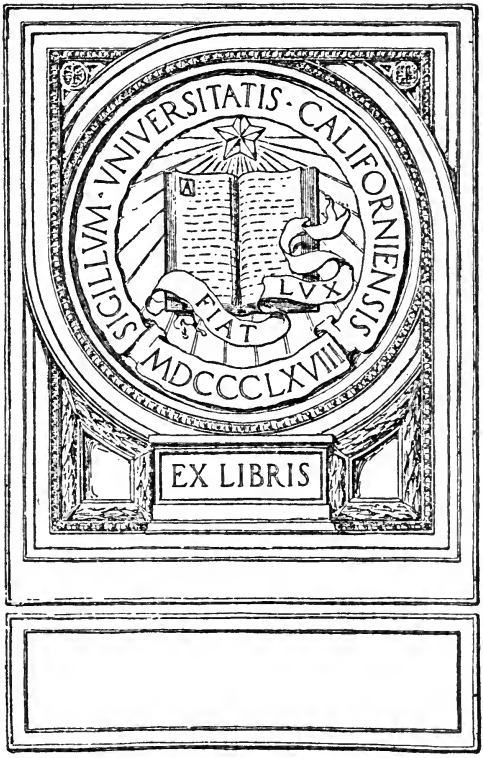
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# TWO RESPONSIVE SERVICES

IN THE FORM AND SPIRIT OF

## The Litany and the Ten Commandments

FOR USE IN FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND CHURCHES

WITH

## A COMMENTARY

BY

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LONDON
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# INTRODUCTION

## I.—Religious Services in the Family

The phrase "for use in families, schools and churches," which appears upon the title-page of this book, is perhaps deserving of a moment's attention.

In view of the spread of Modernism and the New Theology among the laity of every denomination in Christendom, I cannot think my hope wholly without foundation that here and there some Congregational, Unitarian, Baptist, or other religious body will welcome the responsive services here published, and, in using them, will find them a refreshing alternative to some of their present forms.

Schools also are becoming more and more undenominational, in the widest sense of the term. Modern educators are consequently in need of rites of ethical

instruction and inspiration which will neither deny nor affirm the truth of any of the historic schemes of theology. Many a headmaster will recognise in the responsive services contained in this book a special fitness for use at the morning assembly of the school, even if he may not find it expedient immediately to adopt them.

There are tens of thousands of families where the mother and father are not members of any church, or only nominally so. They agree with the principles of Ethical Societies, but they give no definite instruction in religion and morals to their own children. They cannot conscientiously use in the family circle prayers which are evidently addressed to a supernatural agency. They find the old commandments wholly distasteful, and the Litany altogether impossible. But they might use regularly both the Litany and the Commandments in the form which I here publish. I would advise, if parents are in doubt as to the wisdom of such a course, that they make the experiment several times tentatively. Let the mother or father lead in the service, and the rest of the family speak the responses.

Only when ethical idealism, which is already widespread among adults, begins to act as a cohesive force in the family circle, will it show its full power and beneficence as a redemptive energy. And only after the religion of our day, brought into accord with science and humanism, begins to act as a spiritually unifying principle in home life, can it be expected to draw groups of families together in public worship of the moral ideal and in religious devotion to the cause of the good in the world.

I should like further to suggest to parents that no other custom of the home could more powerfully and vividly impress children with a sense of the higher meaning and unity of family life than the weekly use by the members of a household of the services here given.

The essential power of a religious service cannot be realised when it is merely read by a private individual once to himself in the solitude of his own study. The difference in effect between such a reading of such a service and its use by a social group is akin to that which subsists between the private reading of a play of Shakespeare and the actual

performance of it, or the witnessing of its production upon a stage. I cannot here go into this question minutely, but I may refer the reader to my treatment of it in a chapter on "The Psychology of Ritual" in a volume entitled *National Idealism and a State Church*. Here I need only say that the actual production, so to speak, of a religious ritual penetrates much deeper into the spirit than the performance of an ethical drama.

The full edifying power, moreover, of a responsive service cannot be felt at the first participation in it. Let us suppose that in a family, the two services which I here recommend are repeated each once a week for a year. That is only fifty-two times in one year. Let us suppose, however, that they are so repeated for eight years. We may assume that children from the age of eight would begin to appreciate the ideas and sentiments embodied in them, and that for eight years they would progressively, through the weekly repetition, increase in insight, and in emotional and volitional commitment to the ideal principles and purposes set forth. But, to be still more specific, think of a boy's joining, once a

week for eight years, with a social group of the persons who are most revered by him, in finishing the sentence which begins, "That the time may soon come when men will respect all women," by uttering in unison with the others the words, "By our faith in humanity we hope." It is scarcely conceivable that the boy's respect for women would not have become enlightened and deepened by such a practice. Every day of his adolescent life would have brought home to him the significance of the social principle involved. Or think of a boy's responding once a week with the other members of the family into which he was born, to the words "To have mercy upon all men, and to be kind to every sentient creature," by saying, "Is our high privilege." Again, how could a youth be better prepared for manifesting the larger humanity which modern life requires of us than by joining with others once a week for years in declaring that it is "our high task and privilege" "to show our love for the humanity in every culprit, by visiting upon him no other suffering than is needed to reform him and to protect society"? Contrast with this the home

influence of another boy where the parents do not express these ideas, either in this or in any equivalent form.

If it be said that the Litany was not written for children, we must hasten to answer that perhaps the sun and the stars, being so big and incomprehensible, were not made for the eyes and souls of children. It takes a whole lifetime to appreciate the height and depth of the moral law, as it does those of the cosmic order of the physical world. But that is the very reason for beginning young.

What is more, children may be encouraged to ask questions, and the answers of the parents may, in true pedagogical method, be an occasion for the presentation of just so much truth as the child will not distort or be repelled by. There is nothing embarrassing or perplexing in any request for explanation that a child may make. I found, for instance, that when, in reading the Bible with my little daughters of ten and eleven years of age, we came across the word "adultery," they asked what that meant. I replied that a man commits adultery when he is not faithful and true to his wife. In the marriage ceremony, I explained, a man

makes a vow that he will be faithful and true to the woman he is about to marry, and that he will always live with her and be good to her; and a woman, when she marries, pledges herself in the same way. But if they break their vow, they commit adultery. I found that this answer was quite satisfying. Children will learn as they grow older that what their parents said to them in this manner was perfectly true; as acquaintance with life matures, their understanding will merely become more specific. In the same way, parents could meet every question which the Ten Words of the Moral Life here given might prompt the children to ask. Take the clause which I have appended to the seventh commandment: "Neither shalt thou so much as desire anyone whom for the sake of the common life thou shouldst not have." A child might ask what that meant; but his curiosity would be entirely satisfied if the parent replied, "Sometimes one person may like another very much, and want to live with him; yet it may not be right to do so. This commandment says that when it is one's duty not to live with another, then one ought not even to desire to. For if one

desires to, one might be tempted to do so."

I would recommend to parents to have each week at least two such meetings of the family as I have suggested—one for the Ten Words of the Moral Life and the other for the Universal Litany.

The Litany, in its original wording, is the most universally humane, tender, loving, and purifying document ever written; and I cannot but feel that the qualities and powers of the original are not lost in the version which I have dared to make. As regards the Jewish Decalogue, I am of the opinion that it is the most majestic, strenuous and strengthening utterance that ever emanated from a suffering and struggling nation's heart.

## II.—Services in Ethical Societies

The West London Ethical Society, through its Committee, recently decided that into its ceremony for the receiving of new members should be incorporated the following Responsive Service, entitled "Ten Words of the Moral Life." It also determined that at the first Wednesday evening meeting of each month a place should be found for the "Universal Litany." Its decisions, which were made after a number of prolonged conferences, were based upon various reasons. But before specifying these, it may be well to state that the Responsive Services, in their present form, are not the outcome of a sudden or recent thought. More than ten years ago a number of my colleagues in the Ethical Movement assisted me in the attempt to reformulate the Ten Commandments, so as to make them a

more adequate expression of the social conscience of our day. Several years preceding that, however, I had issued a pamphlet on the Ten Commandments, setting forth the principles which have regulated the adaptation here presented. Then, in 1908, in my volume entitled *National Idealism and the Book of Common Prayer*, I devoted many pages to an analysis of the Decalogue and the Litany, and suggested certain restatements. Since that time, some dozen members of our Societies have sympathetically encouraged me, and offered helpful suggestions, as regards both phrase and thought.

But what were the reasons which prompted the Committee of the West London Ethical Society to adopt Responsive Services as an experiment? I advisedly use the qualification "as an experiment"; for, happily, in the present stage of development of the Ethical Movement, we regard no detail in the conduct of our religious meetings as a finality. No phrase, no order of procedure, has become to us inviolable. Happily, also, with us, the sense of the need of experimentation in forms of

religious expression has grown deeper during the last decade. We have an increasing sense that, if we continue our experiments, we may, by good luck or inspiration of genius, in the course of a generation or more, devise some few really notable expressions of ethical sentiment which may prove worthy of adoption even by the older Churches.

The chief reasons which led our Committee to sanction the two services here published were somewhat as follows :—

The items in the procedure which has been in use during the last five or six years at our three meetings a week consist of an organ voluntary, opening words by the leader of the meeting, a canticle sung by the choir and congregation, a declaration of ethical principles by the leader, two minutes of silent meditation, an anthem by the choir, a selection of literature read by the leader, a hymn by the congregation, a discourse, an organ voluntary, during which the collection is taken, an anthem by the choir, an invitation to membership by the leader of the meeting, a hymn by the congregation, and then closing words by the leader. I have intentionally repeated the words " by the leader," in

order to emphasise the general passivity of our congregation, as compared with the active part taken by the official representative of the Society. The congregation's part consists almost exclusively of singing the one canticle and the two hymns, and rising and standing during these. For the remainder, their attitude is that of receptivity. It certainly has not been sufficiently one of active participation. It has happened also that the canticles and hymns have perhaps, of all the items in our service, been least expressive of the real message of the Ethical Movement. The question therefore arose, How is it possible for the whole congregation to participate more actively? One way was to introduce a responsive service. If in answer to some specific statement of the leader of the meeting all the members present took part in an assent, they would, as it were, overtly and publicly pledge themselves to the sentiment contained in the statement. If, as in the case of the Litany, the very words of the leader, before they reached the close of a sentence, were caught up by the congregation and brought to a finish, there would be a still greater

commitment and participation on the part of all present.

