THE

WITNESS OF THE HEART TO CHRIST.

BEING THE

HULSEAN LECTURES

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE IN THE YEAR 1878.

BY THE

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NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

900 BROADWAY, COR. 20th STREET.

To Her

WHOSE LOVE FOR TWELVE SHORT YEARS

MADE LABOUR LIGHT

I DEDICATE THIS LABOUR

OF MY DARKER DAYS.

PREFACE.

THESE Lectures are only indirectly apologetic: they necessarily take much for granted: they have one simple aim: they are intended to illustrate the adaptation of the Gospel to the needs of man. Man is the problem: Christianity is the solution. Tested in every age and by every race, the Gospel has proved itself fitted to man, and possessed of power to win the wandering affections, to satisfy the uneasy conscience, to establish the wavering will, to form the character, to kindle new hope, and to inspire with nobler aims the chance-led or passion-driven life. Of all those who have appealed to man, Christ alone has uttered the magic words before which the sin-closed door of the human heart has rolled open. If this be true, the truth supplies an argument. We may not be accomplished scholars, erudite critics,

or subtle thinkers; but we are men; we know what we need; we know the force of tempestuous passions, the bitter reproaches of a burdened conscience, the painful failings of a vacillating will; we know sin, and sorrow, love and death; and we find in Christ a remedy for these, we find that the medicine suits the disease; the key fits the lock. No other key fits all the wards. Why should we refuse the use of the one which does on the chance that the facts of nineteen centuries may be mistaken? Why should we refuse the aid of Jesus Christ, when He can allay life's fever and restore life's hope, and when there is none else who has ever given to men such words of everlasting life?

ADVENT, 1879.

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LECTURE I.

"The kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.

THERE is a striking contrast between the language of early Christian hope and the sad utterances which we sometimes hear around us to-day. To the earlier believers Christianity was a power and Christ a real King. The Gospel was the power of God, and Christ the destined Prince of the kings of the earth. But now, we hear another tone. Christianity is prostrate [1]. The fascination which lingered round the land of promise is dispelled; Canaan is its name; it is a Holy Land no more. At Bethlehem, too, the angel voices no longer sing of peace and good-will; the freshness has vanished from Nazareth; Olivet has lost its charm; and even Calvary is disenchanted. As we listen to the

[1] "Not only are Lourdes and Paray le Monial contemptible, but Calvary is disenchanted. There may have been a death there, but there never was a sacrifice. Scales have fallen from our eyes. We see it all clearly. The creed we were brought up in is an earthly myth; not a heavenly revelation." — *Contemporary Review*, vol. xxxi. p. 710, "Future of Faith," by W. H. Mallock.

sad voices which proclaim a heart's disappointment, we catch the echo of yet earlier language, as two discoursed mournfully of a dead Christ: "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." This tone of despondency is in sad contrast with the visions of Christianity. Then they saw Him in vision going forth clad in the apparel of triumph, conquering and that He might conquer: now we are told that the sceptre has fallen from His hand. Then the eyes of hope and faith were fixed upon Him, who was alive for evermore: now we seem to hang tearfully over the body of a dead Christ.

What is the reason of this change from hope to sadness? Has age brought upon the world its inevitable hopelessness, when the wearied and over-strained energies can no longer take an interest in the schemes of youth, and when regretful memory is stronger than hope? Has Christianity lost her power? But in truth this is not the way the question should be asked. It rather should be—What is the cause of this change from the spirit of hopefulness to that of despair? Is it in the enfeebled power of Christianity or in an enfeeblement of our moral tone? Is it that the Christian religion that once broke like a stream from its fountain, and poured forth its full and refreshing floods upon

the parched world, has spent its energy, or that we have neglected to dig fresh channels for its generous waters? Is it that the fatigue of life has robbed us of the power of hope, or that time has deprived Christianity of her force? Is the change in our dimmed eyesight which can no longer see the charm of the landscape, or has the land of promise itself lost its loveliness? Is it enfeebled faith in us, or enfeebled force in Christianity, which occasions this depression? Has Christ grown old, or have we?

Perchance the change is in ourselves; and that there is a strangely weakened moral tone in many quarters, who will deny? Are there not to be found among us dispositions and tendencies which enervate all religious force? Are we not confronted with the spirits of moral cowardice, of theological puerility, of religious dilettanteism, and of wide-spread self-consciousness?

I venture to believe that the change is in ourselves, and not in Him whose years are for ever and ever. I venture to believe that the earlier hope was the truer, and that the vision of the conquering Christ may yet again rush back with its fulness and splendour upon the opened eyes of human-kind. I venture to be-

lieve that if instead of mournfully discussing theories, we would but turn our glance to One who walks among us, but whom we know not, our now holden eyes would find in Him, whose words even now make our hearts burn within us, the Christ whom we have spoken of as dead, but who is still the Resurrection and the Life.

