes the *doctrine* of the atonement, though highly important, is not of equal necessity. Its moral impression, its beneficial effects on the mind, were capable of being secured by the institution of sacrifice, though in an inferior degree, while the offender, by confessing his sins

over the head of the victim, which he afterwards slew, distinctly recognised his guilt, his just exposure to destruction, and his exclusive reliance on Divine mercy.”

2. It is very clear, however, that, whatever may be humanity's longings, and however strong its incentive to go forth in pursuit of an ideal Christ, no idealism can supply the place of the Christ of history. The time and place may not be essential. The event may be equally available whether it occur at the beginning, middle, or end of the world's duration, and whether at Jerusalem or elsewhere, but it must happen as an event in man's history at some specific time and place. It would be an anomaly were it otherwise. Every appetite and tendency of human nature has an appropriate external object in which it finds its satisfaction. Dualism is the rule of humanity. It is observable in man's physical construction; and this balance of even powers which we discover in the human framework is carried through his entire natural, intellectual, and moral being. What animal appetite is there that we do not find balanced by an ex-

ternal source of gratification? Then ascend from the animal to the intellectual: every avenue of knowledge exhibits an internal aptitude and a fitting external appeal. The eye is adapted to seeing, the ear to hearing, and the other senses to their appropriate objects. The perceptive power must have an external object to exercise itself upon, and not only does it perceive the object, but, according to the best psychological theories, it assures itself of the existence of what it perceives. Now, as in all these instances the mind's powers exist only in apposition to something out of the mind, so it is with our moral intuitions. They are never developed except by some concrete object—never in the abstract. Our sense of justice is never called out except by the observance of some act of justice or injustice. If there were no just or unjust actions in the world to call it forth, our sense of justice would lie dormant. So of our other moral judgments. Hence, we repeat, an ideal Christ without a historic Christ would be an anomaly.

3. The first glimpse we get of this

wondrous theme in the holy Scriptures is as existing in the Divine mind "before the foundation of the world." It is spoken of as being *then* "a mystery" — necessarily a mystery, since how can a finite mind, which by its very nature can conceive of nothing except as circumstanced in space and time, apprehend the thoughts of the Infinite in eternity? Such thoughts are incapable even of revelation, for, if the human mind cannot comprehend them, human language cannot of course express them. Vast as are the powers of man's intellect, it can no more transcend its finite conditions of thought, than can "the eagle outsoar the atmosphere in which he floats, and by which alone he is supported." We can conceive of finite extension in space, and to this one finite idea of extension we can add another finite idea, and yet another, and we can go on adding extension to extension indefinitely; but, however oft this operation be repeated, we shall never compass the infinite. We can conceive of time, and we can add one period of time to another period of time, tracing it both backwards and for-

wards ; but, however lengthened may be the period through which our thoughts traverse, it is still time, and the idea of eternity is as far distant from us as ever. Now, since we cannot conceive of existence out of time and space, it follows that thoughts in the mind of God before time and space began are to us necessarily " a mystery " — " a mystery *hid in God* " (Ephes. iii. 9).

But, although the mystery was unexplained and inexplicable, the fact that it existed in the mind of God " before the foundation of the world," just as a plan exists in the mind of the architect before being committed to paper and before a stone of the building is laid, is of the greatest possible significance. If the scheme of redemption were in the Divine mind in embryo before the world's moral constitution was settled, how are we to resist the conclusion that the redeeming scheme would therefore necessarily form part of the world's moral constitution when brought out into actual operation. This conclusion seems to us so inevitable, and the apostolic language is so free from

ambiguity, that we should be justified in expressing our surprise should any one professing reverence for holy writ take issue with us on the great truth that lies at the basis of our argument. For, even admitting that Paul's conception has a Platonic tinge, how can that, in the case of an inspired apostle, affect the question of its truth?

When the "mystery" hid from eternity in the mind of God began to be revealed in *time*, it is associated with the record of God "begetting His Only Son," saying, as *time* dawned and the Infinite unveiled His glory, "Thou—the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person—art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Our thoughts are thus carried back to the period, when the Absolute first revealed Himself in the conditioned; and under the plural name Elohim, manifested Himself in space and time, speaking the finite universe into being as the theatre of His future operations, and striking the hour of its birth. To this plurality in unity, the Evangelist John thus refers:—"The Word was *with* God,

and the Word was God." And the form of the fiat, "Let us make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness," indicates the like ineffable co-existence. The nearest approach we can make to its conception, is that of eternity dawning into time, the Infinite revealing Himself in the finite, the Inconceivable making Himself conceivable, "God passing into activity." Such are the ideas associated historically with the relation of the Son to the Father; and this prefatory explanation may possibly enable us to understand better the meaning of words sometimes unduly limited to the period of the incarnation, "No man hath seen," perceived, or comprehended, the Infinite, Eternal, and Absolute "God, at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE hath declared Him." *All* we know objectively of God, is through our intellectual apprehension of God manifested in His Son.

When we begin to think of God the Father, we project our thoughts at once into infinity, and are absorbed in a fathomless abyss. When we begin to think of God the Son, we see Him with us

in all the amplitude of His Godhead in the space and objects immediately around us ; and, scanning each widening circle, above and beyond, we lose sight of Him, at last, in stars and space and distance inconceivable. Our knowledge of God the Holy Spirit, is acquired wholly through our moral intuitions. God the Son is the Divinity without us ; God the Holy Ghost the Divinity within. The Father transcends human thought ; and consequently, the Son, the Logos, or Divine Word, is that Person in the Godhead to whom, as immanent in whatever is objective, our rational faculties exclusively apply themselves. In Him, the inconceivable infinite, without parts or extension, is transformed into parts extended *ad infinitum*, so that every indivisible atom of matter and every indivisible point of space becomes the concentrated home of the "fulness of the Godhead," radiant with God's glory. In Him, the inconceivable eternal Now becomes resolved into an endless succession of Nows, and every indivisible moment of time presents to a wondering universe, a new and, in itself, complete dis-

play of an ever-changing, changeless God. We see Him, in the revived vegetation of spring, in the picturesque beauties of summer, in the gathered fruits of autumn, in the mantling snows of winter. We hear Him, in the low of the cattle, in the warbling of the birds, in the chirping grasshopper, in the rustling leaves of the breeze-shaken elm, in the murmuring of the stream, the stillness of the mountain, the distant roar of the ocean. Hence, any conception of the Son of God would be scripturally and philosophically incomplete, which did not contemplate Him as, not only making and superintending all things, but as being personally domiciled, in all His life-giving energy, in every microscopic corpuscle of the universe, making each a radiating centre whence He manifests Himself—twinkling in every star, smiling in every flower, breathing in every zephyr. “There is no speech nor language where His\* voice is not heard: it has gone out through all the earth, and His words to the end of the world.” Madame Guyon did but trans-

\* Comp. Psalm xix. 3 and 4, and Rom. x. 18.

late these sentiments into the language of devotion, when she sang :—

“ To me, remains nor space nor time ;  
My country is in every clime :  
I can be calm, and free from care,  
On *any* shore, for GOD IS THERE ! ”

According to the explicit declaration of the sacred Scriptures, the “ Lamb was slain,” and therefore, the Atonement made, “ from the foundation of the world.” If the Atonement had been a remedial expedient, provided to meet some sudden and unexpected emergency, not contemplated until after Adam’s fall, this antecedent preparation for the event would require explanation. The facts appear to be more consonant with the notion, that the original constitution of the human race, being that of innocent indifference, contemplated the possibility of an emergence into a state of condemnatory moral consciousness, and a constitutional necessity, therefore, for a Divine Mediator. The Sacrificial Institute is, accordingly, to be regarded as the first embodiment of a principle indigenous to humanity, and animal sacrifices as something more than

mere types and symbols. They were the material bonds of connection between an objective principle and its intuitional recognition.

In whatever way the sacrificial institute originated, whether as the spontaneous expression of an intuitive impulse, or through an external oracular ordination, it is equally entitled to be regarded as the outward portraiture of the inward sentiment. The duty was enjoined of offering to God, in sacrifice, the firstborn of man and beast, the firstborn of man being redeemed by animal substitution; and this selection of the firstborn was obviously representative. Indeed, the ideas of corporate responsibility and representation strongly characterize the whole of sacrificial symbolism. The paschal lamb was slain in sacrifice by the families of Israel, a lamb for every house: and, on the great day of atonement the victim was national: when the goat was sent "by a fit man into the wilderness," it bore away a nation's sins. Add to this the significant circumstance, that the animal selected for sacrifice was an animal in which man

has a social and sympathetic interest, and whose traits are most emblematic of innocence; and then, the idea of sacrifice, so far as it is to be gathered from ancient religious rites, would seem to be, that the sins of repentant humanity are atoned for by something which combines the elements of representation, innocence, suffering, and social sympathy.

But, although the *principle* was embodied in the sacrificial institute, and every devout offerer of a sacrifice declared thereby his confidence in the existence of an *actual* reconciliation between heaven and earth, there was nothing in the typical sacrifices themselves tending to accomplish such reconciliation. Between the ante-Christian sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ, intervened a broad line of demarcation. The one was but a record, the other a transaction; the one but the symbolic expression of a subjective sentiment, the other an objective reality; the one represented only the offerer's personal conviction that, for reasons in which his individual virtue had no meritorious operation, Heaven was disposed to be at one

with him, the other gave a real historic existence to the grounds upon and by virtue of which such atonement was achieved. We say advisedly that the ante-Christian sacrifices were a record of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," not a mere anticipation of the Lamb to be slain. For, to the mind of God, the history of the race from beginning to end is a unit, and Christ's sacrifice was ever before God an accomplished fact, though with an undeveloped *rationale* which "prophets and righteous men desired to scan," but which only could be scanned by human minds through its evolution in time.

Nearly all the apostolic illustrations of the sacrifice of Christ are gathered from typical analogies. Christ was the "first-born among many brethren," and His death was that of "the one for the many," that of the representative first-born of humanity for the entire race. As Israel's national victim bore away a nation's sins, Christ "bore away the sins of the world;" He "died for our sins" just as the sacrificial victim died—becoming "a curse" for

us, and sustaining our condemnation. And having thus died, "He rose again for our justification," coming forth from within the veil to bless us, as did the high-priest after he had sprinkled the blood upon the mercy-seat. His shed blood was "precious" as a "redemption," a buying off, a "price" paid by way of "ransom," in order that the race, whose liberty and lives were forfeited, might be set free.

Beyond illustrative exhibitions, the Scriptures contain but little formal explanation. They point to the fact:—He who from the beginning of time had been immanent throughout the objective universe had entered without aught of self-contraction, without abandoning one spot that He had before occupied, upon the tenancy of humanity. The Godhead, which had ever dwelt concentratively in every atom of man's framework, had taken up His dwelling in man himself. The moral nature and CONSCIOUSNESS of humanity had become God's home. In the incarnation, perfect obedience, sufferings, agony, death, resurrection, ascension, and continuous intercession of the Son of God;

that which existed before time as a "mystery" is revealed. It is a mystery no longer, but a constellation of incidents having a palpable moral import; needing no verbal criticism, no skill in logic, no tongue of eloquence, to unfold and apply them, but conveying at once their own heaven-taught lesson, to every prepared conscience, and every sincere heart.

4. Now it is this fact, that the eternal Son of God entered into and dwelt in the *consciousness* of humanity, which constitutes the central idea of the Christian sacrifice. And the question we are considering is, whether the Christ-consciousness and the human consciousness are not thereby made reciprocal; or, in other words, whether the conscience is not in this way freed from the difficulty it felt in appropriating the Divine mercy till assured that it was mercy exercised in righteousness.