Now, in an ethical society, the old-fashioned relation of pastor to flock, of priest to people, does not hold. The leader, at best, is but the spokesman or representative of the entire membership. There is more occasion, therefore, among us than in an ordinary old-fashioned Church for introducing something besides chanting and hymn-singing as a means of expression on the part of the entire congregation.

We have, moreover, a deepening sense of the common mind and will, the one heart, that beats throughout our fellowship. That we then should introduce into our service statements which it had been agreed that the leader of the meeting should utter, and the congregation respond to, would give a sense not only of our democratic equality but also of fraternity and solidarity.

A second reason, although of a negative nature, why the West London Ethical Society decided to experiment in the direction of adopting responsive services, was because it felt there was no danger of our ever falling into the monotonous

uniformity of repetition prevalent in the Anglican Church. We all, to a man, hate an unimaginative and paralysing frequency of iteration of the same phrases. How remote we are from such a danger, however, is shown by the fact that we have decided to use the Litany here published only ten times among the 129 regular services annually held at the Ethical Church. Ten times a year to repeat the same thing, if it be a good thing, is not much—none too often. A man repeats oftener than that a poem that he loves, because he loves it, and because he knows psychologically that there must not be too long an interval, or its beauty and meaning will fade from his mind.

As regards the other service, since we welcome new members only three times a year, we shall use it only so often; and since its repetition takes somewhat less than four minutes, it means that in any 365 days we shall devote only some twelve minutes to the repetition of a form which we believe to present the main outlines of the common duties of man. We feel no occasion for endless reiteration of the same phrases, as there is no limit to what

can be done in the way of embodying definite sentiments in fresh forms.

Unless our creative energy ebbs, moreover, we shall be able even to invent quite other kinds of congregational expression than that of the responsive service. I have long entertained the belief, based upon experience in ethical classes for children, that speaking in unison by a whole congregation may be developed far more than in mere responses, such as those in the Litany, the Ten Commandments, and the alternate saying of the Psalms as practised in some churches. It would be possible for all the members of a society to say together not only the responses but the whole body of the Litany and the Commandments. Beautiful and expressive of the unity of spirit of a group, where each is both leader and led, is the saying in unison, although without any hint of intonation or chanting, of the principles upon which all agree; for in a society of intelligent persons accustomed to meet often, the inflection of voice, the cadence, the pauses, may harmoniously blend. Just as song in common reinforces the emotion that sways all alike, so does clearly articulate

and sincere speech in unison give to each present a vivid sense of the unified vision and will which characterise the group as a whole, and constitute its sanity and strength.

But there was another and a deeper reason for our adoption of these revised forms of the Litany and the Decalogue. Whoever studies the statements of principles and aims published by our society, will observe, if he notes closely, that, while we speak of the good life, we do not directly specify its contents. Our statements of principles and aims are purely formal, to use the technical ethical expression. Two persons may include, under the term "goodness," two diametrically opposite views of what ought to be done. Our principles do not sufficiently express our convictions concerning the inviolability of life, of property, of monogamy, of the State as opposed to anarchy, of truth, and of what we consider the supreme object of religious reverence. But anyone reading the two responsive services here published will discover that they definitely commit a society using them to a multitude of special duties and virtues.

In specifying these, however, no new departure in the attitude of Ethical Societies has been made. It is only that that which was formerly implicit is now rendered explicit. There has always been among us an almost universal consensus of opinion as to the contents of the moral life. It went without saying that we did not believe in murder, or adultery, or theft, or lying. Our very use of Sunday as the day for two religious services shows that we recognise the ethical significance of the established day of rest. The adoption, therefore, of the Ten Commandments in the form here presented indicates an advance in expression only. Every point of moral judgment contained in these two responsive services has often been presented in our statements of ethical principles, in our hymns, canticles, and invitations to membership, and in the opening and closing words which we have used.

I am voicing the sentiment of our members in general when I say that it is necessary for an ethical society to make it unequivocal that it stands not only for the formal categories of duty, virtue, responsibility, justice, and

the like, but also for a definite body of very particular duties. It is true that we revere the idea of duty, but, far more, that we stand for particular and urgent trends of social service and of self-control. Now, these aspects of the moral life are clearly and comprehensively set forth in the two services here published.

# A
# UNIVERSAL
# LITANY

## A UNIVERSAL LITANY*

THAT we have been delivered from untold evils, by the self-sacrifice, courage and wisdom of countless men and women,

*We gratefully acknowledge.*

That we may be spared to render like service in our day; and that we may escape the censure of the just,

*Is the deep yearning of our hearts.*

That our offences and the offences of our forefathers may not be remembered by anyone against us; nor vengeance of our sins taken,

*We ask for mercy from our fellow-men.*

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of malicious persons and liars; from the wrath of the good, and from unrelenting condemnation,

*We call upon all men to save us.*

* The Responses, which are italicised, may be sung.

From all prejudice of class, sect and nationality; from all pride, vainglory and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred and malice, and all uncharitableness,

*We call upon all men to save us.*

From drunkenness, gluttony and lust, and all other deadly sin; from the deceits of vanity and appetite, and the plots of tempters and mischief-makers,

*We call upon all men to save us.*

From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, and from unprepared-for death,

*Man by his foresight and mercy shall save us.*

From all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion; from all false doctrine, heresy and schism; from hardness of heart and contempt for good counsel and duty,

*Man by his wisdom and mercy shall save us.*

In all time of our wealth; in all time of our tribulation; in every day of judgment, and in the hour of death,

*Give us humility, peace and strength.*

That all nations may work together in unity, peace and concord for the relief of man's estate,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That those to whom the will of the people has entrusted the government of our land may deal justly with all nations,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That our King may be strengthened and kept in devotion to the nation's welfare; and that his heart may be ruled by love of justice and by respect for the liberty of all men,

*We confidently hope.*

That our Prime Minister; the members of the Cabinet and Houses of Parliament; and all persons having authority in our Civil Service and our Army and Navy, may be endued with the spirit of humanity, wisdom and humility,

*We entreat them to open their hearts.*

That all magistrates and interpreters of the law may execute justice and maintain truth,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That all physicians and other guardians of our bodily and mental life, by their knowledge, skill and devotion, may ensure to our people the blessings of health,

*We confidently hope.*

That all who labour with their hands; all controllers of industry, finance, and the public Press; and all thinkers and discoverers, artists and inventors, may find their motive in the doing of good, and not in personal gain,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

To help in hastening the time when all preventable poverty, untimely mortality and excessive toil shall have ceased; and when all avoidable causes of injury to life and health, to happiness and character shall have been removed,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

That in our time the Christian, Jewish, and Mohammedan Churches, and all the other religious denominations in the world, may conform their sacraments, doctrines and governments to the dictates of human reason, science and conscience,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That all ministers of religion, and all teachers, may devoutly study the laws of the universe in which we live; and that both by word and deed they may set forth the principles of humanity and justice,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That all our people may increase in readiness to investigate truth, both new and old, and receive it with pure affection; so that they may bring forth the fruits of wisdom,

*We beseech them to heed our entreaty.*

That the time may soon come when all men and women will understand and revere the responsibilities of fatherhood and motherhood,

*By our faith in mankind we hope.*

That all fathers and mothers may mercifully give heed to the individual nature and limitations of each child born to them,

*In our love for mankind we plead.*

That the time may soon come when all husbands and wives will together live for the common good; and not each for

themselves; nor merely for each other; nor for their children only,

*By our faith in mankind we hope.*

That the time may soon come when men will respect all women; and when women will be accorded every opportunity of citizenship, yet will not the less revere their womanhood,

*By our faith in mankind we hope.*

That in our hearts we may love and dread Righteousness, and diligently live after its commandments,

*We reverently desire.*

To lead into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To strengthen such as do stand; comfort and help the weak-hearted; raise up them that fall; and finally beat down all malice and falsehood under our feet,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To succour, help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To minister to the needs of all women with child, and all sick persons and young children,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To show our love for the humanity in every culprit, by visiting upon him no other suffering than is needed to reform him and to protect society,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To love and provide for fatherless and motherless children ; and tenderly minister to all that are desolate and oppressed,

*Is our high task and privilege.*

To have mercy upon all men ; and to be kind to every sentient creature,

*Is our high privilege.*

To forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and to turn their hearts,

*Is our high privilege.*

That we may feel true repentance ; forgive one another's sins, negligences and ignorances ; and be endued with power to amend our lives according to the principles of unselfish love,

*Is the deep yearning of our hearts.*

So be it now and for ever.