If, on the one hand, we observe that there is a weakened moral tone abroad, if on the other we can, on a survey of the work and kingdom of Christ, find that there is no reason for supposing that it has lost its adaptation to the great needs of mankind, we shall be led to look for the cause of much of this despondent tone in ourselves rather than in Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Let us confess that there has been much fault in ourselves, that the very interest which we take in religion has often blinded our eyes to Him who is its life; that both in the Church and in the world, a lack of moral earnestness has been the strange, but not unnatural outcome of the (shall I say) critical power in which we pride ourselves. There is a robust criticism which can only bring strength because it is earnest for truth—truth above all, and truth even at the sacrifice of our proudest hopes; but there is a spirit also which is the very reverse

of this, which is so self-complacently critical that truth is veiled from its eyes. In the Church it is seen in the eagerness for trifles; the elevation of matters of infinitesimal insignificance into the dignity of principles; we are like men discussing the robe of our Master instead of looking into His face and following His lead. We are earnest enough over things about religion, but in our eagerness we forget the weightier matters of the faith. In our criticism of the mechanism we have forgotten the work of the machine. Nothing is so fatal to moral earnestness and true spiritual life as the spirit of superficial criticism in religion. Every beardless boy may criticise a faith which he has never understood. Every untrained layman may descant upon the imperfections of the Bible, which it is not uncharitable to say he has never read; it is just now the rage to discuss religious matters; it is little more, in many cases, than a rage; as transient as a fashionable colour, and in many cases as unintelligent. We are religious talkers, just as we are ardent astronomers for the week that the British Association visits our neighbourhood, or eager antiquarians during the brief season of an archæological excursion, in which the picnic is more than the ancient camp or the barrow.

There are earnest men, sincere believers, and heart-tried doubters, to whom this dilettanti religionism is insufferable; for all true men soon see that vapid and ill-considered criticism destroys all healthy inquiry. It creates a shallow readiness of talk about a thing, which is the most fatal hindrance to its right understanding. And just as the truth in Art is entirely above the comprehension of the self-sufficient critic, whose aim is rather to say something smart than to advance art-culture, so is it in religion; this spirit in religion[2] disables us from fairly understanding its meaning. Our minds are fixed upon its external features; we forget its aim, we are like those who discuss

[2] "I refer to the disposition to look at faith instead of living in it; to own it as a noble fact in human nature, without being personally committed to it, to feel interest in its representations, but evade contact with its realities."—Martineau, *Hours of Thought*, p. 46.

"Waiving the awful and fundamental question—the only one that touches any living soul,—whether the voice of prophets and of prayer be *true*, men agree that at any rate religion is an indestructible affection of the human mind; that, whether we regard it as a dream, a philosophy, or a revelation, it remains a *fact*; that it is an influence of such transcendant importance as to reward study and demand regulation and control. . . . Churches are built not as holy shrines to God, but as platforms of sectional opinion. Doctrines and sentiments are estimated not by the sincere rule of our private heart, not by their intrinsic worth and sanctity, but by their supposed effect on the prejudices of others and the current usages of thought."—*Ibid.* p. 47.

The same writer thus tersely sums up the spirit of the age:—"The critic is everywhere, the lover nowhere."

the architecture of a cathedral, but who have no knowledge of its use; we can understand the harmony of its outline, or the spreading dignity of its arches, but we have no ear for the melody which rolls along its roof, no heart for the worship within its walls. Our attentions are drawn away from the true purpose of the structure to the architectural details, as our minds have been turned from the first and simplest object of Christianity and directed to its form. We have complained of the clamour or the ungainliness of the machinery; we have not measured its value by its purpose, its aim, or its results. And heaven's gates do not open to such a misdirected spirit, for the true measure of it is not in its capacity to satisfy the critics, but in its power to do its work. When our minds turn to this—the work to be done, and the power that is with us to do it, the evidence which lies so near at hand, which is buried beneath our feet, which is lodged in our hearts, which speaks from our consciences, will leap into life again, and reveal that the true place of the Kingdom of God is within us.

There is reason therefore to suspect the existence of a weakened moral tone among us. But when we turn, on the other hand, to Christianity, we do not find reason to suppose that she has

lost her power of adaptation to the needs of mankind. When we survey her in her widespread rule, in her progressive power, and her impartial administrations, we see her to be possessed of the capacity to adjust herself to the varying changes which test the energies of institutions. In her threefold power to satisfy diversities of needs, to suit the moving ages, and to reconcile conflicting interests, we may still see her fitness to her high and holy calling. Let us observe her adaptation in these directions, and we shall see her expansive power in the world; her progressive power in history; and her reconciling power among the rival claims which distract mankind.