Our contention is, that when humbled with Him into the dust of humiliation, we become capable, by the very constitution of our moral nature, of entering into and becoming conscious of His righteous-

ness. For if, as a consequence of our corporate responsibility, there be, in holy minds, this painful consciousness of others' sins, may there not be, in penitent minds, a corresponding pleasurable consciousness of another's *perfect* righteousness? If there be a ladder by means of which the purest natures can descend to the lowest depths of human guilt so as to become identified with its shame and grief, may not that guilt, when its heavenward tendencies are awakened, climb, by the same road, to the loftiest heights of conscientious peace? If Christ can, by means of this general bond of sympathy and common consciousness of humanity, become conscious of human guilt and suffer and atone for it, what is to prevent us from becoming, in the same way, *conscious* of His perfect righteousness, and being thereby (consciously) justified? Such is the momentous conclusion St. Paul affirms (2 Cor. v. 21) in those pregnant words, already quoted—"He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." You will observe here

a double antithesis. He who had no consciousness of sin personally, felt it vicariously; we who have no consciousness of meritorious righteousness in ourselves, have it in Christ. The doctrines of atonement and justification become, thus, two sides of one tablet. On one side we read the story of Christ's humiliation: on the other, the story of man's exaltation. On the one, that Christ entered into the brotherhood of humanity: on the other, that through the same brotherhood of humanity we become, *not as a legal fiction, but really and truly* one with Christ. On the one side we read that Christ was "made sin for us:" on the other, that "we are made the righteousness of God in Him."

5. But although we may be content to rest the fact upon apostolic authority, our readers will hardly be satisfied unless we deal more explicitly with the *modus operandi*. How, it will be asked, can these things be? In what way can the Christ-consciousness become our consciousness? By way of answer to this question, we will first adduce two or three familiar

instances of sympathetic consciousness occurring in every-day life.

Allow that you are one of an extensive partnership, who owe a joint debt, and that there is only one individual of the many hundreds constituting the partnership that has money enough to pay the debt. All the rest are beggars. The creditor wants payment, and as you are one of those who have been actively concerned in contracting the debt, you are sued for it, and about to be dragged to prison. At that moment the wealthy partner steps forward. He was not personally concerned in contracting the debt, but in consequence of his having voluntarily become one of the firm—as Christ took upon Him our humanity—the debt is laid upon him, *not unjustly*, and he pays it. What is the effect produced upon your mind by this fact? You are no longer in fear of prison; and so far as regards the relation in which you stand to the creditor, your sense of justice is satisfied. Obligations of gratitude are contracted to him who has paid the debt for yourself and for others; but the creditor you can now look

in the face with confidence, and say, "My debt is paid." Is there any psychological difficulty here? Yet you enter into another man's consciousness—that of the partner by whom the debt has been paid.

Again. You remember the history of Joseph; how his brethren were sent by Jacob their father to Egypt to buy corn, because the famine was sore in the land; that Benjamin was not with them on their first journey, but that, on the second, they were compelled to take Benjamin; that their wants were supplied, and they were dismissed to return home to their father, but that a messenger was sent after them complaining that one of them had stolen Joseph's divining-cup; that the cup was found in Benjamin's sack, and that they were all thereupon carried back prisoners before Joseph. You remember Judah's eloquent appeal:—"Thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman

to my lord ; and let the lad go up with his brethren." Let us pause at this point of the narrative, and assume that Joseph had accepted Judah's offer. A crime has been charged in which they are *all* implicated—a corporate crime—but Judah takes upon himself the whole punishment, and in consideration thereof the rest are permitted to proceed on their journey. Would they not proceed without fear, feeling that the demands of law and justice had been fully satisfied? Would not Judah's consciousness become theirs?

We do not say that these are cases strictly parallel to the doctrine of salvation through Christ ; but we say that they are illustrative moral problems ; and that as in them the sense of justice was satisfied, not only in the mind of the chief actor, but in all with whom he was in common, so it is when the contrite conscience comes face to face with the cross of Christ. It enters into the Christ-consciousness and is at peace.

To illustrate our meaning still further, let us suppose that twenty individuals combine together to effect some hazardous

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and noble enterprise—the scaling, say, of the rampart which alone can give success in the day of battle. Suppose that nineteen out of the twenty are driven back defeated, but that the twentieth stands his ground, advances, puts the enemy to flight single-handed, gains the rampart, rears on it the national standard, and then—although too late to share the merit of the conquest, not too late to reap its fruits—the other nineteen again advance, pursue the routed foe, gather around the uplifted emblem of victory, and unite in the shout of triumph. Mark the co-existence here of an individual defeat and a common success, and tell us whether, though individually defeated, the bravery of their chieftain does not redound to the honour of the whole. Willingly do the nineteen award to their meritorious comrade all the praise ; but the battle was a common battle, and the success, therefore, is a common success ; and when they return home to receive their reward, although all eyes are turned to the *great* conqueror, still his companions in arms consciously share his honours. They are hailed as

the great conqueror's comrades ; and it is enough for them that *he* publicly recognises them as his comrades—his glory is their glory, his joy theirs.

Now, as in this illustration the nineteen enter into the fruits of their chieftain's labours and into the consciousness of his joy, so do all true Christians share consciously the righteousness and joy of their Lord ; and this by virtue of an operation which is in strict conformity with familiar psychological laws.

In the absence, then, of any psychological difficulty, we conclude that the mind of one whose conscience is awake and in earnest has within it a latent ability, when the historic Christ is presented, of at once perceiving His aptitude and power to do that which the conscience requires to have done. To repeat again, in relation to this subject, the Socratic question already quoted :—“ Why does truth (so hard to find) when found approve itself to us, often instantaneously, as truth ? ” Can any doubt remain as to the answer to be given to this question ? It “ approves itself to our minds as truth ” in the same way as

it approves itself to the Christ-mind—intuitively. And does not this question of the philosophic heathen suggest also the solution of what many Christians have been puzzled about—the possible *instantaneousness* of the mental change? A mind overwhelmed with doubt and despondency has its intuition suddenly evoked. The Christ of history, well known to the intellect but unknown to the conscience, becomes suddenly unveiled; and, as when a magnificent picture or statue is suddenly unveiled to the eye, a crowd of exciting ideas simultaneously rush in, so there enter with the unveiled Christ the joys of the Christ mind; we become partakers of His consciousness, or, in apostolic words expressing the same meaning, “*He dwells in our hearts by faith.*”

6. As this topic is somewhat abstruse, and we are desirous of making every point as transparent as is practicable, we will, before leaving it, approach it by a different route, and present it in a slightly different aspect.

But before doing so we will avail ourselves of the authority of two or three

names of note in support of our view as to the possibility of reducing Christian faith and experience into harmony with mental science.

One of these is the late eminent Dr. Chalmers, who, in his *Institutes*,\* observes: "The scheme of salvation in the Gospel seems the only one by which to meet and appease the demands of *our moral nature*; and the more profoundly it is reflected on, the more we are persuaded will it be found to tally with the *conscience* and the constitution which God hath given to us." It is to be regretted that a divine so thoroughly orthodox and so eminently gifted did not attempt more than simply to intimate his personal conviction that a harmony subsisted between the Gospel scheme of salvation and the world's moral constitution. But even this personal conviction in a mind so endowed, is an argument of great value.

"It is our deep conviction," says the reviewer, in the *Dublin University Magazine*, of Whewell's *History of Moral Philosophy in England*, "that moral philosophy

\* Part iii. ch. iv. s. 9.

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points us both to the character and to the *work* of our Saviour. It seems to us that moralists in general have been much *too feeble in their assertions of this.*" Other reviewers have, on several occasions, expressed the same opinion, and the venerable Dr. Vaughan, while editor of the *British Quarterly*, gave utterance to his own anticipations in the following words: "On more than one occasion we have ventured to suggest that the great want of the coming age would prove to be a theology possessing such aptitude and freedom as to admit of being brought into healthy relationship *with the best forms of ethical and mental science.*"

Pray what are the "demands of our moral nature" to which these several writers refer, and how are their anticipations to be realised? Has any method yet been devised, or can one be imagined, by which the peculiarities of the evangelical system may be "brought into *healthy* relationship with the *best* forms of ethical and mental science," other than the method we are now propounding?

But to proceed: the adaptation of the

biblical revelation to our inward intuitions has been compared with that of a remedy for a disease, or of satisfaction to an appetite. As these illustrations indicate adaptations of two different kinds, the question arises, to which kind does the adaptation of the Christian atonement to the enquiring conscience properly belong? A disease demands a remedy, and the remedy is adapted to the disease; but, in that case, the discovery of the adaptation is the result of medical empiricism. Is, then, the adaptation of the Christian atonement to man's moral conceptions of this class—simply a remedy for a disease, of which it is known but empirically to be curative? Independent of external experience, does man's moral nature express nothing more than the want, without being able to suggest any hint as to the manner in which the want is to be relieved? To the extent of expressing a want, there are but few of our readers who would not go along with us. We, however, go much further.

We say that, as every appetite gives some vague indication of the means by which it is to be satisfied, as the thirsty

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camel snuffs the distant spring, as hunger craves for food, and the longings of the lone heart for sweet companionship, so man's moral instincts do more than give him an oppressive sense of want. Even without revelation, we have within us, if stimulated by moral earnestness, an internal aptitude to work out some form of the sacrificial idea. The organ of vision has the aptitude to see, before light reveals the glories of the landscape; and, deprived of the greater luminaries, star-light is enough to guide the sagacious traveller. Besides, every faculty called urgently into exercise improves. The Indian in his forest can rapidly track a trail which an European eye can scarcely detect on the closest examination, and can hear a distant sound from an approaching foe, which falls on an unpractised organ as but the lull of the breeze. So *earnest* consciences, even when unappealed to by the Christian revelation, put forth powers, the extent whereof we may surmise from the recorded instances of Abraham, David, Isaiah, Simeon, and Cornelius, and many of a similar description to be found in the

annals of modern missions. Such worshippers may not be able, without the Christian scriptures, to pass into the inner sanctuary, but the glory of the Shechinah is seen through the veil, awakening a longing for a fuller revelation. As the nepenthes lifts the lid of its pitcher to catch the descending shower, as the vulture kens afar his needed prey, as the parched traveller rushes impulsively to the spot marked by yon distant verdure, so the earnest suppliant, unable to find peace within himself, but having the intuitive conviction that there exists in man's corporate relation to God an adequate basis of peace remote from his own personal deservings, if perchance, like the Ethiopian eunuch, he come within the sound of Christian instruction, his cultivated conscience, as the iron to the loadstone, at once attaches itself to the objective realisation of his ideal. As when the eyes of the aged read the lettered page they receive a general impression of its import, but not until the glass has rendered the desired help is its full meaning distinctly visible; or, as when we trace the blue outline of

the distant mountain-range, our minds begin to feel the excitement of its sublimity and grandeur, but not until the telescope has enabled us to see distinctly every object of beauty do we revel amidst their accumulated glories: so is it when the earnest conscience; long looking in hope, perceives at last distinctly what had before but glimmered in the vision, and, advancing beyond hope, believes.

Again: the written revelation from God contained in the holy Scriptures is partly moral and partly historic. So far as it is moral, it is the record of human intuitions poured spontaneously forth from eminently holy minds: for even though Christ-spoken or plenary inspired, the medium of transmission is human. Hence our individual intuitions stand related to revealed moral truth in the same way as the undeveloped germ to the matured plant. Their relation is that of the acorn to the oak, the egg to the eagle, the fœtus to the full-grown lion, the first infant thought to the accomplished philosopher. Hence, between revelation and our individual intuitions, there is the bond of a kindred origin.