# TEN WORDS
# OF
# THE MORAL LIFE

## TEN WORDS OF THE MORAL LIFE*

EACH one of us hears the voice of Duty saying within him :

I am the supreme judge of men and of gods ; thou shalt exalt nothing above me.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not make a god of pleasure, wealth or station ; neither shalt thou worship any being, even though infinite in power, save for its human wisdom and goodness ; for I, the indwelling Power of Righteousness, visit the sins of the fathers, through transmission of life and by the words and acts of kinsmen and neighbours, upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and in all these ways show mercy unto thousands in

* The Responses, which are italicised, may be sung.

them that love me and keep my commandments.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not use words that signify any form of righteousness or unrighteousness, either cynically or in levity; for they who so use such words weaken the common reverence for Righteousness.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Remember to keep sacred to meditation upon the higher destinies of man the one day in seven set apart by the community to that end. Six days shalt thou give to labour and recreation; but the seventh is the sabbath of Ideal Humanity.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest preserve to thyself and transmit to thy children the high tradition of the world, thus securing length of days unto thy family and thy nation.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt do no murder; neither shalt thou inflict any injury, either of mind or body, upon thyself or any other sentient creature, except the good of all shall require it.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not commit adultery; neither shalt thou so much as desire any-one whom, for the sake of the common life, thou shouldst not have.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not steal; neither shalt thou take or keep anything which the general welfare requires that others should have.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour; neither shalt thou misrepresent or withhold from him any fact or any conviction of thine own which it were best for the social life that he should know.

*May no one lead us into temptation; but all men help us to keep this law.*

Thou shalt not covet anything which another owns ; neither shalt thou so much as desire to get or keep anything which it were best for the community that others should possess.

*May no one lead us into temptation ; but all men help us to keep this law. May we also lead none into temptation, but help all to keep these laws. Forgive us our trespasses against you, all ye our fellow-men, as we forgive you your trespasses against us ; and strengthen us, that we may show forth these laws not only with our lips but in our lives.*

So be it now and for ever.

# COMMENTARY

## COMMENTARY

### I.—Literary Adaptation

Many persons of delicate and refined taste in literature profess an abhorrence of anything like an adaptation to modern requirements of a venerable document like the Decalogue or the Litany. In order to express their horror of it, they speak of such an adaptation as a parody. But these sensitive and devout worshippers of the old betray a lamentable literary and historic ignorance. The Decalogue itself, as found in Deuteronomy, is nothing more and nothing less than an adaptation of an earlier Decalogue, and that also arose in a similar way. Even the Lord's Prayer is a parody—if parody be synonymous with adaptation.

Again, if every new version of an old liturgical form is to be thus branded, how

shall the Anglican Prayer Book escape censure? What was it but a modification of Roman Catholic forms? And, to pass to so-called secular literature, many of the plays of Shakespeare are simply reconstructions by him of old dramatic materials. Likewise Chaucer and Milton, and not a few of the other greatest masters of English poetry and prose, have so plainly appropriated materials already at hand that, if they have not been condemned as parodists, it is only because the still worse epithet of plagiarist has been applied to them.

The real question is not as to the right of adapting materials long in use, but only as to whether, in any particular case, the adaptation is an improvement.

In the case of religious documents, however, the test as to whether they be improvements cannot be simply a literary one. The main question is: Does the adaptation serve the needs of our time better than the old form? Does it quicken conscience more effectually? Does it direct more unerringly to the path of duty and give a wider reach to selfless sympathy?

It must further be remembered that he who dares to adapt existing liturgical forms is probably quite aware that he risks the censure of parody. He would not offer his adaptation to the public if he did not believe that it would prove a better instrument of moral edification.

It must also be borne in mind that even a perfect adaptation of an old liturgy, made in order to bring it up-to-date, would be liable, the first time it was heard, to sound grotesque, to appear out of taste, and possibly, to some, even comic. In such a case, therefore, critics who value their ultimate reputation would do well not to trust their first impression. They should wait until they have grown familiar with the new form. Our sense of the comic, when it is aroused by what is to us a novelty, is no proof that a thing is really grotesque. The ludicrous, more than any other emotion, depends upon the subjective mood of the moment. How often the dress of a foreigner, the first time it is seen, strikes us as preposterous and absurd, and yet, after six months of familiarity, is seen to be full of aesthetic charm! Many a time, an

anecdote affects us as highly amusing until some occurrence in our own intimate experience changes our emotional attitude towards it into one of tragic horror. Even a funeral might, without offence, be made the subject of anecdotal wit; and then some bereavement of our own might cause the very thought of the anecdote to seem like sacrilege. And how often do we find that some religious custom or practice, which at first excited our contempt or resentment, upon closer acquaintance with its meaning or effects, begins to win our heart's deference and even reverence! Many of the more respectable classes of society at first thus resented the tactics of the Salvation Army. But when the results of its work became appreciated, not a few of the very persons who had scoffed, now encouraged and supported the new methods. Let those, then, who are moved to resent my adaptations of the Decalogue and the Litany suspend judgment for a time.

It should be realised that true piety towards documents like the Decalogue and Litany consists in so modifying them upon occasion that they shall

continue for ever to serve the human need that first produced them. To let them become obsolete, simply because their letter is no longer applicable to modern circumstances and knowledge, is to show a lack of reverence for them. To value them simply because of their historical or archaeological quaintness is to degrade them; it allows them to become the mere toys of pedants and intellectual idlers. Real love of them requires that they be brought continually up to date. Their spirit demands the renewing of the mere letter.

And now a word may not be out of place addressed to those who on the very opposite ground find adaptations distasteful. More than a few who have wholly broken connection with the historic Church count it a desecration of their present religious sentiments that anyone should attempt to express these in any of the phrases and literary forms associated with supernaturalistic beliefs. They say, "For the new wine, new wine-skins." To which I would retort, "Are you so certain that all your wine *is* new?" And, what is still more to the point, is it true that

any of the phrases or literary structures which I have drawn from the Decalogue and the Litany are perished wine-skins ? If they be, then I stand rightly under condemnation. But, again I ask, is it ethical---is it rational---to allow one's subjective repulsion to the old supernaturalistic beliefs to extend itself so as to include any purely human and natural means of expression which in great part always did serve a purely human and natural end ?

When ethical societies first began to hold meetings on Sundays, many who were extreme opponents of supernaturalism in religion declared that we were only imitating, and that, to show our difference, we should meet only on weekdays. Similar protests were made when we introduced congregational singing, and especially if we used any tune which had been sung in the churches. But such opposition to adaptation needs only to be stated to be refuted. Only those who deliberately take their stand on the ground of blind feeling and prejudice can consistently justify their hatred of anything which in any

way reminds them of the long, long ages of human idealism which elapsed before man began to discriminate between the natural and the supernatural, or thought of rejecting the theory that events sometimes happen without any natural cause.

Persons who in their love of novelty find adaptation repellent, perhaps betray, more than they realise, their own lack of drill in history. A disciplined historic sense delights in seeing the old living on and supporting and reinforcing the new. Perhaps also there is a deficiency of training in statesmanship among those innovators in religion who would discard any human device simply because it had been invented or appropriated by supernaturalists. If humanistic idealism is ever to supplant supernaturalism in religion, it will be by stressing the continuity of history, not by breaking with man's higher emotional associations.

## II.—The Letter, the Form, and the Spirit

I invite the reader, while following this defence of the foregoing adaptations of the Decalogue and the Litany, to bear in mind the distinction not only between letter and spirit, but also between letter and form. No one will deny that the spirit of a document may continue to be as living and urgent as ever, although the letter may be dead. But few realise that to confine the spirit within the dead letter is to render it speechless; they seem not to see that deadness of letter means nothing else than that the words no longer achieve their original purpose. And still fewer students of literature realise that the form as well as the spirit may be alive after the letter is dead. For the form is not the same as the letter. The dialogue, for instance, is a literary form; the epic another; so also the classic drama and

the sonnet. Although all the material hitherto cast into these forms had become no longer applicable to modern life, yet the same spirit that devised the structures might, when discarding the specific contents of the old forms, pour new meanings into the selfsame moulds.

Now, in my opinion, the responsive form of religious service, and what I should call the commandment form, embodying injunctions aphoristically, possess an indestructible utility and beauty.

My contention, therefore, is that anyone wishing to do an educational service in our time like that of the men who of old first constructed and afterwards appropriated for fresh material the Decalogue and Litany, would inevitably preserve these old structures. Nor would a desire so to do emanate merely from a feeling of respect for that which is antique or venerable from age. It might arise wholly from insight into the demands of our day. Even were the old forms quite forgotten, the old spirit, alive to-day, might create them anew.

It is clear, then, that to use the old forms in the old spirit, and fill them with

modern instances, is not to imitate nor to borrow them. One cannot be said to borrow what is already one's own; and the enduring forms are surely the rightful patrimony of all who need them. On the other hand, to discard them is to waste one's heritage; while to invent substitutes that are not so good, for mere innovation's sake, is to dissipate one's energy and to betray a decline in taste and character.

The commandment form was not the product of transient and accidental causes in the life of the Jewish tribe, but was due to vital relationships in it, which still subsist to-day in every nation of the world. It has not become obsolete with the discarding of supernatural sanctions to morality. The community still dictates to the individual. And because conscience itself is, and always will be, clothed with the authority of an ideal community, men will always hear commandments issuing from within their own souls.

We may say that it is the general will of humanity that decrees the commandments; but it must be clearly borne in

mind that this general will is not to be mistaken for positive public opinion. It is not the actual community that utters the imperative which we hear in conscience; it is that ideal community which lurks at the heart of customs and laws, and has become the inward motive of our own free moral agency.

The responsive form of religious service can never become obsolete, because it grows out of the relation between the idealistic trend in history, which is the unifying will of society, and the subjective wills of the individuals who acknowledge the social good as constituting the higher law of their own nature. In responsive services the leader speaks as the representative of the community in its totality; the various members of the congregation answer in their individual capacities. It is quite true that of old the leader of a religious community represented, or was believed to represent, the supernatural. But with the falling away of belief in the supernaturalistic interpretation of the priest, there is no weakening of the communal significance of the father or mother in the family, or

of the teacher in the school, or the preacher in the religious community. The chosen representative of any group of human beings becomes, by the very fact that he is chosen, differentiated from any private individual. The latter can speak only for himself; the former is vested with a peculiar communal office.