On this I wish to fix your thoughts; for I believe that Christianity is still adapted to her work; that Christ is still King. Led by this belief, I wish to put before you some illustrations of the fact that the religion of Jesus Christ is adapted to meet the wants of man and of men; that it is suited to the changing forms of human history; that Christ is still King, and that He shows the sovereignty by the wondrous adaptation of His kingdom to the varying races of the world, to the exigencies of an ever-expanding civilisation, and above all to the deep spirit-needs of the heart of man, pained

with the weight of life's threefold mystery,—an irrevocable past, an unsolaced present, and an uncertain future.

My subject, then, is the worth of Christ's Kingdom seen in its adaptation to man. I ask you to observe Christianity doing its work, to measure it not by the theories of men, but by its own aim and its capacity to accomplish that aim. This view of the adaptation of Christianity to man is no new thought. It has occupied other minds: it is no crude idea, hastily born in the scant thought-hours of a busy life. Men of calm thought and of patient study have recognised the force of the fact. They have spoken of its proved adaptation "to all the spiritual wants of man[3];" they have described

[3] "Its overtures to the individual soul, limited to no race, or caste, or class or set of faculties, extend from its entrance into life to the hour of departure; are adapted to its real wants and failings; and provide for that immortality which strikes an answering chord in the heart of every man."—Eaton's *Permanence of Christianity*, p. 376, to which I am indebted for the two following quotations.

"There never was any religion as that of Christ, so congenial to our highest instincts; so persuasive, so ennobling, so universally acceptable to rich and poor; so worthy of the intellect, so consistent and uncompromising in its rules for advancing moral excellence. Men could not, would not turn from it, if it was properly brought home to them; if it was not tendered to them with some admixture of earth about it, exciting their suspicions and robbing it of its heavenly fragrance."—Ffoulkes, *Division of Christendom*, p. xiv.

"Many I think are agreed, that after all the most striking evidence for the Divine origin of our faith lies in the

it as "congenial to our highest instincts;" and this adaptation has carried conviction to those to whom other modes of argument seemed weak. "It meets me in the deepest needs of my nature[4]," acknowledged one whom many will regard as a father in English philosophy. "Whoever made this book made me," was the exclamation of an Oriental as he rose from the task of translating the Bible[5]. And there was another—a member of this University, a man of wide and varied gifts, cut off in the morning of life, and mourned in imperishable verse by the first of living poets,—

> "Who fought the spectres of the mind
> And laid them,"—

patent fact of its existence; of its spiritual growth and diffusion; its proved superiority to all other forms of spiritual thought; its proved adaptation to all the spiritual wants of man."—Merivale, *Lectures*, p. 6, and *Northern Nations*, p. 28.

"The Bible thus not only discovers a previous contemplation of the habits and faculties of man, and an adequate provision for their wholesome direction, but that its substance is the very likeness of man; meaning its moral substance, as it appears through all its historical details, its exhortations and its prohibitions."—Miller's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 84.

"Merely as a school of ideas to the soul's inmost wants, Christianity is so much above all other philosophies in merit as the moon is more radiant than the sunlight."—Cook's *Boston Lectures*, Series i. p. 67.

[4] Coleridge.

[5] The incident is related in the *Bohlen Lectures* (p. 11) by Dr. Huntingdon, Bishop of Central New York. The Oriental was a Chinese student under Bishop Boone.

and what was his witness? or whence did he draw that noble faith? "I believe this to be God's Book because it is man's book: it fits itself into every fold of the human heart[6]."

I. The width of her sway denotes expansive force.

We often measure the glory of the Anglo-Saxon race by the wondrous capacity they seem to possess of adapting themselves to every climate, and of making a home in every land. They are king-like men, born to rule in every clime. It is but an illustration of the greater ruling power of Christ. Christianity, to borrow a beautiful adaptation of the Psalmist's language, "rose on the wings of the morning, and found an abode even in the uttermost parts of the sea[7]." This was the original aim of Christ. It was no mere accident of development. It was the very character of Christ's kingdom.

[6] "I see that the Bible fits into every fold of the human heart. I am a man, and I believe it to be God's book, because it is man's book. It is true that the Bible affords me no additional means of demonstrating the falsity of Atheism; if mind had nothing to do with the formation of the universe, *whatever had* was competent also to make the Bible; but I have gained this advantage, that my feelings and thoughts can no longer refuse their assent to *what is evidently framed to engage that assent;* and what is it to me that I cannot disprove the bare logical possibility of my whole nature being fallacious?"—Arthur H. Hallam, *Theodicæa Norissima.*

[7] Sermon by Dean Stanley on "Christianity the Universal Religion."

He aimed at no empire founded on the ascendancy of one nation over another. He refused a kingship which would have risen out of a great popular movement [8], because that kingship, from the very law of its growth, would have resulted in a tyranny supported by a Jewish aristocracy. He proclaimed a kingdom in which all men might have equal privileges and equal rights; its citizenship was free to all. The Gospel was to be preached to every creature. There was one God and Father of all [9]. The Son had tasted death for every man [10]. The Holy Spirit would be poured forth upon all flesh [11]. Neither the intellectual aristocracy of Greece, nor the religious aristocracy of Judea, nor the political aristocracy of Rome were exempt from the universal condition, "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent [12]," or excluded from the world-wide amnesty, "God so loved the world [13]."