They are sprung from the same lineage, the same blood runs in their veins, they have the same contour of countenance, are one in thought and feeling, and have but to meet in order to mutual recognition. Does revelation utter its voice? Intuition instantly kindles with connubial love. Does light travel millions of millions of miles from the most distant visible star? An examination of its properties proves it to be the same with the light of earth's feeblest taper: the light of revelation and the light of moral intuition are one; and, being thus one in essence, when they meet, proceeding from opposite poles, their meeting is that of mutual concert and harmony. That harmony occurs when the light without and the light within blend, when the objective and subjective meet in accord, when our moral intuitions respond to the revealed exposition of the fact, and when these two forms of Divine minstrelsy strike together the harp, from the willow, attuned to the music of the cross.

7. Further: an argument is to be derived from a comparison between our

ordinary moral judgments and that for which we are contending. Between our intuitive judgments on moral duty and our intuitive confidence in God's mercy, there are several points of analogy. Both involve the ideas of obligation, of responsibility, of securing the Divine approval, and of obtaining peace to the conscience. Both are theoretically assumed to embrace a complete comprehension of the grounds of God's moral government, as the logical basis of action ; yet, neither of them does, in fact, at the moment of spontaneity, comprehend or even look at those grounds. The virtuous act and the saving trust are alike the immediate product of a moral impulse, the correct analysis of which, in the first example, develops the whole science of Morals, and in the second, the whole science of Redemption : but each science is the result of a reflex analysis, and not the recalling to remembrance of an intellectual pre-consideration. They are alike, in the simplicity of the first spontaneous impulse ; and alike, in the complexity of the principles afterwards found involved therein. If in our attempt to de-

velop the moral idea of the atonement, we have seemed to complicate rather than simplify the subject, we refer, in self-vindication, to the voluminous treatises that have been written on the nature and grounds of virtue, in which, though starting from the principle of its intuitive origin as a practical rule of conduct, the most abstruse theories have been evolved with regard to the rationale of the rule.

Reviewing then that which we have propounded as the rationale and moral idea of sacrifice, is there, we repeat, any philosophic difficulty in the way of its spontaneous mental emanation? We want no aid from mysticism. Let us not, for one moment, be confounded with those who advocate a special faith-faculty, whereby the pure reason, in its theoretical exercises, is supposed to learn, through a direct looking at truth, what is necessary and real in existence, in the same way as the practical reason tells us what is incumbent upon us as moral agents. We are strict disciples of the school of common-sense, and wish nothing granted except as a fair induction from the facts of

consciousness. But, with those facts before us, if the moral faculty can spontaneously throw out germs of thought capable of being amplified and constructed into the science of Morals, why, we ask, may it not, in like manner, throw out germs of thought capable of being amplified and constructed into the science of Redemption?

In order, however, to place beyond doubt the identity *in principle* of these two kinds of intuition, we must pursue our investigation into the region of the conscience a step further.

i. The judgments of conscience are of two classes, (1) those which contemplate moral acts that have become matters of painful or pleasurable consciousness; (2) those which contemplate moral actions and problems objectively only and critically, but without sympathy and quite apart from any connection they may have with ourselves:

ii. The judgments of conscience of the first class—which become incorporated with consciousness—may again be divided into (1) those that are purely matters for self-consciousness, being such

judgments upon our own acts as induce self-approval or self-condemnation; and (2) those which excite the moral feelings, but of which we become the conscious subjects only through sympathy with others.

Now, if there be approximate truth in this analysis, what philosophical difficulty can there be, on the part of those who recognise the intuitional origin of such of our moral judgments as affect our *self-consciousness*, in allowing a similar origin to those which affect our sympathetic consciousness?

8. In Dr. Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, an attempt is made to construct a system of morals by setting up, as to its criterion, the judgment we should pronounce respecting our own conduct, were we to examine it from the stand-point of another person's mind. "The principle," says he, "by which we naturally either approve or disapprove of our own conduct, seems to be altogether the same with that by which we exercise the like judgments concerning the conduct of other people. We either approve or disapprove of the conduct of another man

according as we feel that, when we bring his case home to ourselves, we either can or cannot entirely sympathise with the sentiments and motives which directed it. And, in the same manner, we either approve or disapprove of our own conduct, according as we feel that, when we place ourselves in the situation of another man and view it, as it were, with his eyes and from his station, we either can or cannot entirely enter into and sympathise with the sentiments and motives which influenced it.”\* But in order to enable us to examine ourselves with another person’s “eyes and from his station,” it is clear that we must have the capability of infusing our minds into his mind, and making ourselves objective to ourselves. The operation assumes the existence of a common consciousness, into which we may enter and look at ourselves therefrom. Nor is this impracticable. We are not aware that any critics of the theory ever deemed it so. Adam Smith’s moral theory has been abandoned, not because he assumes that to be possible which is

\* Vol. i. (9th Edit.), p. 226.

psychologically impossible, but because it is unnecessary to have recourse to so roundabout a process; conscience, when its supremacy is established, having sufficient disinterestedness and discrimination to pass upon itself a correct judgment.

9. Any apparent difficulty arises from the magnitude of the question. The joy of the Redeemer, with which we are called to sympathise, arises out of the fact that the world in its unity stands accepted before God, because of Christ's righteousness. If, instead of a world, it were a family reduced to poverty and misery, having at its head an elder brother, whose good conduct, entitling him to the favour of a kind master, had retrieved their fortunes, one can easily imagine how each member of the family, taking the character of their elder brother as a model, and imitating it however distantly, might be able so to confide in his good deserts and his influence with their common master as to identify themselves with him in feeling, and share his joy. No difficulty would be felt in such a case. The loving sympathy between the

helper and the helped, the rescuer and rescued, the redeemer and the redeemed, would flow from one to the other, first in streams of mutual anxiety while the struggle was pending, afterwards in streams of mutual joy. Now, why should the transfer of the operation from a family to a world alter its character? Is not gravitation the same in the case of a feather falling to the ground, and a planet falling toward the sun? To imagine a difficulty because the bodies are larger and the spaces immeasurable, would be very unphilosophical. Science knows no difference between objects just perceptible by the aid of the most powerful microscope, and those descried by the most powerful telescope, but applies its rules equally to both. So, whatever is psychologically practicable in the case of the family is equally so on the larger scale. A redeemed sinner, reflecting on Gethsemane's conflict, may taste his Lord's bitter cup in the anguish of a stricken conscience; and not less may he share his Lord's joy, when the battle is fought and the victory won.

## CHAPTER VI.

THE LAW OF JUSTIFICATION, AS IT EMERGES  
OUT OF THE PRECEDING HYPOTHESIS.

HE scheme we have propounded leads us to the adoption of what we must, for the sake of brevity, call by the name of Subjective Justification, meaning thereby justification *in foro conscientiæ*, with which justification *in foro Divino* is ever combined. We give it this name solely because of the necessity there exists for distinguishing it from justification *in foro Divino* alone, which for this purpose we call Objective Justification. By justification *in foro Divino*, or objective justification, is meant the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, irrespective of our knowledge of forgiveness—a pardon without peace.

Now, the capital error in modern evan-

gelical teaching consists, we submit, in making subjective justification depend upon and follow a previous objective justification, instead of making both the subjective and objective the equally direct and immediate results of the atonement of Christ and of faith therein. What is really one operation is by means of this misconception divided, in thought, into two operations. First, God, it is said, in consideration of the atonement, justifies; and, secondly, this objective justification—freely bestowed by God, for Christ's sake, on our repenting and believing—is, either by a direct or indirect communication, made known to the individual conscience. In this way the justifying act is transferred to a tribunal remote from the sphere of our consciousness, and we know nothing of its occurrence except by a subsequent communication. Then, after the communication has been made, the persuasion it induces—not faith in the atonement—becomes the immediate basis of our peace of conscience. This error we deem fatal to the hypothesis, and wholly destructive of its evangelical character. It

teaches the conscience to rely for its peace, not *directly and immediately* upon the redeeming work of Christ, but upon the belief of a consequent pardon. Whatever removes the work of Christ from the sphere of immediate consciousness annihilates the doctrine of justification by faith, and thus annihilates the Gospel.

The Maurice and Bushnell schools depart still further "from the simplicity of the Gospel" by depriving the atonement of its objective character, which, as we have before shown, is one of its essential features. Hence we stand equally opposed to the modern scholastic system, and to the recent attempts made ostensibly to improve it, but which, in our judgment, have the directly contrary effect.

According to the theory which naturally emerges out of this discussion, the atonement being *ever* available for all who have the moral power conscientiously to appropriate it, the contrite soul clothes itself with Christ's merits by an instinctive act. We, in apostolic diction, "put on Christ" and, as the old writers were wont to express it, become "arrayed in the robes of

Christ's righteousness." As in exercising the faculty of perception the perceiving mind, out of its own intrinsic stores, adds to its sensations a belief in the outward reality of the perceived object, so the contrite conscience, out of its own aroused energies, adds to our conception of Christ's work elements of intuitive certainty and personal appropriation. This done, subjective justification is at that moment realised, and with it objective justification also, inasmuch as we cannot conceive of a judgment being pronounced *in foro conscientiaë* which is not contemporaneously pronounced *in foro Divino*—"If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John iii. 21).

In using terms which imply that we appropriate to ourselves Christ's righteousness "by an instinctive act" or by moral intuition, we must however a second time guard ourselves against misconception, lest any should ignorantly suppose that, in reducing the operations of the Christian heart to a series of natural sequences, we are excluding the influence of the Holy Spirit. At the same time it is to be ob-

served that the light of the Holy One is not a mystic ingress, but a Divine egress; His influences do not saturate the surface like the descended dew, but spring up from the inner life as a bubbling fountain: they do not play upon the intellect like a moonbeam on the waters, but break forth from the conscience as latent fire bursting into flame. In a word, the operations of the Holy Spirit are not merely analogous to, but are in point of fact the moving cause of, our spontaneous moral intuitions.

We will now endeavour to place before our readers distinctly the points of difference between the theory we advocate—which we maintain to be the OLD evangelical theory—and its modern empirical decadence, by subjecting the latter to a few words of criticism.

1. Put to any intelligent and spiritually-minded Christian man this question, “On what do you base your hopes of heaven?” and he will immediately answer, “On the merits of Christ.” Any cross-examination of the Christian consciousness would probably fail to elicit any answer more in de-

tail. Whatever might be the prelude flourishes of youth, the experienced Christian, like a wary sage, contents himself with giving expression to all he *surely* knows—namely, the simple fact that his conscience, like Noah's dove, can find no rest for the sole of her foot except in the ark, Christ. He does not say that he appropriates to himself the general doctrine of atonement *because* he has the consciousness of having repented and believed; or *because* he has, through the rites of baptism and of the Eucharist, become a member of Christ's mystical body; or *because* he once, in prayer, had a special impression made upon his mind assuring him of his good estate; or *because* the Church, through her official representative, has pronounced absolution. All reasoning upon incomplex truths tends only to complicate them, and to render difficult that which is in itself easy. And such would be the effect of the explanations we have quoted: they would tend to mystification and doubt, by interposing between the conscience and the atonement a questionable middle term.

2. Again : every scheme of justification which deals with faith as intellectual only, and not moral, proceeds upon the assumption that revealed truth is readily capable of reduction into propositions, and must exist in that form before it can be understood and believed. What, then, is the proposition which, on being satisfied with the evidence of its revealed origin, our faith is to embrace? Has it ever been categorically stated? Or can it be? Have not all the most judicious divines abandoned the attempt, and declared faith indefinable — meaning thereby to confess their inability to state a proposition, the simple intellectual belief of which justifies?