It will be noted that in my responses to the commandments have been incorporated one phrase from the Lord's Prayer and another from a response to the Commandments in the Anglican Communion Service. "May no one lead us into temptation" is a deliberate adaptation of the phrase "Lead us not into temptation." How slight the verbal change, and yet what a world-deep revolution in thought! It indicates the advance from inert reliance (if the customary interpretation be accepted) upon a superhuman deliverer to direct and active trust in human beings, that they will protect us —even from ourselves. Likewise the transition from "Incline our hearts to keep this law" to "May all men help us to keep this law" seems slight indeed; yet it marks the whole difference between

the prostration characteristic of the old superhumanism and the interdependence among equals which distinguishes democratic and scientific humanism.

The form of response embodied in the Litany is peculiar. The implied relation of the leader to the congregation is not simply that of the communal will to the individual purpose of each member, or merely the relation of a spokesman to those who follow. The taking-up by the congregation of each sentence which the leader has begun, and the finishing of it in unison, indicates that as the meaning becomes clear to the congregation, their own conviction and intensity of feeling will not allow them to wait in silence to the end; so they, as it were, take the words out of their spokesman's mouth and bring the sentence to its period. Such a form is appropriate and beautiful in the case of any intense sentiment, or of an unwonted depth of faith or sympathy. The mood of the Church Litany is of this order; and the adaptation which I here submit leaves intact the fundamental emotions involved and expressed in it.

I have said that both the form and the

spirit of the Litany are imperishable, and that the perishing of the letter has been due to changes in the circumstances of modern life and in our conception of the relation of the universe to our ideals. We do not believe that supplications to an intelligent Will behind the forces of outward nature cause such a Will to interrupt the uniformity in the sequences of our experience. The scientifically disciplined imagination is offended by the notion that any appeal to a superhuman intelligence will cause that intelligence to intervene directly on our behalf by providing us with wealth, health, or anything else. But all modern experience proves to us that supplications to the Human Will, in a thousand ways that we had not before realised, and to an extent hitherto undreamt of, do occasion changes in the course of nature which would not have taken place except for the intervention of man's scientific prevision and humane purpose.

Yet it is not in man only that we trust. When we cease from all expectation of miracles, we rest in a fuller, deeper, and more abiding confidence and thankfulness

upon the regularities and inevitabilities of outward Nature, upon her unity, her uniformity, her accessibility, and her readiness to yield up her secrets when we pursue certain methods of investigation and experiment. Modern science gives us good reason for reposing in nature as if the everlasting arms of an infinite mother were underneath us, without once requiring us to presuppose that nature is animated by a self-conscious, intelligent volition, over and above that of the wills of men and the Will of Man.

## III.—The Litany and Modern Life

With our eyes upon those circumstances of our life which did not exist when the Litany was written, and with our minds disciplined by the modern conception of the relation of the universe to the actualisation of our ideals, it is possible for us in no mere patchwork manner to modify the Litany, and to make of it a supple and powerful instrument of ethical religion.

As one instance of my own attempt to appropriate to the needs of our day the form and spirit of the Litany, compare the adaptation here given with that portion of the original where it says---

> That it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons and young children, and to

show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives,

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

We notice, in the first place, that the specific reference to the dangers of travel by land and by water harks back to a far past age. There is no longer any special danger to travellers from thieves and murderers; and it is maintained by statisticians that a man is as safe from accident to-day, when travelling by rail or by steamship, as when lying in his own bed. There are exceptional dangers, to be sure, in motoring and aeroplaning, but there is no necessity, as yet, constraining us to such enterprises. The phrase, accordingly, "to preserve all that travel by land or by water" may very well fall away.

As regards the supplication on behalf of "all women labouring of child," our conscience and solicitude are now by no means narrowed to the immediate crisis of childbirth. Humane effort aims at guarding all expectant mothers, especially of the poorer classes, from insufficient and unsuitable nourishment,

from overwork, and from worry and dread. A supplication, therefore, that the needs of all women with child shall be administered to, would be an expression of the real aspiration and active energy of modern effort. And if to the case of such women was added that of all sick persons and young children, the whole supplication would express a real social need and purpose.

But it is incongruous with our modern sense of personal human responsibility that we should beseech an outside Lord to fulfil our desire that women with child, all sick persons and young children, should be properly provided for. What we feel is that it is our high task and privilege to do this thing ourselves. Even if a superhuman deity might do it, we should not wish him to usurp our right of human service. Instead of the old supplication, then, let the Church of the future say—

> To minister to the needs of all women with child, all sick persons and young children,
>
> *Is our high task and privilege.*

In the whole of the old Litany there

is no more beautiful and tenderly pathetic supplication than that contained in the clause in which God is asked to show his pity upon all prisoners and captives. But the modern sense of the fitness of things is not that the Creator should show his, but that we should show *our* pity; and for a century and a half there has been a growing determination to do so. More than this, we now know in what kind of treatment our pity should manifest itself. We have made the moral discovery that no other suffering should be inflicted upon criminals or delinquents of any kind than is necessary to reform and to deter. Nor does the word "pity" exactly embody the new sentiment towards the criminal. On the part of good men and women there is a deep sense of identity with wrongdoers—a sense more intimate, mystical, humble, and self-accusing than pity. According to Sir John Seeley, the finest human love is not merely love for the race, nor precisely love for the individual; it is rather love for the humanity in the individual man. This profound interpretation of the modern philanthropic spirit might

well be allowed expression in the Litany of the Church of the future. For these reasons, I have so changed the clause as to make it read—

> To show our love for the humanity in every culprit, by visiting upon him no other suffering than is needed to reform him and to protect society,
>
> *Is our high task and privilege.*

Now, before passing to another instance of justifiable adaptation, let me ask: Are the emendations just cited a parody, a burlesque? Are they comic, are they out of taste? Is the only alternative to perpetuating the dead letter of the old clause to discard the clause altogether?

As a second instance of occasion for amending the Litany, take the part where it says—

> That it may please thee to rule and govern thy holy Church universal in the right way,
>
> *We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

And with this let us connect the supplication—

That it may please thee to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons with true knowledge and understanding of thy Word,

*We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.*

As we look out upon modern circumstance, and as we remember that the function of the Church always was, or ought to have been, to act as the ethical school or university of all the people of a nation, we have a sense that these supplications of the old Litany have to-day become so obsolete as to be grotesque. The condition of the Church to-day, and of the moral education of the masses of the people in our awakening democracy, is such that the first of these two supplications ought to ask that the churches shall reform themselves; for until they do, there is no such thing as a holy Church universal, except in idea and ideal. The Church to-day is a travesty of what it ought to be. There should, therefore, be a prayer in the Litany asking the Churches to bring their sacraments, doctrines, and methods of government into conformity with the spirit of social democracy and

with the results of humane science and critical philosophy.

It is, moreover, absurdly provincial, now that East and West are linked up into intercommunication of all kinds, that we should think only of the Church of Christendom as the teacher of social righteousness, who herself needs to be taught. Our supplication must embrace Mohammedanism, Judaism, and all the religious cults of the East. Yet there is as great occasion for us to plead for the reform of Christianity as for the reform of any of the great religions of the world. They are all essentially obsolete in the conception of the universe which they presuppose, and in the circumstances of social life and duty which they imply as existing. They are all pre-democratic and pre-scientific. What more crushing indictment could be brought against them ?

And what could be more naïve than to supplicate that it may please God to illuminate all bishops, priests, and deacons —as if to-day these were the only or the most important preachers of social righteousness ! Every teacher of any

subject in any school is, even by profession, and must be, a teacher of righteousness; and, by virtue of the spiritual discipline of the school, a priest of the Most High. All fathers and mothers, by virtue of their responsibilities, are in the same position. So is every journalist or other writer who has a share in moulding the moral judgments of men and creating public opinion. All these, besides the Church's officials, should be embraced in this clause of the Litany.

And concerning what do they all need to be illuminated? The Litany says, "With knowledge and understanding of thy Word"—undoubtedly meaning thereby the Bible, or (if not that) the personality of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible and in the Church. Without denying our need of illumination concerning these subjects, we have a profound sense of the impossibility of being contented with so narrow an enlightenment. Teachers of religion are in dire need of knowledge and understanding of the laws of the universe —including man as well as nature—in which we live, and of which both the Bible and Jesus Christ himself are but parts.

If we concede that knowledge and understanding of "thy Word" would prove an adequate illumination, it must be because we mean by the expression "thy Word" the universal principles of the right life. It is these that all leaders of thought and life must set forth in their preaching and living. But when such is our meaning, we must adopt the language of universal ethics, which is acceptable to persons of every speculative creed, as well as to all who have rejected the old dogmas and traditions.

Let us likewise test the supplication, that it may please God to give to all his people increase of grace to hear meekly his Word. The lack of readiness to hear meekly the message of the Bible is a very small part of a far more radical and universal shortcoming. The Bible is not the only revelation that it is important for the people to hear meekly; and hearing is not the first duty in this direction. There must be an increase of willingness to investigate at first hand all the fundamental experiences and obligations of life. Our Litany should pointedly enjoin a readiness to in-

vestigate truth; and, because truths not sanctified by age and not yet glorified by social prestige are especially liable to be disregarded, it ought plainly to insist upon the duty of welcoming new truths as well as those long ago discovered and established.

In the prayers for the *personnel* of the Government of England, the pre-eminence given in the Litany to the Royal Family is quite disproportionate, now that the sovereign will of the people has assumed the power of veto formerly vested in the monarch. In nothing is the Litany more out of date than in its omission of all reference to the sovereign will of the people. The whole nation is now ultimately responsible for the existence and political character of the Kingship, of the House of Lords, and of the Commons. The Anglican Litany approximately fitted the age in which it was formulated; but for the Church of England to refuse to revise it now is to cast discredit upon the Church and weaken the national character.