And if such was the charter of Christ's kingdom, it was a charter faithfully administered, at least in early days. The pioneers of that kingdom emerged from Jerusalem; they were Jews, in whose veins the blood of Abraham and

[8] John vi. 15.
[9] Eph. iv. 6.
[10] Heb. ii. 9.
[11] Acts ii. 17.
[12] Acts xvii. 30.
[13] John iii. 16.

of the Prophets flowed, who had been brought up in the pride of religious exclusiveness; yet the despotism of prejudice had been broken down in them. They knew no man after the flesh [14]. Christ has died for all; all, therefore, are dear to them! they are debtors to the Jew and to the Greek, to the bond and to the free [15]. They are as ready to preach to the barbarians of Malta as to the cultured Greek, the wealthy Corinthian, or the influential Roman. The Apostle pleads as earnestly with the few women of the river-side, as in the midst of Mars Hill or in the precincts of the Imperial Palace. Philemon is as much his care as Publius; Timothy as Sergius Paulus and Agrippa. And nothing more rouses the hostile energies of St. Paul and St James than the dawning wish on the part of some to create a privileged class in the Church, whether the effort was made on social or semi-religious principles. Against the Judaiser, who still indulged the dream of some fancied superiority, the whole force of St. Paul's generous and far-seeing enthusiasm awoke [16]. He had caught the spirit of his Master too well to allow the glorious kingdom of His Lord to be limited by the narrowness of a proud sectarianism. And just as St. Paul contended

[14] 2 Cor. v. 16. [15] Rom. i. 14. [16] Gal. ii. 3-18.

against a would-be religious aristocracy, St. James protested against the broad house of the Church of God being made the nursery of class prejudices[17]. The Charter of the Kingdom made its benefits free to all: this was their conviction, and they acted on it.

But it would have been vain to have been the preachers of so wide and loving a faith unless the religion so preached had in itself elements which proved it to be suited to all. But this is what Christianity has been proved to possess. All varieties of class, race, tongues and nations and languages have acknowledged that the kingdom of Christ affords a safe shelter from their pains and cares. Other religions, like the special products of their own soil and climate, seem incapable of transplantation; they may grow in a specially prepared atmosphere as scientific specimens for the curious, but they cannot adjust themselves to the peculiarities of the diverse climates; they have not the native hardihood of Christianity, which like the corn, its most fitting symbol, can take root and grow wherever man can breathe and live. This is her privilege. Men have dreamed of an absolute religion; Christianity alone of all creeds has

[17] James ii. 1-9.

shown herself fitted to be the Universal Faith[18]. All the systems of the ancient world were "limited in their design and local in their range[19]." The gods of Egypt would never compel the respect of the cultured Greek. The wild frenzies of the Celtic worship would find no favour with the calm inflexible priesthood of Egypt. But the cross of Christ found a welcome in every land.

And the wonder of this is the greater when we consider the marvellous diversities and oppositions of character with which the kingdom of Christ came into contact. The minds of the

[18] "Judaism, as a supreme religion, expired when its local sanctuary was destroyed. Mohammedanism, after its first burst of conquest, withdrew itself almost entirely within the limits of the East. But Christianity has found not only its shelter and refuge, but its throne and home, in countries which, humanly speaking, it could hardly have been expected to reach at all."—Sermon by Dean Stanley on "Christianity the Universal Religion."

[19] "With the sole exception of Muhammadanism,—a heresy that drew its dogmas and its very life-blood from Revealed Religion,—we shall find that all the systems of the ancient world were limited in their design and local in their range. They were the images of separate nationalities; they issued from within; they represented special modes of thought and harmonised with states of feeling and imagination that prevailed in certain districts: but with Christianity the case was altogether different. It came fresh from God: it rested on a series of objective revelations: it was active and diffusive as the light, and all-embracing as the firmament of heaven: it dealt with man as man, and never faltered in its claim to be regarded as a veritable 'world-religion.'"—Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, p. 42.

East and of the West; the brilliancy of the Gaul, the sagacity of the Saxon, the imperious energy of the Roman, the fertility of the Greek, the subtlety of the Indian; the zeal of the active, the repose of the contemplative; the restlessness of youth, the vigour of manhood, the sadness of old age,—these are but some of the classes which the Gospel encountered. But among all, the Kingdom of Christ found a home [20].