Now, this indefinable character of justifying faith, though utterly inconsistent with the notion of its being the purely intellectual reception of revealed truth, is quite in accordance with the hypothesis of its moral spontaneity. We have already shown that it is of the nature of our moral instincts to realise themselves in the concrete, under the impulse of a silently operative law; and that the truths involved in the instinct are not pre-conceived, but

become soluble on reflection. "The spider," says Bunsen, "discovers, by its peculiar sense, the state of the atmosphere, and, by its impulse, regulates accordingly its mathematical work of self-preservation—the web." Here, we have the web as the product, whence to infer the dictates of the "sense" which impelled its construction, and the "mathematical" truths its form exhibits. So, conscience, alarmed by the absence of that personal righteousness which our moral nature tells us to be essential to Heaven's approval, seeks refuge in the righteousness of Christ. There is an intuitive perception of the aptness and sufficiency of the work of Christ to afford the desired refuge, but it is not until after the object of faith has been attained and justification is enjoyed, that we can reduce the subject matter of this intuitive moral judgment into a written form, and even then we fall short of articulate propositions.

3. Again: every moral truth admits of two kinds of knowledge—a speculative knowledge and a practical knowledge; the one dependent on philosophical analysis,

the other upon moral culture. It is this circumstance that creates the distinction between the moralist and the moral, between the professed Christian and the real Christian: a man may be no ethical philosopher and yet virtuous, a skilful theological disputant and yet not a "believer."

Now, we venture to affirm that, upon empirical grounds, this distinction cannot, by any possibility, be made cognoscible. In what, we ask, is the faith that justifies different from the faith of the speculative theologian? We are not, of course, enquiring into the practical difference: that every one knows. What we want to be informed about is the scientific difference; for, two faiths with such diverse practical tendencies cannot fail to be scientifically distinguishable. Are they of the same origin? The empiricist says that they are. He asserts that the distinction between them is one of degree only, and that, although up to a certain point our apprehensions of truth amount only to a speculative faith, yet as soon as they go beyond that point, and become more comprehensive and more vivid, the faith con-

sequent thereon becomes regenerating and practical. Then (to say nothing of the unsatisfactoriness of resolving a palpable difference in principle into one merely of degree) the empiricist, when required to account for this increased comprehensiveness and vividness of intellectual belief, refers it to the co-operation of the will; such change of the will he refers to the power of motives; and the efficacy of motives, not wholly to their logical value, but—to “the state of the heart.” This seems to us very like arguing in a circle. It is proposed to explain *why* one kind of faith affects the heart with religious emotions and the other has no such effect; and the answer given is, that true faith affects the heart because it has its origin in the “state of the heart!” We should be sorry to misrepresent an adverse argument, but so obviously is this the necessary result of the empirical theory, that we challenge the advocates of the system to put their explanation into any shape that will not necessitate a similar conclusion. If speculative faith and saving faith *be* identical intellectually, but diverse in their

moral tendencies, it is obvious that they *must* be diverse in their origin: and if they be *not* identical intellectually, in what else can the difference between them be *conceived* to consist, unless herein—that the former is governed by the laws of man's intellectual nature, the latter by those of his moral nature?

We adopt this, then, as the only conceivable principle of the distinction, and thence derive the fact upon which the present argument is based—viz., that the faith which makes a man a true Christian is dependent for its origin and growth upon contrition and moral culture. Does any one doubt the fact? The ease with which the young, the ignorant, the uncivilised, the least intellectual of Eve's sons and daughters, are made to understand the Gospel, when their consciences are awake, and the difficulty there exists in making it intelligible to the most cultivated minds when the moral nature is dormant, have been demonstrated by so many examples, as to place an insuperable difficulty in the way of any one who should contend that moral culture and the growth

of Christian faith have no mutual dependence. And equally stubborn is the scriptural doctrine that there can be no true saving faith in Christ without previous repentance.

Among many examples illustrating the effect of moral culture in developing the germ of Christian faith and facilitating its exercises none perhaps is more eligible than that of the late Dr. Gordon, to whose memory so graceful a tribute has been paid by the Rev. Newman Hall. "His," says his biographer, "was not a life of indifference to religion, closed by a sudden conversion and a few days of enthusiastic excitement. But after many years of earnest and anxious enquiry, with secret and constant prayer for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, *together with a conscientious discharge of every duty*"—but without any Christian profession—"he was favoured towards the close with such a view of the all-sufficiency of Christ to meet the sinner's wants, and was enabled by faith so fully to rely on his merits for acceptance with God, without one doubt or misgiving, that rising above the

vaporous atmosphere through which he had long been climbing up the craggy cliffs of the 'hill Difficulty,' he basked in a cloudless sunshine, at a higher elevation than Christians ordinarily attain."\* Dr. Gordon's mental training was not toward the cross, although, as this quotation shows, his moral training led him thither.

4. Another argument is deducible from the necessity there exists of the relation between the atonement and the pardoned conscience being such as to associate with it a holy life. Every system is false which does not so connect a holy life with peace of conscience, that the one cannot possibly exist without the other. To connect them adventitiously is not enough, they must be blended morally and imperatively.

Many perplexing theories have been propounded to overcome this difficulty. According to the theory of Bishop Bull, faith does not justify except as *producing* works: but how is this reconcilable with the Pauline doctrine, that faith does not

\* Page 62.

justify except as *renouncing* works? Faith, according to others, is the only thing which God looks at in justifying—repentance and conversion He takes no more account of than was taken of silver in the golden days of Solomon: and yet the same persons insist, with the same breath, that repentance and conversion are nevertheless *necessary* to justification. Are not these palpable contradictions?

Others, again, in order to avoid those difficulties, say that God receives men into His favour previous to their becoming the subjects of any moral change, and that, being first justified by faith without works, they are regenerated afterwards. If by this be meant that God receives men into, and retains them in, His favour wholly irrespective of their moral character, past, present, or future, the sentiment is too gross to be worthy of a reply. But if all that is meant be that God heaps favours upon men that He may thereby soften their obduracy, and that He adopts them as His children in order that He may, by the regenerating power of paternal

love, induce dispositions befitting their new relationship, we can see nothing in this view that in the slightest degree tends to remove the difficulty. Whether we become the children of God in name and by Divine recognition before or after we become His children in moral resemblance, the sequence is but nominal, it being inconceivable that the filial relation should be separated from filial moral resemblance by any perceptible interval of time. And, at all events, they are inseparable in the Divine contemplation. Whether men are morally changed in order that they may become thereby reconciled to God, or are reconciled to God in order that they may be thereby morally changed, the change of relation and the change of character are mutually dependent upon each other, and the circumstance of the dependence being prospective or retrospective in no way affects the question at issue, inasmuch as a contemplated result is, in this case, quite as prolific of objection as a performed condition.

From these perplexities there is no possible escape, except by admitting the

Scriptural distinction between objective justification and subjective justification, and by applying the Pauline proposition to the latter. Thereupon, all difficulty vanishes. God receives into His favour, for Christ's sake, all who repent of their sins, turn from them, and lead a new, virtuous, and holy life: but, conscience cannot be appeased by the consciousness of such change. Nothing can satisfy the conscience but faith in an objective atonement. This faith, however, while it totally disclaims and renounces all kinds of works, including even the work of faith itself, from directly contributing to peace of conscience, is so connected with works as to be unable to exist without them. In fact, the moral state out of which works spring is also the source out of which faith springs. Thus the union of faith and works becomes, according to the theory we are advocating, easy and natural; on any other theory it is, as we would with all deference suggest, perplexing and impracticable.

We have now, we trust, said enough to make clear the distinction between the old

intuitive theory of justification and the modern empirical theory, and to prove that the latter is exposed to difficulties which must condemn it in the esteem of all sound and consistent thinkers.

The process described as intuitive we call "the law" of justification, adopting the phraseology of St. Paul, who makes use of it in the following passages:— Rom. iii. 27., "The law of faith," as opposed to the law of works; Rom. viii. 2., "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," as opposed to the law of sin and death; Rom. ix. 31., "The law of righteousness or justification" (*νόμον δικαιοσύνης*).

A law, in the sense in which it is here used by the apostle, has been defined to be "an arrangement of consecutive *data* leading always to one unvarying result." In order to constitute a law, it is not necessary that we should know the secret forces by which each member of the series acts upon its successor. It is enough that the sequence be found unvarying. Thus we are entitled to assert the existence of a law of gravitation, although we have not

the least idea as to what the force we call gravitation really is. No chemist has yet been able to explain the nature of the forces by which bodies are made to combine, but the fact of their combination in certain definite and unvarying proportions constitutes itself into a law simply by the invariableness of the sequence. So it is a law of our moral nature that conscience condemns the guilty, the following series being found in invariable sequence :—1, a sense of duty ; 2, duty violated ; 3, a guilty conscience. In like manner the following series is found in constant sequence :—1, a contrite conscience ; 2, a consciousness of the Christian sacrifice ; 3, the conscience set at rest.

With the heart at rest in conscious friendship with God, the Christian stands upon a higher moral platform, and hence arise those higher morals which are distinctively Christian, and of which no other religious system has ever produced the like. To these it will be right for us to make fuller reference ; but before doing so, the natural order of thought

seems to require that the arguments we have adduced against our opponents' theory should be followed by such affirmative arguments in support of our own theory as the subject will admit of; and these we propose to adduce in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

PROOFS FROM CATHOLIC CONCURRENCE, AND  
FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

**W**HATEVER may be the worth of an individual judgment, there is no doubt that deference is due to Catholic concurrence. We accordingly turn with great interest to inquire to what extent the idea of sacrifice having a natural adaptation to the conscience is sustained by authority. To those conversant with theological literature we need scarcely say that it is far from being a novel notion, even in its formal statement; while, as a principle hidden in the depths of theological reasoning, it is familiarly old. Yet we must not be supposed to commit ourselves to the assertion that it is to be everywhere

found shaped scientifically into a theory. What we mean is, that the foundation truths upon which the theory is built are laid deeply in the Christian mind and heart, and have, from time to time, been put forward with different objects and in different modes of expression, so as, when combined, to constitute a series of unpremeditated coincidences, and therefore the strongest possible evidence of Catholic concurrence.

Basil, one of the fathers of the Church, who flourished in the fourth century, wrote :—“ Faith is that which *draws* the soul to assent by a force transcending the methods of logic : faith is that produced, not by the necessary demonstrations of geometry, but by the energy of the Holy Spirit.”

Whitaker,\* an eminent Church of England divine of the sixteenth century, in the course of an argument designed to prove that the Church cannot empirically inculcate faith, quotes the preceding among many other authorities of a similar kind,

\* Whitaker's *Disputation on Scripture* (Parker Society's edit.), pp. 356, 7 ; 448.

and thus records his own views :—“ It is only the Holy Ghost that can infuse into our hearts that saving faith which is therefore called by the schoolmen *Fides infusa*. The Church cannot infuse this faith ; for that faith which we obtain from the Church is not called infused, but acquired ; and it is not sufficient to a full assurance or certain persuasion.”

“ Nor was it altogether without grounds,” says Coleridge,\* “that several of the Fathers ventured to believe that Plato had some dim conception of the necessity of a *Divine Mediator* ; whether through some indistinct echo of the patriarchal faith, or some rays of light refracted from the Hebrew prophets, or by his own sense of the mysterious contradiction in human nature between the will and the reason, *the natural appetences and the not less innate law of conscience*, we shall in vain attempt to determine. It is not impossible that all three may have co-operated.”

The distinguished Bishop Butler† re-

\* *Aids to Reflection* (5th edit.), vol. i. p. 23.

† *Analogy*, part ii. ch. v. s. 4.

marks, "From the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, the notion of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt appears to be contrary to the *general sense* of mankind." Bunsen\* also attributes sacrifice as well as prayer to "the religious impulse—the highest instinct of humanity." And Maurice,† discussing the character of Noah's sacrifice, thus proceeds:—"Here, under the same *inward* guidance, the mound of turf gives place to the altar which is built; an order is discovered in the dignity of the inferior creatures; the worthiest are selected for an oblation to God; the fire which consumes, the flame which ascends, are used to express the intention of him who presents the victim. If you asked him to tell you what these visible things signified to him, he could have given you no answer. At a later time men might have muttered one which would have a certain sense, but not a very clear sense; now they would simply act on

\* *Philosophy of Universal History*, vol. ii. p. 167.