In justification of other adaptations and insertions which I have made, but

which need not here be specified, let me remind the reader that whole continents of hope and duty have arisen above the sea-level of ancient ethics and religion in the 300 years since the Anglican Litany was constructed. There is, consequently, no hint in it of the new respect for woman on the part of the finer sort of men, and not a word that would tend to spread this respect throughout all classes of society, until it should become a universal mark of modern manhood. Nor is there any hint in the Litany of the new self-respect of women, or of the social revolution which that self-respect is initiating.

The Litany, moreover, contains no word of protest against the prevalence of the selfishness of husbands towards wives and of wives towards husbands; yet there is no more prolific source of personal misery on earth than this. Nor is a word of protest uttered against that *grand egoïsme à deux* in which husband and wife live to each other alone, vitiating their own love, and depriving society of their combined power to redeem the world.

Nor does even a syllable of the old Litany brand the widely prevalent, anti-

social family exclusiveness, according to which the mother and father live and work almost wholly for the education and social advancement of their own offspring, exploiting all social opportunities, but never once heeding the claims of mankind at large.

One searches in vain also, throughout the letter of the Litany, for any recognition of the responsibilities, so lightly assumed by most men and women, of paternity and maternity. There are modern humanists who have maintained that these responsibilities should be set forth by all teachers and preachers of religion as constituting the most sacred duty in human life. Let us, then, so revise the Litany that it shall become an instrument for the education of all men and women in this respect.

Modern child-study has sprung out of a finer sense of our obligations towards the young than ever was entertained by parent or priest in former ages. Without even knowing it, parents in earlier times sinned against humanity, by treating children as if their nature was the same as that of adults, and by overlooking the

peculiar individuality of each child. It is time that the organised religions of modern nations should so help to educate fathers and mothers that the home shall no longer be—as it so often has been in the past—either a torture-chamber or a lethal chamber for the intellect and the soul of the child.

One of the sublimest spiritual and ethical trends of our age consists in the effort to abolish poverty and reduce infant mortality to the possible minimum; to shorten the hours of work, to redistribute the wealth produced, and to reorganise its production, in such a way that there shall no longer exist any such thing as degrading poverty. Now, if we were to judge from the prayers at present sanctioned by the Church of England, we should be forced to conclude that this sublime enterprise is a thing apart from the work and function of a Church. Yet surely the Anglican priesthood would have the wit, if only it had the will, so to revise the Litany as to bring the Church into quickening contact with this noble and ennobling enterprise.

## IV.—The Scope and Character of the Commandments

In the life of nations there appears comparatively early a sixfold discrimination or classification of social duties. Almost at the beginning of history, the tribe, or at least the chiefs who attempted to organise and perpetuate the existence and prosperity of tribes, recognised the inviolability of life, property, the family, the State, the truth, and that which was believed to deserve the supreme reverence of the human heart. The Ten Commandments include all these six inviolabilities.

The first four commandments are generally called religious. They declare the inviolability of something which man is to focus his reverent attention upon, as of supreme worth, or as the source of

the supreme value in life. They declare the inviolability, so to speak, of God.

But these first four are political as well as religious commandments. For the God whose worship they enjoin is a tribal deity. Duty to him involves duty to the State.

The third and the ninth commandment, enjoining that no one shall bear false witness, and that no one shall take the name of the Lord in vain, deal with duties of speech. They condemn falsehood and insincerity. It is true that they are very specific, and their range is narrow; but they undoubtedly contain implicitly an affirmation of the inviolability of truth and truthfulness.

The fifth and the seventh commandment, and one clause of the tenth, by enjoining respect for parents and for wedlock, proclaim the inviolability of marriage, the family, and the home.

The eighth and a part of the tenth commandment assert the sacredness of property.

The sixth declares the inviolability of life.

The Ten Commandments are sometimes spoken of as if they betrayed just such a

lack of moral experience and insight as one might expect among a semi-barbarous people. But it would not be easy to find any duty, occasioned by the most highly developed and specialised life of modern times, which could not be included under duties concerning life, property, the family, the truth, the State, and God.

Wholly new duties, for instance, concerning truth, have been revealed in the last few centuries. None of the Ten Commandments imply that it is our duty to investigate the laws of the universe; none of them imply that intellectual honesty is a duty. But these new obligations have been discovered by that same spirit which forbade false witness and the using of sacred names in vain.

The modern principle of the liberty of the individual does not seem to be secured in any way by any one of the injunctions of the old Decalogue. And yet, when the various commandments are universalised, as in the responsive service which I here submit, it becomes evident that the object of every one of them is to secure the liberty, the rightful scope and claim of the individual. The "Thou

shalt nots" are all attempts to protect the individual against encroachment. The commandments imply that each man has a right to life, property, domestic and civic security, to truth, and to that which he most reveres—that is, to his God. The purpose of the community, in issuing the commandments to each of its members, evidently is to preserve the integrity not only of itself as a whole, but of each individual.

The contrast between the Old and the New Testament is sometimes alleged to consist in a tendency of the Old to lay down prohibitions, and of the New to prescribe positive duties. Those who thus interpret the Bible tell us that the Old says "Thou shalt not"; the New, "Thou shalt." The burden of the Old is, "Thou shalt abstain from injuring thy neighbour"; that of the New, "Thou shalt be actively beneficent." But such a distinction will be seen upon close examination not to be well founded. It is true that only two of the commandments —those concerning the keeping of the sabbath day holy and the rendering of honour to parents—are positive in form. But

all the prohibitions presuppose the active existence of an adequate positive energy in each individual to look out for his own life, his own domestic felicity, his own property, his own country, his own access to truth and to his God, if only he be not prevented by the unjust aggression of others.

If it be true that in modern times there is a great call upon us to be individually our brothers' keepers, in the sense of looking after their life, their property, their domestic security and access to the truth and to God, yet we must remember that the implied lack of self-assertion on the part of the individual is, if the individual be normally endowed by nature, always to be traced to social, political, and religious oppression. Somebody—perhaps the whole community—has done what ought not to have been done, or else there would not be this tremendous modern need of widespread beneficence. If, moreover, the prohibitions of the Decalogue be universalised, so as to cover all cases of wrong-doing, and not simply the extreme ones overtly specified in the old commandments, it will be found that they,

if carried out, would render unnecessary the kind of individual beneficence enjoined in the New Testament, in the sublime ethical allegory of the Last Judgment.

Furthermore, we are very apt to forget that the commandments by the community in the interest of all were originally directed against the classes in power. The fourth commandment plainly implies that the persons it addresses possess servants, and are not themselves manual labourers. It is especially to the possessing classes also that any revised form of the commandments to-day must speak. Such injunctions must, of course, be directed against all the enemies of society; but not chiefly against those victims of our unjust social order who, in despair and bewilderment, are tempted to commit anti-social acts for the preservation of themselves or for the gaining of necessities for their families. The supreme utterance of the social conscience of our day is a prohibition against individual aggression. Witness the attempt of modern democratic legislation to win back to the community as a whole the primal sources of wealth in land and capital.

What is it but a "Thou shalt not" to the landlord and capitalist, rather than a summons to personal beneficence?

In order fully to appreciate the negative form of commandment, we must also remember that ethics always has been and always will be a science of limits. It is a science of the limits beyond which individual instincts, desires, and ambitions shall not dare to pass. And if it were not so, the outlook of humanity would be melancholy indeed. If the primal instincts themselves were deficient rather than in excess, it is not easy to believe that any injunction by the community, commanding people positively to assist others, could ever bring the deficient up to the mark of real energy, insight, and enjoyment. Nature, in the process of evolution, has brought about —and it is hard to conceive how it could have been otherwise—the survival of those whose instincts are strong. The positive energies of appetite and instinct are in excess, unless restrained by the will of the community; and, therefore, it must inevitably be that ethics is chiefly and normally the science of the limits

beyond which no man shall dare to move in his realisation of himself. From the point of view of the man who is oppressed and denied scope for human activity, the prohibition that checks another's encroachment upon him seems by no means a mere negation. The "Thou shalt not," spoken to the aggressor and the oppressor, means "Now at last I may" to the man who has been oppressed.

Christian ethics is sometimes defended to the disparagement of Jewish, on the ground that the latter is external, while the former is inward. The latter enjoins, it is said, only the washing of the outside of the cup; the former, of the inside first. It is asserted that the ancient Jews cared only that the external deed should be correct and in conformity with the positive law, but that the revelation of Christianity consisted in the new sense of the importance of the inward disposition of the heart, and of the character whence issue overt acts. If, however, we study the Ten Commandments with this distinction clearly in mind, we find that on the whole they deal far more with

the inward life than they do with outward conduct.

"Thou shalt have none other gods before me" is supremely an injunction for the regulation of the attitude of the soul of the individual towards that which ought to be worshipped. "Thou shalt not make graven images" is a direct attack upon externality and materialism in religion, as opposed to the worship of an invisible, universal principle. How can a religion, the God of which can never even be figured in outward form without degradation, be counted a religion of the external act alone? It is also impossible to think of the commandment against the taking of the name of the Lord in vain as concerned only with outward speech, rather than with the disposition which manifests itself in words. If language is only a system of symbols, and if the symbols concern an invisible and spiritual God, how can this injunction allow that a man shall take the *thought* of his God in vain, provided only that he do not take the name in vain? Likewise, if ever a commandment was directed towards the inner life, it is that concerning

the keeping of the sabbath day holy. The prophetic use of the sabbath had little else as its goal than to check the externalism and materialism of the Jewish tribe. It was an attempt to turn the attention of this materialistic people to the fundamental principles of self-control which secure immortality to a nation. In the same way, the injunction of piety towards father and mother is surely a law for the inner life; an attitude of receptivity and obedience is enjoined, and there is nothing to imply that the spirit of the commandment could be fulfilled by an external submission without loyalty, devotion, and humility on the part of children.