The ambassadors of Christ were welcomed with enthusiasm by the warm-hearted Galatian, with affection and simple faith by the men and women of Philippi; with intelligence and candour at Berœa: they made converts at Athens and at Rome. They moved eastward. "They discoursed as freely and effectively in tents of wandering tribes, as in the schools and temples of the land of Egypt. Though century after century expired, the Gospel showed no symptoms of decay or imbecility; it was adapted, as at first, to the necessities of every race and all

[20] "When we see Him followed by the Greek, though a founder of none of his sects; revered by the Brahmin, though preached unto him by men of the fishermen's caste; worshipped by the red man of Canada, though belonging to the hated pale race,—we cannot but consider Him as destined to break down all distinction of colour, and shape, and countenance, and habits, to form in Himself the type of unity to which are referable all the sons of Adam."—Wiseman, *Lectures on Science and Religion*, Lecture iv.

the varied phases of society[21]." In every realm, from the British Isles to the Euxine, the sounds of Christian worship were heard. "Thou mayest (so said St. Chrysostom) hear men everywhere discoursing out of the scripture with another voice indeed, but not with another faith."

And is the witness less true to-day? No!

Still to-day[22] the Kingdom of Christ moves silently but surely over the face of the earth and captivates diversities of hearts. It was always wonderful that a faith born in the East should spread with an imperial power in the West: but as the ages move the wonder is increased. If marked differences between Oriental and Western minds existed nineteen centuries ago, time has deepened those differences; the East has been stationary, the West has advanced, but Christianity is "as vigorous in her age as in her youth, and has upon her the *primâ facie* signs of the Divinity[23]." For she is not stricken

[21] Hardwick, *Christ and other Masters*, p. 42.

[22] "After a revolution of thirteen or fourteen centuries, that religion is still professed by the nations of Europe, the most distinguished portions of human-kind in arts and learning as well as in arms."—Gibbon, vol. ii. p. 151, ed. by Milman.

"The fishermen of Gennesaret planted Christianity, and many a winter and many a summer have since rolled over it. More than once it has shed its leaves and seemed to be dying, and when the buds burst again, the colour of the foliage was changed."—Froude, *Short Studies*, Series ii. p. 32.

[23] "What the Church has lost in her appeal to the imagina-

with paralysis in Asia, and she exhibits an expanding energy in Europe and America. "I assure you," it is the language of one who has the right to speak of India, "that whatever you may hear to the contrary, the teaching of Christianity among one hundred millions of civilised and industrious Hindoos and Mohammedans is effecting changes, moral, social, and

tion she has gained in philosophical cogency by the evidence of her persistent vitality. She is as vigorous in her age as in her youth, and has upon her *primâ facie* signs of divinity." —Dr. Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, pp. 425-6, quoted in Eaton's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 5.

Mr. Lecky writes in a similar strain :—"There is but one example of a religion which is not naturally weakened by civilisation, and that example is Christianity. In all other cases the decay of dogmatic conceptions is tantamount to a complete annihilation of the religion; for although there may be imperishable elements of moral truth mingled with these conceptions, they have nothing distinctive or peculiar. The moral truths coalesce with new systems; the men who uttered them take their place with many others in the great pantheon of History, and the religion having discharged its functions is spent and withered. But the great characteristic of Christianity and the great moral proof of its Divinity is that it has been the main source of the moral development of Europe, and that it has discharged this office, not so much by the inculcation of a system of ethics, however pure, as by the assimilating and attractive influence of a perfect ideal. The moral progress of mankind can never cease to be distinctively and intensely Christian as long as it consists of a gradual approximation to the character of the Christian Founder. There is indeed nothing more wonderful in the history of the human race, than the way in which that ideal has traversed the lapse of ages, acquiring a new strength and beauty with each advance of civilisation, and infusing its beneficent influence into every sphere of thought and action."—*History of Rationalism in Europe*. vol. i. p. 336.

political, which for extent and rapidity of effect are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in Modern Europe[24]."

And if we turn from this dawn in the East, what is the promise of the West? "It is in Italy, in France, in Germany, in England, and America (I quote one whose character for candour and impartiality is above all praise) that the hopes of Christian civilisation have rested. Christianity born in the East, has become the religion of the West even more than of the East[25]." There is no need of more. The Church of Christ, if it witnesses nothing else, witnesses a power to suit every class. She has her message of hope for the young. She gives the exhilarating satisfaction of noble work to the strong; she can soften the pang of regret to the old; she has gathered beneath her wide-spreading roof every form of human sorrow, every class of human character; the nations of the world have ransacked their treasures and have given up their noblest to the sanctuary of Christ. It is not that every nation casts a jealous eye, and guards as a sacred trust, the sepulchre of Christ;

[24] Sir Bartle Frere, p. 317, Christian Evidence Society Lectures, "Faith and Free Thought."