† *The Doctrine of Sacrifice*, p. 23.

their *intuition*, and let it justify itself as it could."

An incident in the life of the great German reformer, records both his own views and the views of those who were the honoured instruments of his conversion. "Leading him back to the Apostles' Creed which Luther had learnt in early childhood, at the school of Mansfeldt, the aged monk repeated this article with kind good-nature:—'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' These simple words, which the pious brother pronounced with sincerity, in that decisive moment, diffused great consolation in Luther's heart. 'I believe,' he repeated to himself ere long, lying on his bed of sickness,—'I believe in the forgiveness of sins.' 'Ah!' said the monk, 'you must believe not only in the forgiveness of David's and of Peter's sins—it is God's command that we believe our own sins are forgiven.'\* How delightful did this command seem to poor Luther! 'Hear what St. Bernard says, in his dis-

\* *Davidi aut Petro. . . Sed mandatum Dei esse, ut singuli homines nobis remitti peccata credamus.*  
—*Melanchth. Vita. Luth.*

course on the Annunciation,' added the aged brother:—'The testimony of the Holy Ghost is this, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' From this moment,' adds D'Aubigne, "light *sprung up* in the heart of the young monk of Erfurth."

Many of the Puritans taught that "Justifying faith is the receiving of God's justifying sentence in our own consciences." And with this agrees the doctrine of the Homilies:—"By this you may well perceive that the only mean and instrument of salvation required on our part is faith; that is to say, a sure trust and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade ourselves that God both *hath* and will forgive our sins, that He *hath* accepted us again into His favour, that He *hath* released us from the bonds of damnation, and received us again into the number of His elect people, not for our merits or deserts, but only and solely for the merits of Christ's death and passion."

"Faith," say the authors of the *Synopsis Purioris Theologiæ* "is a firm assent by which every believer, with a certain trust resting in God, is persuaded not only that

remission of sins is in general promised to them who believe, but is granted to *himself* particularly, and eternal righteousness and from it life, by the mercy of God." And this is the doctrine also of the Augsburg confession.

Sir William Hamilton\* alleges as follows:—"Assurance, personal assurance (the feeling of certainty that God is propitious to *me*,—that *my* sins are forgiven, *fiducia, plerophoria fidei*), was long universally held in the Protestant communities to be the criterion and condition of a true or saving faith. Luther declares, that he who hath not assurance spews faith out; and Melancthon makes assurance the discriminating line of Christianity from heathenism. It was maintained by Calvin, nay even by Arminius; and it is part and parcel of all the Confessions of all the Churches of the Reformation down to the Westminster Assembly." *The British and Foreign Evangelical Review*† disputes the accuracy of this statement, but admits thus far:—"With respect to the nature of saving faith, the

\* *Discussions*, p. 493.

† Vol. v. p. 938.

Reformers in general maintained that it had its seat in the Will, and was properly and essentially trust (*fiducia*). The great majority of eminent Protestant divines have adhered to the views of the Reformers upon this point, though some have taken the opposite side, and have held faith, properly so called, to be the mere assent (*assensus*) of the understanding to the truth propounded by God in His Word; while they represent trust and other graces as the fruits or consequences, and not as constituent parts and elements, of faith."

Now it is clear that if faith have "its seat in the 'Will,'" it must be moral; which is our chief point of contention. That being ceded, we are at a loss to know how a theory can be constructed, recognising the *moral* character and origin of faith, that can consistently maintain the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith *without works*, unless the justification in which it issues be a *subjective* justification. The Reviewer is obviously upon the horns of a dilemma. Retaining his position that faith has "its seat in the

Will," he must either, against Paul and the Reformers, maintain that justification is by works or, which is the same thing, by a faith whose essential element it is to be the root of obedience; or he must maintain, with Paul and the Reformers, that the justification which is by faith *without* works, is a *subjective* justification. There is no alternative. To Sir William's capacious and logical mind, this whole connection of thought was present; and his representation of the opinions of the Reformers was doubtless correct. Their hypothesis was precisely that to which Sir William recalls the attention of their lapsed disciples who, by depriving justification of its subjective element have—and mark! we again quote the words of Scotland's greatest philosopher—"eviscerated the Protestant symbol (*Fides sola justificat, Faith alone justifies*) of its real import."

In strict accordance herewith is D'Aubigne's\* admirable definition:—"Faith, says the theologian in order to express his ideas, is the subjective appropriation of the objective work of Christ."

\* *History of the Reformation*, vol. i. p. 51.

The language of President Edwards is peculiarly explicit:—"It is evident,"\* says he, "that there is such a thing as a spiritual belief or conviction of the truth of the things of the Gospel, peculiar to those who are regenerated; so that the conviction they have does not only differ from that which natural men have, in its concomitants, in that it is accompanied with good works, but the belief itself is diverse. He that truly sees the divine, transcendent, supreme glory of those things which are divine does, as it were, know their divinity *intuitively*: he not only argues that they are divine, but *he sees* that they are divine."

John Wesley,† too, the Apostle of Methodism, is equally clear and decisive:—"Faith is *a divine evidence and conviction*, not only that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself,' but also that Christ loved *me* and gave Himself for *me*. It is by this faith that we receive Christ."

"The sense of moral deficiency," says

\* *Religious Affections*, part iii. ch. 5.

† Sermon xliii.

Chalmers,\* “ the unfailing sense of every earnest spirit, will, without any nice argumentative computation, suggest the instant feeling of at least a probable guilt, a probable God, and a probable vengeance at His hands,—enough to set the whole machinery of human interests, and fears, and disquietudes, into busy operation. It is in the midst of such agitations and doings that Christianity offers itself to the notice of an inquirer; and for the tens or twenties who may seek after its literary and historical evidence, there will at least be thousands who fasten their intent regards upon its subject matter; and who, *as the fruit of their moral earnestness* and prayers, will be made to behold its divine adaptation to the exigencies of their state, and so to close with it on the strength of those credentials which are properly and independently its own.”

Authorities like these might be indefinitely multiplied, but we forbear, and merely adduce these few by way of example, in order to show that the idea

\* *North British Review*, vol. vi. p. 320.

of Christian faith being intuitive is not novel.

Before ascending from human authority to the Divine, we wish to premise that, while we distinctly and emphatically repudiate the slightest sympathy with any of those "hybrid products of Greek and Oriental speculation," which have been so fruitful of heresy, we nevertheless recognise and appreciate the Platonic mould given to Christian thought in Scripture, and by the best of the early Christian thinkers. No one cognizant of its grandeur will deem us wanting in reverence for the New Testament writings, if we ascribe to some portions of them the gleamings of a true Hellenic fire, irrespective of their loftier and holier inspiration. And would it not have afforded cause for wonder if modes of thought which still so largely influence the civilised world had, after centuries of intellectual neighbourhood, failed to influence the cultivated Hebrew mind?

First, then, we ask, on what ground did the Redeemer claim that His words

should be received as truth? Was it not on the ground that the truth of His teaching was self-evident to every sincere, contrite, earnest spirit? Can language be plainer than this (Luke xii. 56), "Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth [these facts are self-evident to you] how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves [*ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν*,\* out of your own minds, and without being taught by me], judge ye not what is right?" Nor is His language on other occasions less explicit:—"He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God,"† and "He that is of God heareth God's words,"‡ consequently, every one "that is of God" will recognise in my doctrines "the words of God," "every one that is of the truth heareth my voice,"§ and "if any man hear My words and believe not, I judge him not, . . . the word

\* "'Από, governing the genitive, expresses what is strictly the idea of the genitive case itself (Buttman, § 132, 2) viz., the *going forth or proceeding* of one object from another."

† John iii. 34.

‡ John viii. 47.

§ John xviii. 37.

that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"\*—however he may disregard My words now, *they will then* wake up in his conscience to condemn him.

Accordingly, when Nicodemus expressed confidence in Him as "a teacher come from God," on the ground that no man could do such miracles except God were with him,† our Lord at once directed the mind of the Jewish ruler to that higher faith which flows spontaneously from a regenerated nature. As though he had said, a faith based on miracles is not enough, such a faith "cannot see"—has no spiritual discernment of—"the kingdom of God;" all true faith originates in the heart, hence "if any man will *do the will of God he shall*"—but no one else can—"know of the doctrine whether it be of God;"‡ faith springs up in the earnest soul intuitively, stealthily as "the wind."§ That this reference by Jesus to the wind was designed by Him to illustrate the intuitive as distinguished from the empirical,

\* John xii. 47, 48.

† John iii. 2.

‡ John vii. 17.

§ John iii. 8.

the moral as distinguished from the intellectual, origin of faith, a candid examination of the context will place beyond all reasonable doubt. The metaphor was employed to show *why*, for what end, we “*must* be born again.” Our Lord had asserted\* the necessity of the new birth, as a pre-requisite to our being able to “see” or spiritually discern “the kingdom of God:” He now repeats that assertion, and adds that there is nothing so very marvellous† in this dependence of moral perspicacity on moral character—“Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not *these* things?” *How* faith springs up in the mind, whence its source, what are its causal antecedents, it may be difficult to explain; but this is a difficulty we have to encounter in the natural, as well as in the moral, world—“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth;” so faith arises imperceptibly in “every one that is born of the Spirit.” That this is the true interpretation of the passage appears also

\* John iii. 3.

† *Ibid.* v. 7.

from the sequel, in which, still keeping up the same train of thought, Christ attributes unbelief not to mental but moral causes:—"light is come into the world," but men love "darkness rather than light, because their deeds" are "evil."

The words of the Saviour to Peter, which have formed so fruitful a subject of controversy, are, if possible, even more explicit than His conversation with Nicodemus. "Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"—such was the question first put to the disciples, and whereto they suitably replied. He then asked, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."\* How did Peter come by the faith he thus avowed? Was it the result of an intellectual appreciation of objective evidence—something taught by man? Our Lord expressly affirms the contrary: "Flesh and blood *hath not* revealed it unto thee." If then the truth entered not into Peter's mind from an objective source, how otherwise could it enter, except either by special reve-

\* Matt. xvi. 16.

lation or by intuition? In either case it was from God. That which is intuitive is not less Divine than that which is inspired.

The fact which has been urged as adverse to the intuitive origin of Peter's faith, forms in our view the strongest argument in its favour—viz., "that when the Lord referred to His own sacrifice of Himself as essential to His kingdom, all Simon's intuitions were at fault." And why were they at fault? For the same reason, doubtless, that Peter denied his Master. Had his faith been dependent wholly upon the testimony of his senses, upon the miracles he witnessed, upon the oracular truths that were announced to him and the intellectual import and objective evidence of those truths, its vacillant character would have been inexplicable. But, based upon his moral intuitions, it was of course necessarily regulated by the variances in his moral state—the very point we are labouring to substantiate.

Turning from the Master to the disciple, we discover in Paul's writings the

same under-current of "spiritual discernment," the necessity for which he thus enforced:—"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. ii. 14). By the phrase "spiritually discerned," we understand a mode of discerning Divine realities other than that of receiving them through objective sources—an inner vision dependent for its clearness upon the moral state, and in the exercise of which, things previously incognoscible become self-evident.