It is true that the commandments "Thou shalt not murder," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and "Thou shalt not steal," deal wholly with outward acts. But it must be remembered that the tenth commandment contains distinctly inward supplements to the injunctions against adultery and theft. If ever there was an injunction commanding one to cleanse the inside of the cup, it is: "Thou shalt not desire

thy neighbour's wife." Here we have both inward and outward: "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife," and "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Also in regard to stealing, the Decalogue declares not only "Thou shalt not steal," but "Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbour's." In all the New Testament, what is more inward, or more fully reveals a sense that out of the abundance of the heart proceedeth the wrong deed or the right? Accordingly, we see that of these three commandments, "Thou shalt not murder," "Thou shalt not commit adultery," and "Thou shalt not steal," only the first is not traced back to its well-spring in the human heart. But it must be remembered that nearly always, even in modern society, the motive to murder is due either to desire of one's neighbour's wife or to covetousness of his property. If, therefore, the two inward injunctions of the tenth commandment be followed, there is no liability that murders will be committed; for only a fanatic or lunatic takes human life without any motive which may be traced ultimately either to lust or covetousness.

In the same way, it will be found that there is no occasion for introducing a commandment of an inward nature to correspond to that which declares, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," for here again it will be found that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the man who swears falsely does so because he either desires the wife of another or covets property which legally belongs to someone else. Even the lies of political and religious leaders will be found to be animated not by love of their doctrine or their country, but by a secret motive of lust or greed.

The inwardness which this analysis discloses in the Decalogue will doubtless come to many as a revelation, for altogether the Old Testament has been disparaged in the interest of the New. But whoever perceives the inwardness of the Jewish Decalogue will feel the truth of the assertion often made by writers such as Matthew Arnold, but seldom backed by specific proofs—that the ancient Jewish prophets had an ethic passion and insight as far above that of surrounding nations as were the

aesthetic delight and vision of the Greeks above that of their neighbours. The Decalogue compels us to assign to the Jews supremacy in ethics, just as the Parthenon and Plato's *Republic* constrain us to acknowledge the ascendency of the Greeks in architecture and philosophy.

As to the number and sequence of the various commandments, it will be noticed that these are based not in logic but in psychology. For instance, if we count as the first, "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," the second is not a totally different one, but rather a specific application. "Thou shalt not make any graven image" was directed against the special violation of the commandment "Thou shalt have none other gods before me," which required pre-eminent attention. Logically, it is involved in the first; but it was the one instance of the violation of the first which required that a powerful searchlight should be focussed upon it. Again, as we have just noticed, the tenth commandment is not wholly distinct from the seventh and the eighth, but only supplements them by prohibiting those inward dispositions which lead to

adultery and theft. It is quite clear, however, that the ancient editor of the Decalogue refused to subsume these two inward prohibitions under the seventh and eighth commandments, knowing that, unless emphasised, they would be in danger of neglect.

As to the number of the commandments, there is nothing in the nature of the moral law that could give any unique sanctity to the number ten. No doubt that was chosen for several reasons. One was that every human being has ten fingers, and therefore that number always stands out pre-eminently in the mind of the illiterate. There was also no occasion for formulating nine or eleven. Besides, more might tend to burden the memory, and fewer might not have given scope enough for the due emphasis of pre-eminent points. For these reasons, probably, it would also seem advisable to anyone who wished to-day to revise the Decalogue to subsume under some one of the existing ten any new injunction, rather than add other co-ordinate ones. The moral duties of man do not go on subdividing themselves for ever and ever

into co-ordinate commandments. They are duties respecting life, property, family, country, truth, and God.

It must, moreover, be remembered that even amongst the Jewish prophets it was never supposed that the Decalogue was to be the sole and only instrument for moral edification. It was only one of a hundred various instrumentalities; it was and is an excellent one; it was devised by the same genius that converted the astrological into the ethical sabbath.

## V.—The Ten Words of the Moral Life

*First Word.*—There is an admirable passage in Professor Clifford's writings where he speaks of Conscience as the supreme judge of men and of gods. Such an ascription of supremacy, authority, and dignity to our moral judgment can be gainsaid by no one who thinks. Nor can anyone deny the grave need there is in our times of asserting unequivocally the primacy of conscience. It is an assertion that can scarcely be made too often. If made in strong and simple phrase, the reiteration can never become mechanical. The primacy of conscience is so vitally significant a truth that the repetition of it each day in a man's life would only deepen its hold upon his heart and will, with the effect that whenever some incident in life focussed his attention

upon it, its meaning would become luminous and full of energy for good.

If one imagines conscience as speaking —or, if not conscience, morality as a factor in life—one could not do better than borrow Professor Clifford's phrase, and make the first commandment read: "I am the supreme judge of men and of gods." But, that the full implication of this principle may not be lost, it should also be expressed in the form of an injunction. Duty, speaking authoritatively in the soul, or morality personified as issuing a commandment, would say, "Thou shalt exalt nothing above me."

The Old Testament commandment, "I am the Lord thy God: thou shalt have none other gods before me," may possibly not have meant to represent that Duty or Righteousness, as an active potency in human life, was speaking. But even if it did not, that would in no wise lessen the truth or the significance of the commandment at which I have arrived by making the very power inherent in the Right declare, "I am the supreme judge of men and of gods. Thou shalt exalt

nothing above me." Few will affirm that the writer of the old Decalogue meant no such thing at all. Most people will concede that "the Lord thy God" into whose mouth the Judaic prophets put the commandment was indeed righteousness, or its indwelling power; but they will contend that it was also something more—the creative and eternal spirit of the universe. Nevertheless, they will admit that the distinguishing quality ascribed to the deity by the prophets was his concern for social righteousness in the hearts and deeds of men, and that our conscience and the power inherent in good deeds are supreme manifestations of God. They will accordingly concede that the same spirit does animate the formula I propose as animated the first commandment of old. And if this be so, few of them would protest against the use for the new of a form suggested by that of the old.

Nor have I any anxiety but that discriminating readers will see that to set up the indwelling power of righteousness as the supreme judge of men and of gods does not in the least involve a denial of

the existence of an infinite personal Creator.

*Second Word.*—In order to realise what a burning issue of ancient Judaism was dealt with in its second commandment, one needs only to read an account of the worship of graven images which prevailed in Egypt, and to remember that the Jews themselves had for generations lived surrounded by this superstitious idolatry. The growing consciousness and experience of the Hebrew race gradually came to realise the waste of emotion and attention involved in the practice of image-worship. But the second commandment achieved its work so thoroughly that we, the inheritors of the Jewish prophecy, are free from this tendency, innate in the undisciplined mind of the child and the savage, to deify symbols of the invisible principles of nature or of the mind. The letter, accordingly, of the second commandment is completely obsolete to-day. But there is as great danger as there was of old that the cohesive principle of human society, the power inherent in the right deed and the good will, may be replaced in the hearts of men by other claimants to their atten-

tion. Even in Roman Catholic countries, where there is still the use of images, nevertheless the real competitors to-day for the first place in the souls of men are not graven images, but pleasure, wealth, and station. If there be any one object that the social reformers of our time have found it necessary to set before them, it is the breaking down of the love of pleasure, of the craving for worldly possessions, and of the mad chase for outward social distinction and prestige. If one wanted to formulate into a single injunction the chief meaning of the effort to check the forces of degeneration and disintegration that threaten modern nations, one could not do better than to say, "Thou shalt not make a god of pleasure, wealth, or station." This is a warning that should be constantly reiterated in the ears of the worldly, the indifferent, and the aggressively selfish.

But even in circles where there is a deep love of righteousness, and a strong reverence for the God of the Jews or the Redeemer of the Christian dispensation, and although pleasure, wealth and station may have been renounced, there prevails a

morally degrading tendency to bow before the mere power manifested in the physical universe and in man himself. It is not so much the goodness as the infinite might of their deity that excites their awe. Among those, however, who share the deeper insight of our epoch, there is a growing sense that goodness, in a being however weak, or goodness in and of itself, as a mere idea and principle—as a thing that ought to exist and prevail —is just as worthy of homage as goodness when already actualised in a mighty potentate on earth or in an infinite Creator of the universe. It is not the power of a Creator, but his goodness, as goodness, that should receive homage. At least not power in general, but only that which is actually advancing the cause of the good in the world, deserves or should receive reverence. The power, moreover, in righteousness that makes for blessedness should receive the whole devotion of the heart. An overt commandment to this effect would help to lead the masses of the people in a democratic age away from their idolatry of mere power. For this reason it would

be well if every boy and girl, throughout every democratic nation in the world, should learn by heart, from the fifth year on, "Neither shalt thou worship any being, even though infinite in power, save for its human wisdom and goodness."

But even reverence for goodness must be rational, and able to render an account of itself. The reason why goodness, as an active power, ought to be worshipped is because it, and it alone, visits the sins of the fathers, through transmission of life and by the words and acts of kinsmen and neighbours, upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate it, and in all these ways shows mercy unto thousands in them that love it and keep its commandments. It must be remembered that righteousness in itself is a mere abstraction---that it does not exist except in specific, concrete tendencies of deed and disposition. The moral deterioration and the misery of the children who are born of sinners, or are influenced by them, spring forth directly as natural and social consequences of the sins of men and women.

In modern language, and from the

point of view of sociology, we may say that all causes of character and happiness group themselves into two main classes. One we call the law of heredity ; the other we call the law of environment. The latter embraces " the words and acts of kinsmen and neighbours " as influences upon the child. The former embraces the innate tendencies of the stock or family of the father and mother, which determine the capacities and limitations of the offspring of any union. Heredity is " the transmission of life." The investigations of Mendel and Galton as to the relative proportions of the child's being which come from the immediate parents, from the grandparents and remoter ancestors, justify us, in any literary formula, in neglecting that portion of transmitted characteristics which comes to children from ancestors remoter than the great-grandparents or the great-great-grandparents. It is, therefore, for all practical intents, adequate to speak of the sins being visited upon the children " unto the third and fourth generation."