[25] Dean Stanley, sermon above quoted.

far more potent as a witness to the powers of Christ, than this universal guardianship of the tomb of the Redeemer, is the view which history gives of every nation sending her choicest representatives to the Church of Christ. Do you ask who they are? Do you ask for representatives of the past? I bid you move along the splendid corridors and aisles of the Church of God. Behold Origen, and Athanasius, and Augustine! Do you ask where are the sons of Greece and of Rome? Chrysostom and Ambrose are here. Do you ask for Celt and Saxon, Latin and Teuton, St. Bernard and Tauler, Xavier and Luther, Fenelon and Pascal, Wycliffe and Latimer, Hooker and Usher, Lancelot Andrewes and Jeremy Taylor, Butler and John Wesley are here. Thus from every land come those whose highest honour is to honour Him whose dominion is from sea to sea. Those that dwell in earth's highest places have bowed before Him: the kings of commerce and the kings of intellect, the kings of science and the kings of song, the kings of society and the kings of saintliness, have offered the homage of their various gifts. Yea! all kings have worshipped before Him, and all nations have honoured Him, who is the Prince of the kings of the earth.

II. The progressive power of His sway is the

token of its eternity. The test of men's power does not lie in their own age. The present cannot estimate itself; it needs a larger wisdom, an ampler view to contemplate the surroundings and conditions of men's lives, and a more impartial eye to form a fair and fitting judgment. This lack is supplied by a power which comes forth to rectify the errors of men. History emerges from her watch-tower and casts her impartial eye upon the works of men: were I to paint her I would picture her as still in the freshness of youth, her broad, fair brow unseamed with care; scorn seated on her lip; her keen eye looking with equal calmness upon the long past and upon the far future; and bearing upon the girdle of truth, which binds her simple robe, the legend, "She hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek." She casts her glance upon the works of men, and not without a quiet irony reverses the prejudiced verdicts of men. She shows that the wealth that dazzled could not confer greatness; she shows that men who were credited with almost supernatural powers were often but the creatures of circumstances; she remorselessly unrobes men of the purple of an imposing splendour, and reveals the insignificance which has been honoured with the title of

Great. She shows the emptiness of high-sounding titles: the glory of Crœsus dwindles down to a name; the glittering reputation of literary pretenders she tears into shreds. "She puts down the mighty from their seat." But she beckons forward modest and obscure worth and bids it occupy a throne in the world. She reverses the positions of men. She dismisses the monarch of Egypt, scarcely deigning to pause and record his name; she enthrones the shepherd of Midian among the legislators of the earth; she flings Nero into the horror chamber of history; she enshrines St. Paul in the Pantheon of the world. She silences the voice of the foolish merry sovereign who filled Whitehall Chambers with idlers and favourites; she opens the mouth of the blind, unheeded poet of Aldersgate-street, and bids men listen to a voice "majestic like the sea."

Such is the wise irony of impartial history—and the reason is not far to seek. She measures men not by the tawdry reputations of the hour, but by the influence they can diffuse; she watches the circling wave which forms as men cast their force into the great ocean of life, and she measures their power by the life of that wave, and she finds that few—few indeed—have been able to spread their influence beyond

their age; she notes many exalted to the skies, and she sees that in the next generation their name is clean put out; she measures the greatness of men as men do the height of mountains, by the length of the shadows they cast upon the surface of the world; and measuring thus she bids those whose influence lives through the ages to sit like gods among the hills of time. Such is the test of history to the pretensions of men.

Thus does Sovereign History deal with the reputations of men. Christ, in founding His kingdom, challenged the verdict of this inexorable and impartial sovereign; He has braved her power and He has triumphed. As the ages moved, the lustre of His name gathered brightness, and the stability of His influence grew stronger. The Galilean peasant, the carpenter's son, the Nazarene, has ascended the throne of the world, and spread His empire through time. He has not only vindicated His own power, but He has shown Himself capable of conferring dominion upon others. Let the name of Christ be blotted out, and lo! what numberless names must die with His death. Let Christ be reckoned as naught, and behold all those into whom He breathed the breath of power must die with Him. When the light of the sun pales, the hue

of every petal of every flower fades: thus would the beauty which lingers round the names of Mary and Lydia, and the splendour which adorns the names of St. Peter and St. John, of Augustine and of Gregory, of Anselm and of Melancthon, of Thomas à Kempis and of Donne, fade, if He, who was once the Sun of the Day of Christianity, sank from the heavens. But He has not vanished beneath the horizon. He is in the meridian of His glory! He is seated upon the Throne of the world! Let the throne of the world be declared vacant to-morrow. No other name could be named that would not provoke angry competition; but when Jesus Christ is seated there, there is none that has dared to dispute His right. Yea, those who withhold from Him Divine homage acknowledge that He, and He alone, is worthy to be seated there. "Rest, then, upon Thy Throne, O Thou victorious One; henceforth between Thee and God men will no longer distinguish[26]." It is the impassioned eloquence of a French sceptic. Hear the sober and well-matured judgment of an Englishman, whose clear, cold intellect was never betrayed into words of meaningless panegyric. "Nor even now would it be easy, even

[26] Renan, *Vie de Jesus*.

for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract or the concrete, than to endeavour so to live as that Christ would approve our life[27]." Such is the verdict of impartial history on One who nineteen centuries ago was despised and rejected of men. Who is seated on the throne of the world, if it be not Jesus of Nazareth?