That St. Paul used the word "justification" in a subjective sense is manifest from his argument in Rom. iii. 19, 20. "By the law," says he, "is the knowledge of sin"—meaning that the effect of the law is to sting the conscience with the conviction of personal guilt. To awaken the conscience is the very design of its promulgation—"What things soever the law saith it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped"—unable to utter an excuse—"and all the

world may become guilty\* before God"—not be made guilty in fact, for that they are already, but may be smitten with the overwhelming consciousness of existing guilt. "Therefore, by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."—If, on examining ourselves in the conscious presence of God, the recollections of our past life, compared with the standard of the "law," bring to us only the "knowledge" or conviction "of sin," how can that which convinces of sin remove such conviction? how can that which troubles the conscience give it peace? Such is the Apostle's argument. And, since all its force turns upon the "knowledge of sin" and "justification" being opposed to each other, we must so construe the meaning of those terms as that they may be, in our conception of them, *really* opposed. Consequently, the

\* ὑπόδικος—*Ut omne os obturetur, et obnoxius fiat totus mundus condemnationi Dei, i.e., Ut omnes homines agnoscant, se obnoxios esse reatui, iræ ac condemnationi Dei. Verba enim quæ esse, fieri vel agere significant, quandoque pro rei cognitione poni solent.*—*Christ. Stockii Clavis.*

“knowledge of sin” being subjective—implying a guilty conscience—“justification” must be also understood as subjective—implying a justified and peaceful conscience.

But once admit justification to be subjective and theoretical, consistency requires that our hypothesis be received in all its integrity.

That St. Paul used the word “justified” subjectively, will be further seen from a comparison of Acts xiii. 39 with Heb. ix. 9. In what sense are we to understand the alleged impotence of the “law of Moses” to “justify”? To this question, arising out of the first of the cited passages, the second gives an explicit answer: The “law of Moses” could not “justify,” because it “could not make him that did the service *perfect as pertaining to the conscience.*” It could not give him the consciousness of a perfect righteousness.

Again, to the words, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God” (Rom. v. 1), there is ordinarily attached the loose and general idea that we are *first* “justi-

fied " in heaven ; *then* informed that we have been justified ; and *then* have peace of conscience as the final result. But a closer examination does not support this view. The three steps into which modern empiricism has thus divided the peace-giving act is, in the nervous diction of the Apostle, concentrated in one. If it is by faith that we are justified, it is by faith also (*τῇ πίστει*) that we are made, with the same *immediacy*, to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

The phrase " God justifieth the ungodly " (Rom. iv. 5) is another phrase of pregnant import. Are we to understand the word " ungodly " here in an objective or in a subjective sense ?—does it mean outward ungodliness ? or rather does it not obviously refer to that sense of ungodliness which every one has who knows himself and is thoroughly contrite ? That such a one being penitent, is " justified " in Christ, it is not difficult to understand, in whichever sense you employ that word ; but that St. Paul used it here, as elsewhere, in the subjective sense, we infer from the obvious intention he had to sug-

gest a contrast; and he will not have succeeded in doing that, unless the terms of the proposition be made to admit of contrast, by referring both to the outward character, or both to the mental state. They cannot both relate to the outward character, for to say that God pardons and retains in His favour men who continue ungodly, would be absurd in thought, and a blasphemous imputation upon the Divine holiness. They *must* both therefore have relation to the mental state, and then this meaning comes out of them —“ God causes truly contrite souls, who have in themselves no other consciousness than that of personal ungodliness, to stand before Him consciously justified in Christ.”

But the argument in favour of this meaning being given to the passage does not end here. The context also requires it. The Apostle is contrasting the imputation to us of our works with the imputation to us of the righteousness of Christ; and he is educing their different moral influences. The one inspires the pride of “debt;” the other, the humility of

“grace.” But in order to this, the believer must know that Christ’s righteousness is “imputed” to him, in the same way as, had he been the innocent possessor of perfect personal righteousness, he would have known that that was imputed to him? Although in the one case “the reward would have been reckoned of debt, and in the other “of grace” (Rom. iv. 4), yet, in other respects the mode of reckoning is the same. Personal *sin* is intuitively and consciously reckoned (Rom. v. 12—14). This *must* have been so, argues the Apostle, before the written law was promulgated, for there can be no sin without law, and there *was* sin without a positive written law. consequently the law that then was must have been “written in the heart” (Rom. ii. 15): but the knowledge of the law and of sin being intuitive, the imputation of sin is necessarily a *conscious* imputation; must not then the imputation of righteousness be *conscious* also? Upon the consciousness thus induced, the Apostle builds the following reasoning (Rom. v. 8—10): If, while we were impenitent sinners, Christ died for us,

and thus demonstrated God's unbounded love toward us, can we doubt that, as a fruit of the same love, now when we are consciously reconciled, we shall be saved from future wrath? if we have been brought into this state of conscious reconciliation by the "blood" or suffering life of Christ, what may we not confidently expect from His victorious and triumphant life? Mark! St. Paul starts from a basis of consciousness, and his reasoning has thus a solid foundation; which otherwise it could not have.

That we have accurately recorded the ideas present to the Apostle's mind, is further shown by the practical question which he mixes up with the doctrinal discussion (Rom. iii. 27)—a question that deals wholly with the subjective, "Where is boasting then?" If a man hope to gain the esteem of Heaven *because* he believes well, how can that "exclude boasting" any more than if he were to be esteemed for working well? The "law" that excludes boasting must bring faith and justification into *immediate* contact, excluding everything that would interpose between

them, whether in the shape of a rewardable act or a conditional act. The latter would be quite as fatal to the Apostle's arguments as the former. A beggar who receives a benevolence promised to him on *condition* that he ask for it, has as much ground to congratulate himself on his effective asking, as he who receives his well-earned wages has to congratulate himself on his effective working. The claim of the former, when the stipulated condition is performed, rests on as firm a moral basis as the claim of the latter: they are *then* equally "debts," inasmuch as the benevolent promiser is as much bound to perform his promise, as the just master is to pay fair and equal wages. The gist of the Apostle's argument, therefore, as well as the words he employs, necessitates the conclusion, that *nothing* can be interposed between faith and justification; consequently that they *must* be spontaneised; and that, in the act of justifying, the personal consciousness and the Christ-consciousness *become, by moral spontaneity identified in the "law" which excludes boasting.*

Again. "There is now," says Paul (Rom. viii. 1—4), "no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." In this passage, there are three antitheses: 1, Between the flesh and the spirit; 2, Between the law of sin and death, and the law of the spirit of life; 3, Between the condemnation of our persons, and the freedom therefrom consequent upon the condemnation of our sin. With regard to the first term of the first antithesis, all who walk after the flesh are affirmed to be condemned by both laws. With regard to the second term, they who walk after the spirit, although condemned by the law of sin and death, are freed from condemnation by the law of the spirit of

life. A law implies its own recognition by a discriminating faculty, and the moral law could not with propriety be called here "a law of 'sin,'" except that, in its action upon the conscience, it induces the consciousness of sin. If then the first term of the second antithesis refer to a truth operating upon the conscience, so also must the second term; and then it will follow that the third antithesis includes, in the import of its first term, a guilty conscience, and of the second term, a peaceful conscience. The Apostle, in affirming the impotence of the law, must consequently be understood to declare that, because of our inability to perform perfect obedience, the law thus made "weak through the flesh" cannot give to us conscientious quiet—cannot subjectively justify; but that what the law could not do Christ has done. The law condemned the sinner; Christ has condemned that which was the cause of our condemnation—sin. Sin, atoned for, no longer exists; it is "condemned," destroyed, annihilated. Contemplated in the person of Christ it becomes non-

existent—lost in His perfect righteousness.

We have already intimated that in 2 Cor. v. 21, where the Apostle uses the expression, “made Him to be sin (*ἁμαρτίαν*) for us,” there is a much deeper meaning conveyed than simply “He became a sin-offering.” The most cursory examination of the passage must place this beyond doubt. “He who knew no sin [who had no consciousness of personal sin] was made sin for us; that we [who have no consciousness of personal righteousness] might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” Several points of contrast are here distinctly noted. 1, The non-consciousness of personal sin on Christ’s part, is contrasted with our non-consciousness of personal righteousness. 2, His being made sin, is contrasted with our being made righteousness. 3, The “for us” is, in like manner, contrasted with the “in Him,” suggestive of interchange, reciprocation, mutuality. 4, “Knew no sin,” is contrasted with “was made sin;” and since the former has reference to the consciousness of sin, so must the latter :

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the idea being that although our Saviour had no consciousness of personal sin, He so entered into our relations with God that He felt all the shame, remorse, and anguish on account of our sins which we ought to have felt. 5, But if the words "made sin" include the consciousness of sin, the words "made righteousness" must include the consciousness of righteousness; and the phrase "made the righteousness of God in Him," must be construed to mean that, as Christ identified Himself with our sin, and endured its guilty consciousness, we become identified with His righteousness and enjoy its peace-giving consciousness.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE MORAL FRUITS OF JUSTIFICATION.—

“ ECCE HOMO.”



THE charm in *Ecce Homo* which has secured for that work so extensive a circulation, is the excellence of the moral code it ascribes to Christianity and its Author, and the beauty of thought and expression in which the claims of Christ's religion on the world's attention are, on this ground, maintained. Whatever may be its other merits or its defects, it does not lie in our way at present to advert to them. We shall merely notice the views it puts forth on Christian morals, so far as is necessary to enable us to use its utterances as a foil, whereby we may be able more easily and, with greater effect, to exhibit the points on

which, as we think, *Ecce Homo* fails to render to the Christian moral system adequate justice.

“It is a mistake,” says that writer, “to regard Christianity as a rudimentary or imperfect moral philosophy.” No doubt it is—a very great mistake. The error, however, would be less if the proposition were reversed. It would be much less inaccurate to say that moral philosophy is a rudimentary and imperfect form of Christianity. We can, therefore, hardly agree in our author’s next proposition:—“Philosophy is one thing, and Christianity quite another.” And the reason why we differ from him in this conclusion is that we altogether dissent from his premises. “The difference,” says he, “between them lies here—philosophy hopes to cure the vices of human nature by working upon the head, and Christianity by educating the heart.” Now, we do not believe that any system of moral philosophy worthy of the name ever attempted so futile a thing as to cure the vices of human nature otherwise than by educating the heart. Nor can we conceive it possible for Chris-

tianity itself ever to educate the heart without also working upon the head. The distinction here attempted is a false distinction, and does Christianity injustice by slighting its appeals to humanity's highest intellect.

The primary difference between moral philosophy and Christianity is, we submit, a difference of ideal standard. The moral standard of every earth-born system is conventional—the average attainment of the best people in the city, nation, or continent whereof the collective sentiments constitute, for the time, popular opinion. Hence, in ancient times and in heathen countries, where the conventional moral standard was low, the character of the gods was made to conform to that standard and was reduced to the level of those who worshipped them. And in modern times, to the extent to which the authority of Christianity is paralysed, the same degradation follows ; so that even religious systems, professedly Christian, share in the demoralisation, and become so far corrupted as to conform to the prevailing conventional standard.

But what, in the meantime, is the true

standard? What is the standard which Christianity's Divine Author proclaimed in His Sermon on the Mount, and which *Ecce Homo* omits to cite, although other parts of the same discourse are long and lovingly dwelt upon? It is this—"Be ye perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." So then the true standard of morals is our ideal of the Perfect One. Even the lowest moral natures, conceiving this ideal, would place the standard far above their practice; but in cultured natures the ideal standard rises higher, and is not only never reached even by the very best of men, but seems, to their exalted conceptions, to rise higher and higher as they advance toward it, so as to become more and more distant. This peculiarity in our moral nature is wholly lost sight of by *Ecce Homo*, and yet the recognition of it is by no means unfamiliar. Opening, as we write, the pages of *Longfellow's Dante*, the eye rests upon a passage in which the very same thought is expressed. Referring to the hero's celestial conductor through the realms of purgatory, the effect upon his

cultured conscience of a slight error is thus marked:—

“ He seemed to me within himself remorseful.

O noble conscience, and without a stain,

How sharp a sting is trivial fault to thee !”\*

And in the *Dream of Gerontius*, the conveying angel gives the following striking description of the effect to be produced upon a holy disembodied spirit by the first sight of Christ:—

“ There is a pleading in His pensive eyes

Will pierce thee to the quick, and trouble thee.