Only within the last two decades have writers upon the nature of the human mind

pointed out the immense significance of the focussing of attention as a factor in the building up of good or bad character. Psychologists lay stress upon the difference between voluntary and involuntary attention. The latter is the focussing of all the energies of the mind spontaneously upon some object which acts as a natural stimulus to some one of the forty or fifty innate dispositions of the human mind which are called instincts. These instincts, aroused by various stimuli, compete and clamour to enlist the whole mental energy in the service of themselves exclusively. Voluntary attention, however, is the focussing of the whole mind's interest and energy upon objects which do not minister directly to the elementary instincts in isolation, but rather to those organised dispositions of the mind which long individual and social experience have developed. The preservation of the individual person throughout a lifetime, and of his race for centuries, claims the attention—that is, the concentration of the whole mental energy—as against the allurements of objects that minister to the

separate primal instincts. The Decalogue was a device of religious teachers to focus the minds of the people upon those objects of the highest importance to humanity which are liable to be neglected; and the first two commandments specifically enjoin it as a duty upon every individual by systematic effort, against the seductions of antagonistic objects, to attend to what must be the supreme concern of each man through a lifetime, and of his race for all time.

*Third Word.*—The old third commandment has no longer any significance. There was a tendency in ancient Jewish society to use the most sacred word treasured by the community as a magical potency in the practice of sorcery. This practice it was necessary for the patriotic statesman to condemn. Also there was a tendency on the part of false witnesses before judges not to shrink from calling upon their God to curse them if their testimony were false. The patriotic statesman viewed with alarm the scepticism or cynicism of witnesses who had no fear of or belief in the national God.

In our day, except among a few de-

generate intellectuals, there is no belief in sorcery or magic, and, so far as I am aware, even among degenerates there is no tendency to use names to summon occult forces. There is also no great reason why modern patriotic statesmen should view as a national menace the oaths uttered in courts of law by witnesses who do not believe in the deity upon whom they call; for there is certainly no more tendency among avowed atheists, in taking the customary oaths, to bear false witness than there is among conventional believers in the established religions.

But a very definite and great cause of moral disintegration in our day is to be found in the way in which all sorts of personal and social wrongdoings are often spoken of—either in levity, for jest, or cynically and in the bitterness of contempt for all efforts at the restraint of powerful instincts. Obscenity is only one form of this evil. There is no analogous term to describe flippant or cynical talk in regard to intemperance, drunkenness, theft, and murder; but such talk is most flagrant and most dangerous to national character. There is also a tendency in certain social

sets to ridicule in speech all the virtues, until the very names purity, self-control, mercy, humanity, and justice fall into dishonour. In such sets, scarcely anyone dares to give expression to his love of right or his regret at anyone's shortcomings. There are circles of highly intellectual and leisured society in England where, in speech, even to recognise the distinction between right and wrong is considered a mark of inexperience and lack of independent reflection. Such a state of things has been engendered not so much by the actual wrongdoings of the men and women in these circles as by the habit of cynical and flippant speech. The tongue is a most mighty tool in the tearing down of a nation's high tradition.

There seems, therefore, to be great occasion for the formulation by modern educators of an injunction that will especially call the attention of every man and woman, and of every boy and girl, to the personal responsibility of each in keeping up the associations of terms that stand for deeds of social service, and in preserving the associations of alarm and dread, of contempt and loathing, for those

deeds that tend to the destruction of all that is sweet and sane in life. An injunction of this sort learned in childhood and repeated in the family circle, at school, and in the religious meeting, would deepen the consciousness of the fact that we are the trustees of language. It would direct the attention of the whole nation to the heinousness of the offence which George Eliot called "debasing the moral currency."

But there are special grounds why such an injunction should be accompanied by a statement of the reason which has led the educator to formulate it. The ordinary unthinking man or woman does not realise the consequences of cynical and flippant speech concerning right and wrong; or if he grasps the fact that deterioration of character and conduct often finds its origin in mere words, he has seldom analysed the law of cause and effect manifested in this sequence. He does not see that the cynical and flippant use of ethical nomenclature has for its immediate effect the weakening of the common reverence for righteousness. Yet it is out of the relaxation of

the moral fibre, thus induced, that all the remoter consequences arise.

If we compare the formula which I have suggested as meeting the requirements of our day, with the third commandment as it is found in the Jewish Decalogue, we notice that the letter of the old commandment has been entirely discarded; yet its spirit is preserved, and not only its spirit, but its form. In the name of their God centred all the holiest and finest associations of the Hebrew mind and character. But while the old formula does not cover all the duties embraced by the new one, the new contains by implication, for everyone who is still a believer in the old deity, the injunction "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."

*Fourth Word.*—The old-time Jews and Christians believed that the sabbath was set apart by the Creator of the universe, that man should pay homage to him on that day. The judgment of our own age is that the Jewish Government, acting in the interest of the nation, adopted a custom borrowed from other nations. We know that originally

the motive was, in part at least, to pay homage to the self-conscious intelligence of the tribal God, but that, unconsciously or consciously, it was at the same time one of social utility. In the interests of those human beings and beasts of burden that were always in danger of being overworked by their masters, the day became, or was at the start, one for rest. In the Deuteronomic version, the people were bidden to meditate upon the nation's history and outlook. At the advent of Christianity the Jewish sabbath had been widely adopted throughout the Roman Empire as a day of cessation from manual labour. All modern humanists recognise the keeping of one day in seven for rest as a most beneficent invention. The social conscience throughout the world to-day is becoming more and more convinced of the necessity that all human beings, so far as is practicable, should keep sacred to meditation upon the higher destinies of man the one day in seven set apart by the community to that end. It is highly probable that as the nations of the world become co-ordinated in ideal

interests, the Jewish sabbath or the Christian Sunday will be universally adopted; and one of the best means of bringing about such a result will be the inculcation of the sentiment as a social commandment. The use of this as a part of the aphoristic wisdom of the world will secure that there shall be no danger thereafter of anyone's imagining that the day was established by a superhuman intelligence. The formula must clearly assert that it was adopted by the community itself, in the interests of humanity.

Modern humane sentiment clearly requires that recreation shall not encroach upon the day set apart for meditation, but shall be given an adequate place throughout the six days. Both labour and recreation are incompatible with meditation upon universal principles and duties. Meditation of this order requires the relaxation of the will and the detachment of the heart from all the specific responsibilities and diversions of life. Intuitive insight comes in hours of relaxation even from every effort of thought. Only detachment affords an opportunity for the sub-conscious reservoir

of psychic life to rise into consciousness and be appropriated for social service.

But spiritual meditation requires not only that the individual himself shall for a period of hours become detached from the fret and the worry, the ambition and concentration of ordinary life; it is practically impossible, if all those about one are as busily pursuing recreation and labour as ever. It is easy to rest in the spirit only when everybody else is similarly resting. The detachment of those about us makes our own spontaneous. It well may be that it is impossible so to arrange society in modern life as to secure that every human being throughout the nation shall abstain wholly from manual or other specific labour, or from diversion, on the one day in seven set apart for meditation. But the practical implication of the sabbath is that no one shall do anything during those twenty-four hours except it contributes to the sum-total of relaxation from laborious effort.

*Fifth Word.*—No one who has had an opportunity to compare the domestic

life of the poorest Jewish with the poorest Gentile families in the slum districts of our modern cities can fail to experience a sense of the advantage which Jewish children possess, in that they inherit the Jewish tradition. This advantage is due to the fact that Judaism required the father to transmit to his children, by word of mouth, the great hygienic and ethical disciplines of the Mosaic polity.

Nor can anyone who compares the fortune of children of any race born into very poor and illiterate families with those in well-to-do and highly educated ones, fail to realise the dire misfortune of being excluded from the best traditions of a race. When parents are ignorant of the wisest sanitary practices and mental disciplines, the children are denied the privilege of receiving a thousand valuable influences at that period of life when they are most impressionable and responsive. The full significance of the responsibility of parents to keep in touch with " the high tradition of the world," in order that they may transmit it to their children by word of mouth, cannot be fully realised if we limit the meaning of the phrase simply to

its distinctively and more narrowly ethical connotation. That high tradition is a tradition in accuracy and mastery of speech, in courtesy and deference of demeanour, in science and art, in the knowledge and practice of a thousand regulations in the care of the body and of the mind, as well as in a strong sense of civic virtue and responsibility.

Deep social and historic insight was manifested by the Jewish statesmen who connected the honouring of parents with length of days in possession of their national territory. Reverence for ancestors engenders loyalty and devotion to every object associated with them. While it is not of itself an adequate force to cope with the aggression of mighty empires mad with territorial greed, yet, other things being equal, it can do much in securing possession. It brought the Jews back from Babylon; and there are men of no mean insight and political training to-day who believe that ultimately this honouring of parents will bring the great mass of the Jews themselves into possession of their ancestral territory, and re-establish them in

sovereignty. Certainly, as the sentiment of the fifth commandment spreads throughout the democracies of the modern world, deference for the Jew will, more and more, lead to a desire to restore to him not only political independence, but Zion itself. More and more will it be impossible for one nation to steal the territory of another. For such theft inflicts a deep spiritual deprivation.

*Sixth Word.*—The commandment "Thou shalt do no murder," attempts to fortify, from within a man's own soul, the powers which would stay the impulse to commit the extremest attack upon the life of another. But this commandment, taken literally, is not calculated, either logically or psychologically, to prevent those attacks upon bodily or mental life which are short of murder. An infinite amount of injury to the mental energy of others, for example, is inflicted by persons who would never so much as dream of committing murder; and since bodily and mental life are interdependent and inseparable, injury inflicted upon the mind is as much a desecration of life as injury inflicted upon the body. The causing of any pain, where

there is no social necessity for inflicting it, is a violation of the spirit which animates the injunction, "Thou shalt do no murder." But if it is not overtly condemned, the commandment will exercise scarcely any influence to the checking of it.