But we must not forget that certain grave exceptions have been urged against the integrity of Christ's Empire. It is not a question it may be said of personal power; there is a poetical homage which men are willing enough to give to the idealised representations of men, but if we are to apply a true test, we must not ask merely what is the reputation of Christ, but we must ask how His Kingdom has fared. We must observe how far it has proved itself to be a beneficent empire, conferring blessings upon mankind; and it is not against Christ Himself, but against the success of His administration, that the strongest objections are made.

I shall notice three. First, it has been said that Christianity has failed because the history of the past shows that in many points the expectations, which men were led to form, have proved

[27] J. S. Mill, *Essay on Religion*, p. 253.

deceptive. Now this objection, when stated in its simplest form, means that Christianity has failed because men have not found that their expectations have been realised. It certainly at the outset is a strange thing that a man should be held responsible for all the absurd expectations which have been entertained on his behalf, and I would ask you to notice that almost every new scheme, enterprise, and invention has had to run the gauntlet of three different stages of public opinion—the stage of ridicule, the stage of exaggerated expectation, and the stage of just appreciation. Men first deride the hopes of original genius; then they rush to the extreme of the most unmeasured applause; and only at last the stirred ocean sinks to the calm level of a fair judgment. Whether it is the steam engine, or gas, or the electric light, you first hear ridicule and contempt, then abject and unreasoning wonder, and finally contented understanding. Like the barbarians of Malta, they look upon the apostle of every new cause, first as a character with a blot on it; then as a God; and only at last, when the extremes have passed, as a minister of simple, practical good. And Christianity has not been exempt from these paroxysms of prejudiced judgment. It is true that the faith of Christians can never

be too strong; and the faith of men in their Lord will never be put to shame. But there is all the difference in the world between strong faith and an omnivorous credulity; between simple *trust* and an exaggerated expectation. If faith be the hand of the soul, its strength is not to be measured by the number of things it clutches at, but rather by the firmness of its grasp. That firm grasp of faith will never fail, but the timid stupidity which seizes on straws will likely enough sink beneath the waves of doubt. It can never be too often affirmed that there is a whole heaven of difference between the faith of men and their expectations; and it is no proof that Christianity has failed in her work because the silly expectations of infatuated Christians have been over and over again falsified: the failure of Christian expectations is not the failure of the faith.

Examples will make this clearer. The faith of the devout Jews was directed by their prophets to the advent of a Messiah; but as the years moved on strange and gross conceptions of the Messiah's work were formed. If he was to be a king, a king to them meant territory and armies, wars and conquest, wealth and worldly splendour. These were the expectations. The event fulfilled their faith, but it

falsified their expectations. The Messiah came, but His Kingdom was not of this world. Another era dawned. The disciples of Jesus Christ took the place of the devout followers of Moses. Their faith looked forward to the return of their Lord; and out of that faith, imagination born of Mosaic literature, and perhaps nurtured by present sorrow, began to build up once more gross and material expectations; they began to measure the promises of their Master by their own earthly wishes, and the years of Him who liveth for ever and ever by the span of their own narrow life. Then came the words of apostolic caution to those who taught that the day of the Lord is at hand. And what did that caution (applicable to the self-constituted prophets of our own day as to them) amount to? It told them that their faith was undoubtedly right; the day of the Lord would come; but that their expectations were entirely wrong. That day would not come without the intervening ages of trial and apostasy. And it is not in the world of theology alone that men's faith has been right but the expectations wrong. It was the faith of Columbus that he could find land by sailing towards the sunset. His expectation was that the land so found would prove to be the already known East Indies. His expecta-

tion was wrong—though his faith was right—God's world proved then (as it has often proved since) to be larger than the little thoughts of men. Thus evermore do the widening purposes of God vindicate the faith and rebuke the expectations of men. The broadening world and the broadening future are like the finger of God which beckons the Church of Christ onward to take possession of new worlds and to plan for new eras; but the hand which beckons us onward destroys our false and hastily-conceived hopes. We are taught that faith need not fall because the theories of men are proved crude. The reality of a great fact is not to be discredited by the stupidity of its interpreters, else it would go hard with the Solar System and the British Constitution. The Ptolemaic theory goes down, but the planets are not shaken from their courses; the starry worlds sweep onward in their quiet orbits: noisy politicians vapour their narrow thoughts; the progress of free institutions moves forward. The schemes of prophetic interpretation, the elaborate ecclesiasticisms, the narrow and petrified consistency of symmetrical dogmatism, all may be disappointed, but Christ's Kingdom will move forward on her starry course; the puerile and the antiquated notions of men and

Churches may vanish, yet Thou, Christ, art King. "They shall perish, but Thou remainest; they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail[28]."