And thou wilt hate and loathe thyself; for  
though

Now sinless, thou wilt feel that thou hast  
sinned

As never thou didst feel; and wilt desire

To slink away, and hide thee from His sight;

And yet wilt have a longing eye to dwell

Within the beauty of His countenance.

And these two pains, so counter and so keen—

Thy longing for Him when thou seest Him  
not;

The shame of self at thought of seeing Him—

Will be thy veriest, sharpest purgatory.”

In this refined conception of purgatory,

\* *Purgatorio*, canto iii.

Dr. Newman gives a vivid portraiture of the conflict between two opposing moral feelings; and, *were it not for the harmonising effect of the appropriated sacrifice*, which Dr. Newman fails to bring into the account, this conflict of feeling would, we opine, increase with increased holiness, whether on earth or in heaven. Hence the Apocalyptic song, “Worthy the Lamb,” will be eternally fitting, eternally new.

What then, on earth, is the consequence of this conflict? What effect is produced upon our minds by the consciousness of the disproportion—the ever increasing disproportion—between our ideal of what we ought to be and our consciousness of what we are? It is that which Christianity announces at the offset as man’s natural state, but of which *Ecce Homo* singularly enough takes no notice—a state of guilt and condemnation. How to rise out of this state is the first and greatest of moral problems; but it is a problem which *Ecce Homo* in no way assists us to solve.

Having emerged from this state, the Christian’s first pœan is one of praise to

his Deliverer—the first stirrings of his enthusiasm are to Christ and His honour. What next? We quote from *Ecce Homo* the following passages with great pleasure:—

“ Our investigation has led us to three conclusions respecting Christ’s legislation: 1, that He does not direct us to adopt a private or isolated rule of life, but to occupy ourselves with the affairs of the society: 2, that He expects us to merge our private interests absolutely in those of this society; 3, that this society is not exclusive, but catholic or universal—that is, that all mankind have a right to admission to it. . . . It is a society of men who meet together for common objects, resembling those societies which we call states in this respect, that it claims unlimited self-sacrifice on the part of its members, and demands that the interest and safety of the whole shall be set up by each member above his own interest and above all private interests whatever.” Hence the significance of the phrases, “ the kingdom of God,” “ the kingdom of Heaven.”

Instead of laying down a written code of laws for His kingdom, after the manner of earthly kingdoms, and making obedience to consist in external conformity to the strict letter of the law, Christ, continues *Ecce Homo*, “would give to every member of it a power of making laws for himself. He frequently repeated that to make the fruit of a tree good you must put the tree into a healthy state, and, slightly altering the illustration, that fruit can only be expected from a fruit-tree, not from a thistle or a thorn.” This law-making power consists in the infusion of a Divine enthusiasm. “The earliest Christians, like the Christians of later times, felt a natural repugnance to describe the ardent enthusiastic goodness at which they aimed by the name of *virtue*. This name suited exactly the kind of goodness which Christ expressly commanded them to rise above. They therefore adopted another. Regarding the ardour they felt as an express inspiration or spiritual presence of God within them, they borrowed from the language of religious worship a word for which our equivalent is ‘holy;’ and the inspiring

power they consistently called the Spirit of Holiness or the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, while a virtuous man is one who controls and coerces the anarchic passions within him, so as to conform his actions to law, a holy man is one in whom a *passionate enthusiasm* absorbs and annuls the anarchic passions altogether."

"But now of what nature is the enthusiasm Christ requires?" Here we must part company from our author. We will not stay to take exception to the phraseology just quoted, in so far as it attributes the inspiring power to a seeming, rather than to a real, Divine indwelling: for it is clear that if all good comes from God, the enthusiasm now spoken of must be a real Divine inspiration. But Divine influence operates in harmony with, and not in substitution of, psychological forces; and the question to be considered therefore is—how, *psychologically*, is this law-making enthusiasm induced?

Our author calls it "the enthusiasm of humanity," and defines it as "the love not of the race nor of the individual, but of the race *in* the individual; it is the

love not of all men nor yet of every man, but of *the man* in every man.” “There is a fellow-feeling, a yearning of kindness towards a human being as such, which is not dependent upon the character of the particular human being who excites it, but rises before that character displays itself, and does not at once or altogether subside when it exhibits itself as unamiable. We save a man from drowning whether he is amiable or the contrary, and we should consider it right to do so, even though we knew him to be a very great criminal, simply because he is a man. By examples like this we may discover that a love for humanity as such exists, and that it is a natural passion”—a constituent element, we would add, of that unity of humanity which we have treated of in a former chapter. “Now this was the passion upon which Christ seized; and treating it as the law-making power, or root of morality, in human nature, He trained and developed it into that Christian spirit which received the new name of *ἀγάπη*.”

All this is exceedingly good, and we

admit its truth if we be allowed to reckon the enthusiasm of humanity, not as a primary, but as a secondary and subordinate, principle of action. We cannot understand, however, what our author means when he speaks of Christ "seizing upon a passion and training and developing it." How is this effected in our modern daily life? *In what way* does Christ seize upon our humane passion? No psychological connection is shown between our knowledge of any thing Christ did and the kindling of the *ἀγάπη*; and in the absence of such psychological connection, *Ecce Homo's* entire argument falls to the ground.

It is no sufficient reply to our objection to say, that "since Christ showed this enthusiasm to men, it has been found possible for them to imitate it, and that every new imitation, by bringing the marvel visibly before us, revives the power of the original"—and that thus "it is handed on like the torch from runner to runner in the race of life." Such reasoning confesses the difficulty without removing it. No intelligent and self-sustained enthu-

siasm can be kindled by simple imitation—the enthusiasm of imitation is factitious. There must, in order to the production of a genuine feeling, be in every individual instance a new application of the exciting motive. And this exciting motive, *Ecce Homo's* argument does not supply.

True, it is attempted, but see how feebly! “The first method of training this passion, which Christ employed, was the direct one of making it a point of duty to feel it. To love one’s neighbour as one’s self, was He said, the first and greatest *law*. And in the Sermon on the Mount He requires the passion to be felt in such strength as to include those whom we have most reason to hate—our enemies and those who maliciously injure us—and delivers an imperative precept, Love your enemies.

“It has been shown that to do this is not, as might at first appear, in the nature of things impossible, but the further question suggests itself, Can it be done to order? Has the verb to love really an imperative mood?” After a brief discussion of this question our author pro-

ceeds :—“ But we shall soon be convinced that Christ could not design by a mere edict, however authoritative, to give this passion of humanity strength enough to make it a living and infallible principle of morality in every man, when we consider, first, what an ardent enthusiasm He demanded from His followers, and secondly, how frail and tender a germ this passion naturally is in human nature.” To draw forth the latent feeling, there must be the sight of excellence. It is not, however, “ absolutely necessary that a man shall have seen *many* men whom he can respect. The most lost cynic will get a new heart by learning thoroughly to believe in the virtue of *one* man. Our estimate of human nature is in proportion to the best specimen of it we have witnessed. This then it is which is wanted to raise the feeling of humanity into an enthusiasm ; when the precept of love has been given, an image must be set before the eyes of those who are called upon to obey it, an ideal or type of man which may be noble and amiable enough to raise the whole race and make the meanest

member of it sacred with reflected glory.” “Did not Christ do this?” To this question we answer unhesitatingly—He did. But we very much doubt whether the mere contemplation of moral excellence will kindle enthusiasm, until there has been preparatory moral culture. In cultivated moral natures the effects might follow which *Ecce Homo* anticipates. We have not, however, as yet, advanced so far on our journey. The question has first to be considered, how are we to get at the hearts of the degenerate?

There is no doubt force in what follows: “If some human beings are abject and contemptible, if it be incredible to us that they can have any high dignity or destiny, do we regard them from so great a height as Christ? Are we likely to be more pained by their faults and deficiencies than He was? Is our standard higher than His? And yet He associated by preference with these meanest of the race; no contempt for them did He ever express, no suspicion that they might be less dear than the best and wisest to the common Father, no doubt that they were naturally

capable of rising to a moral elevation like His own. There is nothing of which a man may be prouder than of this; it is the most hopeful and redeeming fact in history; *it is precisely what was wanting to raise the love of man, as man, to enthusiasm.* An eternal glory has been shed upon the human race by the love Christ bore to it. And it was because the edict of universal love went forth to men whose hearts were in no cynical mood, but possessed with a spirit of devotion to a man; that words which, at any other time, however grandly they might sound, would have been but words, penetrated so deeply, and along with the law of love the power of love was given. Therefore also the first Christians were enabled to dispense with philosophical phrases, and, instead of saying that they loved the ideal of man in man, could simply say and feel that they loved Christ in every man."

We cannot deny that the point to be finally determined is now at length fairly put. "The kernel of the Christian moral scheme" is personal devotion to Christ. How, then, is this passionate personal de-

votion to be awakened and sustained? Mark with what a trembling hand *Ecce Homo* writes the answer to this clinching question! “As love provokes love, many have found it possible to conceive for Christ an attachment, the closeness of which no words can describe—a veneration so possessing and absorbing the man within them that they have said, ‘I live no more, but Christ lives in me.’”

We have said that the point has been fairly put, but we dare not venture to say that it has been fairly met. *Ecce Homo* seeks to get out of the difficulty which he evidently feels pressing upon him by citing examples of personal devotion to Christ, in which he knows perfectly well the passion was kindled on a theory very different from his theory. It was not the contemplation of Christ’s general love to humanity merely that aroused the heart in the examples referred to, but the appropriation of Christ’s love and work to the individual conscience, first removing guilt and the fear of its consequences, and then kindling ardent love and passionate devotedness to the person and purposes

of Him by whom the redemption was achieved.

Hence every Christian hymnal abounds with such passages as—

“ I sing the cross ! stupendous theme !  
Glow my heart, glow ! ”

And body, soul, time, talents, property, life, are all, in glowing song, consecrated to the service of Christ, to be employed in telling others what He has done for ourselves, and urging them to share with us our new-born joys.

Thus the life of the disciple becomes like that of the Master—a life of self-sacrificing toil to promote the world’s weal. So sang the gentle *Keble*:—

“ Think not of rest ; though dreams be sweet,  
Start up, and ply your heavenward feet.  
Is not God’s oath upon your head,  
Ne’er to sink back on slothful bed ?  
Never again your loins untie,  
Nor let your torches waste and die,  
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,  
Ye hear your Master’s midnight call ! ”

If to this we append a stanza from *Charles Wesley*’s more impassioned strains, the two examples, breathing the spirit of

the Universal Church, will show the ardour of the enthusiasm which, not on *Ecce Homo's* but on the evangelical scheme, is kindled at the cross:—

“ Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
 That were a present far too small ;  
 Love so amazing, so Divine,  
 Demands my soul, my life, my all !”

Now that personal devotedness to Christ, more ardent than even poetry can express, inflames many Christian hearts is a fact which *Ecce Homo* frankly admits. But that his theory accounts for the fact, none but the most credulous can believe. If the evangelical theory of Christian morals be not more *rational* than that of *Ecce Homo*, reason had better descend from her throne and abandon all attempt to solve the problems of human thought.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCLUSION.



AND now, with a few parting words, we bid our theme, Farewell!