The Jewish form of this commandment also does not, either logically or psychologically, involve a condemnation of suicide. Much less does it include a censure of the thousand and one ways in which human beings inflict upon themselves mental and physical injury or pain, to no good to themselves or the community, or to individuals round about them. Undoubtedly by drunkenness, by excessive indulgence of various instincts, untold misery and weakness and shortening of life are induced. The injunction "Thou shalt do no murder" ought, both logically and psychologically, to be supplemented by another to the effect that no one should do anything to injure his own health, unless the true life of humanity requires such a deed as a sacrifice.

The humane conscience of our day

also demands that the life of lower animals shall not be taken unless the good of all requires it. Not only is the life of dumb brutes, other things being equal, to be counted inviolable, but their health, their freedom from pain, and their enjoyment and zest in living out the activities involved in their peculiar constitution, are to be held sacred. The sixth commandment, in the form into which I have cast it, condemns murder, suicide, the infliction of mental and physical injury or pain upon oneself, upon any other human being, and upon any dumb animal, unless adequate cause, before conscience, demands it.

There is a difference of opinion among modern humanists as to the exact motive at the heart of the new sense of the sacredness and rights of the lower animals. Some maintain that the reason why no injury should be inflicted upon them is because such a practice would redound to the injury of mankind, by increasing cruelty or insensitiveness to the sufferings of men. Others maintain that, irrespective of any such remote and indirect injuries

to mankind, the infliction of death and pain upon lower animals is wrong. Society, they maintain, as an ethical ideal, includes not simply human beings, but all sentient creatures whose existence and welfare are within man's control. This latter conception seems to me the only right, the only organic one. I have, therefore, in the expression "except the good of all shall require it," used in the word "all" a term which would include the lower animals as well as human beings. Everything else being equal, there is no difference morally between depriving any dumb creature of life and happiness, and depriving another human being of them. But the phrase "the good of all," while comprehensive, is not dogmatic in its implication upon this point.

*Seventh Word.*—As the union of man and woman is not, in the strict sense, a marriage unless it be legally sanctioned, the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is purely legal. On this account it is inadequate as a deterrent against the violation of many relations of sex which must be respected if a nation or tribe is to survive and increase in

mental and physical efficiency. Even the supplementary injunction of the tenth commandment is not adequate. Now that women are becoming free, there is equal occasion to declare, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's husband." Also there are many others besides neighbours' wives who should not be desired by married men. Nor is it enough that only married men and women should abstain from such emotional vagaries. Man or woman, married or unmarried, "Thou shalt not so much as desire anyone whom for the sake of the common life thou shouldst not have." But it is neither possible nor desirable that in a formula of instruction on this question there should be anything like a specification of all the offences which it is necessary to exclude. Nor is there any occasion for such a specification.

The "Thou shalt not desire thy neighbour's wife" of the tenth commandment of the Jewish Decalogue at least gives the hint towards constructing a universal rule. By immediately calling attention to the universal principle of inward purity, we should condemn all

possible violations of the outward law. We need, then, only to widen this clause of the tenth commandment.

Our seventh word, thus universalised and made subjective, addresses itself to women as well as to men, to the unmarried as well as the married. While it selects for overt condemnation only the one act which the old formula forbade, yet, by the universal nature of the inward commandment contained in the second clause, it contains implicitly a censure of all the other forms of sex irregularity. Thus are prohibited all that the law of a country condemns, and also the much more which is left to private honour.

*Eighth Word.*— The commandment "Thou shalt not steal" is, like the seventh, purely a legal one. To steal is to take property that legally belongs to another. But the social conscience of our day, in the spirit of this old commandment, makes a far more sweeping prohibition. The legal injunction "Thou shalt not steal" still holds; but many persons in modern life who do not steal are accounted by all of us to be as bad as thieves, and some as far worse. Under our laws it is

possible to get possession of wealth to the injury of thousands of individuals, of the life of the community and of the race. One may legally inherit property which the law ought never to permit one to inherit. The laws ought so to be changed that many forms of taking property would legally become theft. But this is not the whole case: the moral commandment concerning property, its accumulation and control by one person, is of infinitely wider scope and delicacy of application than anything which the laws of the State can ever formulate. It would be the peculiar function of a religious and ethical Decalogue, designed to be taught by parents and teachers and preachers, to supplement the civil and criminal law, and to create an enlightenment and a disposition among the people that would prevent not only violations of positive law, but also violations of those interests of individuals which no legislation could reach.

*Ninth Word.*—Two of the Jewish commandments were aimed against sins of the tongue: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," and "Thou

shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." The duties of speech, however, are not exhausted by such injunctions; and it is probable that the statesmen who formulated them only meant to strike against the worst violations of love of truth which the tongue could commit. It would, however, enormously advance modern communities if the educators of children, and of adults, could make every individual as clearly conscious of the claims of society upon kindness and truthfulness in speech as the Jews were made by their prophets concerning the heinousness of false witness in a court of justice.

Terribly prevalent is the omission to say what we ought to say. A thousand motives lead to it: cowardice, self-interest, vanity, conventional exclusiveness, and etiquette. Not only do we omit to communicate information concerning facts that would be of value to others; the progress of the world is still more retarded by our failure to communicate to others our own subjective convictions and surmises as to truth, our own principles and judgments. The democratic watchword

"freedom of speech" by no means adequately characterises the demands of the best men and women to-day as regards the ethics of the tongue. It is not so much the freedom as the duty of speech that must be insisted upon. Nor is mere abstention from telling lies concerning facts and concerning our private convictions by any means our whole duty. Our silences—although no one be deceived, because no one draws any inferences at all—may be as sinful as the most malicious lie. What is more, we need enlightenment as to the relation of the law of truth in words to the law of kindness in words. A man shall not escape condemnation simply because all he says is true to fact and to his inward conviction. He must make clear to his own conscience, or that of anyone who is to sit in judgment, that the communication of that truth or that conviction upon that special occasion was at all events not fraught with the infliction of unnecessary pain and discouragement. Was it best for the social life, or at least not detrimental to it, that he should have communicated that truth or that praise or blame?

*Tenth Word.*—In the Jewish Decalogue, the tenth commandment devotes many words to the specification of the various items of one's neighbour's property which one should not covet. In that age there may have been occasion for such specification; but to-day the commandment would be adequate if it simply read, "Thou shalt not covet anything which another owns." Such a condensation, moreover, leaves space for a supplementary injunction vitally akin to that against coveting one's neighbour's goods, and in our age requiring to be reiterated.

The prohibition against coveting that which others own is evidently directed towards persons who do not own something which they would like to possess. But a state of mind very akin to covetousness often exists among those who own in superabundance that which others need. They cling to that which they legally possess, although it is patent, to all whose minds are not blinded by self-interest, that it would be far better for the community and for humanity at large if there was no such accumulation of property in the hands of any one individual person. If

the most enlightened conscience of our day is saying anything at all, it is a word to the rich; and in substance it is this: "Thou shalt not so much as desire to get or keep anything which it were best for the community that others should possess." It is, no doubt, terribly wicked for those who possess no land and no capital to covet any fraction of the enormous wealth of millionaires; but it is far more to the interest of humanity that the subtle and disguised form of covetousness which fights to acquire or retain much more than it needs of this world's goods should be rooted out of the human breast.

## VI.—The Old Forms Universalised

In the foregoing pages I have more than once spoken of bringing the Decalogue and the Litany up to date. But the essence of the adaptations here made is not the modernising of the old. That, at most, is only incidental. My task has rather been to universalise both the Decalogue and the Litany, by removing all supernaturalistic elements and all Christo-centric tendencies, and by introducing supplementary features. I have removed the ancient Hebrew colouring from the Ten Commandments, and have replaced the Roman and mediaeval features of the Litany by worldwide and enduring lineaments. In its dead letter, the Litany is Christo-centric ; in the wording here suggested, it has its centre in the God-point of beneficent energy at the heart

of every human being. If the Litany, in the wording I propose, be no longer Christian, yet there is nothing anti-Christian in it; and it is non-Christian only in the sense that it includes more than Christianity, and is not tied to the transient elements of traditional dogma or to the pre-scientific discipline of the spirit. It seems to me that I may claim for the adaptations I have made, that they do not destroy either the Jewish or the Christian spirit, but fulfil them; and do so by transcending the old letter. In origin, the Decalogue is Jewish and the Litany Roman Catholic; and both, as commonly interpreted, involve supernaturalistic implications; but in virtue of their social utility, and of our right to give them an evolutionary and ethical interpretation, they are in destiny universally human. My adaptations, instead of obscuring the inmost meaning and beauty of the old documents, illuminate what in them had been obscured.

In my version of the Decalogue, there is no pre-eminence given to the Jewish people, and it is therefore possible for citizens of any nation to introduce special references to their own

institutions and development. The Litany, by ceasing to be Christo-centric, will become immediately welcome, for example, to Buddhists or Shintoists, because it does not require them first to attach themselves intellectually to the Christian symbols.

My attempt to adapt an ancient Jewish and an early Christian document so as to make them of moral utility for all human beings, of whatever nation, should not be interpreted as implying on my part any preference for ancient Christian and Jewish documents as compared with the materials furnished by the other religions of the world. So far, however, as I am acquainted with the writings of ancient Egypt and Assyria, of India, China, and other peoples of the East, there seem to me to be in them no summaries of human wisdom and duty comparable either to the Decalogue or the Litany. But even if these ancient Jewish and Christian documents, when brought into accord with science and humanism, should always remain pre-eminent, that is no reason why we should not appropriate materials furnished by the Oriental religions.

Furthermore, as I have already indicated, there is no occasion for limiting future rites to mere adaptations of old materials. We may expect original poets and prophets to create for the expression of ethical passion and insight forms which have no precedent or analogy in the religious literatures of the past.