The chief thing we fear from criticism is, lest undue attention be given to the mere incidents of the discussion, instead of striking home at once to its innermost principle. That principle we here again record. In brief, it is simply that all true and saving faith in the Christian Atonement is intuitional. More at large, it is as follows, viz. :— Humanity is constituted so as to IMPLICATE us not only in our own personal moral acts, but also in the moral acts of each other; and *in consequence thereof*, conscience, in its higher exercises extends beyond the sphere of our individual conduct, and is sympathetically affected by

others' conduct. The extension of these principles to their utmost degree unfolds the true theory of the sufferings of Christ for our guilt, and of our participation in His perfect righteousness. By virtue of His UNION with us in *moral consciousness*, a clear avenue is opened between the Christ consciousness and the human consciousness, and we detect, in their inter-communion, the accord of the atoning act and the believing act. Our Saviour, conscious of our sins, has taken them upon Himself and atoned for them; we, conscious of His righteousness, appear with it in the sight of God and are justified: our sins are His sins; His righteousness, our righteousness: *and this union of Christ and His people in moral consciousness, is the CENTRAL IDEA OF THE GOSPEL.\**

But let it be distinctly understood, that

\* *St. Augustine* held the doctrine of Imputation in what *Faber* designates "its highest form," insisting "upon the reality of a reciprocating or interchanging imputation, so that our sins become the sins of Christ, whilst conversely Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness."—*Faber's Prim. Doc. of Just.* p. 197.

in thus recording the result of our investigation, we are not attempting to *account for* the facts here recorded, or to explain *why* man's relation to God is what we affirm it to be. The astronomer, in ascribing certain celestial phenomena to gravitation, does not account for them, he merely states a principle of generalisation—a law evolved from the phenomena themselves, by the application of which, facts before apparently unconnected become reducible to a system. The metaphenomenal is far beyond our reach. As well might you ask us to explain, *why* God made man? as to ask, *why* the relations between heaven and earth are such as we find them to be? The utmost we can do is to evolve from ascertained phenomena the principle of their generalisation, and *this is all* we have attempted to do. Aught beyond would involve the hazards of an Icarian flight.

To prevent the possibility of mistake as to the character of the intuition contended for, we here again record our conviction, that the intuitions of *our moral nature* are the *only* religious intuitions spontaneized,

and that the intellectual intuitions, mis-called faith, which some have proposed to elevate into original principles of belief, are excluded by the law of parsimony, as being wholly unnecessary to account for what our ordinary moral intuitions, responding to external facts, sufficiently account for already.

Respecting these also it may be observed, that it is of the nature of our moral intuitions to be dependent for their accuracy and vigour upon the extent of our moral culture; so that, practically, faith in its inception is the product of contrition, and, in its permanence and increase, the product of a holy life. Hence, the true and only way to acquire and retain a peace-giving faith in the Christian sacrifice is to seek it in the path of prayer and obedience, the state of mind thus induced requiring nothing more than the objective suggestion of the phenomenal fact as the *occasion* of our spontaneously putting forth a believing activity. So Wordsworth wisely taught, although, like other lessons of wisdom, his words are not always received in their true intent:—

“The victory is most sure  
For him, who, *seeking faith by virtue*, strives  
To yield entire submission to the law  
Of conscience; conscience revered and obeyed,  
As God’s most intimate presence in the soul,  
And His most perfect image in the world.”

Of all subjects of human investigation, none is so greatly glorious as the world’s atonement. It is the bow in the cloud inviting our thoughts from the storms of earth by its peerless beauty—heaven’s angelic messenger winging radiance through the gloom. If we have paused awhile in our earthly wanderings to gaze at the cross, far from our hearts have been the feelings of those who wagged their heads in sceptic raillery; very different have been the sentiments prompting us to speculate upon the mysteries of “that hour” from those of unbelief. We indulge the persuasion that, old as the theme is, it is still fraught with novelty; and that, if darkness continue to shroud its glory, it is a darkness which will yield to free rational investigation, and prove transient as the three hours’ gloom which, when Calvary bore the Crucified, gathered round the sacred hill.

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It is one of the noblest attributes of truth to court inquiry. Because the doctrine of the Christian sacrifice is the most sublime of truths, we cannot act more contrariwise to its genius than to attempt to repress the spirit which, in a matter of such concernment, is prone to demand the most searching investigation. In the name, then, of the magnitude of our subject, we ask free discussion ; for certain it is that the deeper our thinkings the richer will be the discovered treasure, the wider our explorations the more magnificent will be the world's mine of sacred wealth. Such is the unity of truth, that a new discovery in one direction can scarcely fail to excite and facilitate inquiry in another. Every pulsation in the heart of truth throbs to the utmost extremity of finite being ; every pebble cast upon its waters spreads its circling undulations to the most distant shores of time. The wondrous advancement that has been made within the last few years in almost every branch of human knowledge, demands from theology that, if it would still ride triumphant upon the stream of thought, it must keep pace with

its rapid progress. Professional caution is proverbially a *pseudo* caution: and hence every science under professional control requires the occasional admixture of the controversial and lay elements, to irritate it to healthy activity.

One thing, at all events, is quite clear—that just in proportion as science has extended its domain and acquired system and certainty, it has become more simple, and better adapted to the popular mind: and similar is the result we should augur, from an application to our theology of a more exact philosophy. However prolix the process of discovery, truth when discovered is always, like the pure diamond, eminently simple; and, in its simplicity, exquisitely beautiful. Its chaste brilliance is that of heaven's own gem. Simplicity is energy: while mystery is powerless, simple truth is omnipotent. Truth strung with nature and revelation, philosophy and theology, science and the Bible, flings from its immortal lyre enrapturing harmony; and the more perfect the harmony and simplicity of truth, the more thrilling its power. Simplify the truth,

and you sharpen the edge of its weapon ; divest it of obscurity, and you add mass and velocity to its projectile force.

The hypothesis we have sought to establish commends itself, we venture to think, as peculiarly characterised by the attributes of simplicity and power. In those few words, "God is, in Christ, righteously reconciled : believe it, and accept Him as your loving Father"—is concentrated the entire Gospel. To proclaim this with befitting zeal, using every lawful expedient to arouse the conscience and command attention, is the Church's sole mission. All beside is mere fringe and garniture. Once let this truth arrest the heart, whether won by a rude and rugged eloquence, searching logic, or a devout choral service, by the stern tones of rebuke or the seductions of holy song, that moment becomes the turning-point in a man's history. The first thought heavenward opens out before us the whole vista of the Christian salvation : the first step is across the Rubicon, on the path of glory, to the city of God. The earliest dawn of that moral state which indicates that conscience is

now the sovereign mistress of the soul, introduces us into relations of sympathy with the Christ-mind, and *from that moment* His righteousness only awaits our appropriation to become *consciously* ours.

How to gain access to the conscience so as to introduce the evangelical lever, becomes thus, it will be seen, a mighty problem. Till the conscience is aroused, the Gospel is inoperative—it is offering food to a gorged appetite, water to one who feels no thirst. If aroused and there is at hand no Gospel, the conscience seeks refuge in unhealthy stimulants and drowns its anxiety in scepticism, superstition, or the excitement of worldly pleasure. Hence the importance of accompanying every appeal to the conscience with an offered Christ, neither concealing His presence under an overdone ritualism nor under a weak common-place sermonism. Thanks are due for the revival and defence of a word whereof our most evangelical religionists were beginning to be ashamed: whether it be called enthusiasm, or the inspiration of the Holy One, or a baptism of fire, its presence is essential to the

effectiveness of utterances offering Christ. The method of conversion by human instrumentality is not by high and dry intellectualism, but through the communion of moral natures—conscience in attrition with conscience. Flashed from the one earnest conscience, truth arouses the careless consciences of the many, partly by direct mental sympathy, partly through the suggestiveness there is in the very aspect of ardent zeal, whence steals a force of persuasion far beyond skilful logic or the most thrilling eloquence of words, but chiefly by virtue of the adapted power which, according to our natural constitution, exists in moral truth thus coming living from the lips to compel a response.

“As the ample moon

In the deep stillness of a summer even  
 Rising behind a thick and lofty grove,  
 Burns like an unconsuming fire of light  
 In the green trees, and, kindling on all sides  
 Their leafy umbrage, turns the dusky veil  
 Into a substance glorious as her own,

· · · · ·  
 · · · · · *like power abides*  
*In man's celestial spirit.”*

The trust that a secret influence may ac-

company preaching which has in it no perceptible *moral force*, is only another form of the equally fetish notion that a miraculous energy permeates unintelligible symbolic rites; both errors exerting a most baneful effect, by lulling to sleep ministerial energy and by weakening the conviction which cannot be too strongly held, that in religious, as in commercial and scientific progress, there is a strict relation between labour and success.

Then, wherever there is simplicity and its associated power there will be union. What! is the union of Christendom within the range of possibility, or is it not the dream of a fanatical fancy? Only in one way is it possible. Until hearts are united in the common experience of the cross's peace-giving power, we shall look for union in vain. The cry for union is heard everywhere; but what is the kind of union contemplated? Is it to be an artificial union, a union which has nothing to sustain it but the compacts of councils and synods? In all such artificial unions there is the germ of oppression, and, consequently, the foe of social progress.

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Union to be free, permanent, and progressive, must be natural, the spontaneous efflux of products variable as the vernal verdure but bursting like it spontaneously from a common soil.

Let the principle of intuitional faith once permeate our theology, and it will but need to be worked carefully out to its legitimate conclusions, in order to annihilate polemic strife. Unite Christians, if only in the same degree in which men of science are united; let them recognise a central idea expanding outwards, instead of beginning at divers points of the circumference discursively to reason inwards; assimilate their difference of opinion and interchanges of thought to those common with the enquirers into other branches of human knowledge—and theology would cease to be, what it has been too long, a system of distasteful and repulsive logomachy, it would have intellectual as well as spiritual attractions and, assuming its rightful supremacy among the sciences, would concentrate the mental and moral energies of the churches in promoting a method of Divine teaching adapted alike for

the pulpit and the lecture-room, the cathedral and the conventicle, the select assembly of the *elite* and the promiscuous multitude ; a method which, sweeping aside petty party strifes, would proffer a theme whereon the most profound in thought and eloquent in diction, might worthily dilate, either in unadorned simplicity or (if it unfold to the conscience what it exposes to the eye), amid the pomp of ritual, or wherewith the natural oratory that can attract and hold the attention of a street crowd might, without encountering the supercilious scowl of pedantic respectability, wield a power like that which the Master wielded of old.

To revive this bond of sympathy with "the common people," as when Jesus taught and they "heard Him gladly," is universally admitted to be the want of the age. Not a subservient homage through alms-giving, but a frank interchange of thought, and thorough moral intercommunion between the spiritual life of the Church and the untaught masses which crowd the lanes and alleys of our populous towns. Among these Christian-

ity has won, in all ages, its most splendid triumphs. Under its chisel, the hardest granite has assumed forms of surpassing beauty. To its voice, nature's sternest rocks oft give back the sweetest echoes. The lessons of a merely expedient or prudential morality, decked though they be with the tinsel of the philanthropic novelist, are as child's play, compared with the manly power of a well-applied Gospel—but the feeble tinklings of the sheep bell, lost in the mighty sound that sends forth from the cathedral tower, far away o'er the surrounding landscape, the summons to prayer.

Quite possible is it to exaggerate probable results ; yet we cannot forbear thinking that were the hypothesis we have contended for generally accepted and acted on, much of the prejudice against the Church's teaching, as a clumsy system of creeds and artifices, would give way ; and the religion of the Cross

“ Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves  
Of tempest,”

would be hailed more generally by earth's

storm-tost mariners as a true light, guiding to safety. A harmony would become established between faith and obedience, between theology and philosophy, between conscience and the Bible, such as to enable us boldly to rest the popular reception of revealed truth on a self-evident, and therefore impregnable, basis; and with their spiritual artillery thus planted, the Church's embattled legions attacking with greater confidence, would publish the Gospel as the natural, the only efficient, and *therefore* the Divinely appointed instrument for arousing to action man's moral nature, and for carrying to the homes and hearths of the most degraded of our population, the fairest forms of virtue and the brightest hopes of heaven.

THE END.







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