A second objection is that Christianity, as a system of moral regeneration, has failed when tried by History, because she has developed certain grave corruptions. It will not be denied by any one that the history of the past eighteen centuries has been darkened with violence and stained with blood. We might perhaps plead that whenever Christian influence has been in the ascendant, then the moral tone and the humane tone have prevailed; at least to such an extent that the average standard is decidedly in advance of that attained under other influences. If such be the case, as I believe it is, may we not say that steady increments of good are the most satisfying proofs of true and real progress. Spasmodic prosperity may be due to exceptional causes. Well-graduated and increasing prosperity must be due to steady and well-sustained growth of the sources of prosperity.

But it is important to distinguish between

[28] Heb. i. 11, 12.

things which differ. In any great movement there are circumstances attending its growth which need to be investigated before it can be fairly assumed that they are the consequences of the movement at all; and even when we have ascertained that they are the consequences of the movement, we must again investigate whether they are consequences which are the real offspring of its own bosom, or only consequences developed in the course of its progress. There are thus three classes of circumstances—circumstances independent of a movement but attending it; circumstances which are the developed consequences of a movement; circumstances which are the real offspring of it. These must be distinguished. A common-place illustration will be forgiven. A man is ill; his doctor prescribes for him. If the sick man injures himself by a fall, that is a circumstance independent of the doctor or his remedy. But if the doctor's remedy produces, because of the poison in the man's blood, some painful symptoms, these are consequences for which the medical man is not responsible; they are incidental consequences of the remedy: but if the medicine given is wrong, and death or disease ensues, then the doctor is responsible. We cannot charge men or some new scheme with

any but those consequences which are deducible from their principles. Liberty is not responsible for revolution. Religion is not responsible for the crimes committed in her name. In estimating then the great events of human progress we must distinguish between essential consequences and incidental consequences, and also between consequences and after-events.

After-events must not be interpreted as consequences. *Post hoc ergo Propter hoc* is an absurd principle: it is ridiculed in daily life. The thunderstorm which disturbs a wedding-party is not a consequence of the wedding. Neither are sickness and poverty and war, as such, consequences of Christianity: they were as rife before Christ's coming as after: they existed before: they could not, therefore, be consequences of Christ's advent. Incidental consequences are not the same as essential consequences. The evils which a movement developes are not all evils which it creates. It is the method of the physician to develop the latent disease; the poison in the blood must be brought out; he does not create the evil, he only brings to light what existed before. Similarly Christianity has no doubt developed evils. The bringing to light the hidden things of darkness was a part of Christ's scheme. There is nothing hidden which

shall not be made known, neither covered that shall not be revealed. To convince the world of sin was a part of the Holy Spirit's work[29]. Is it to be wondered at, still less complained of, that Christianity has made certain evils reveal themselves as evils? Concealed they were fatal to mankind, revealed they were brought out to be seen and to be condemned. An example may be given. Persecution for opinion has been thought by some to have been due to Christianity. Its intensity was no doubt a consequence of Christianity, but not a creation nor a legitimate offspring of her teaching. In this she revealed what was in man—she gave to man keener convictions as to the supreme importance of religion. Religion was no longer a mere ritual or an inoperative ceremonial; it was a power fraught with strange and far-reaching consequences. A man's religion then was no trifling accident of his life, like the colour of his coat or of his hair. It was raised to a matter of supreme interest. Earnestness was created—we shall not blame her for that. Want of earnestness will surely be condemned as a moral suicide, and a high crime and misdemeanour against society. But this quickened

[29] John xvi. 8.

earnestness brought to light the hidden germ of a fatal moral aberration in the heart of mankind. The same sun which ripens the good seed ripens the evil also. "The faith that simply adds to the folly and ferocity of one, is turned to enduring sweetness, abounding charity, and self-sacrifice in another. Christianity varies with the nature upon which it falls[30]." Some natures there were which found it impossible to be in earnest without animosity. Why was this? Was the animosity the creation of Christianity? It was developed by the creation of religious earnestness; but the ill-weed sprang not from Christ, but from the soil of the human heart. "Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of," was the wail of religion at the stake and at the rack; the hand of religion was fain rather to wipe the pain-sweat from the heretic's brow, than to turn one look of approval on the Inquisitor. Scenes like these are abhorrent to humanity, and are abhorrent to Christianity which was sent to be the guardian of all that was humane and merciful, as well as holy; scenes like these prove not that Christianity has failed, but that there was a tremendous fund of unholy passions in human nature which only

[30] Prof. Tyndall, *Contemporary Review*, xx. p. 766.

time, and faith, and knowledge could eradicate. There are evils developed then by a system which are not the essential outgrowth of it. Only when the vice is bound up with the very texture of a religion can we fairly charge her with causing it, in the sense of being responsible for its existence. The modifying influence of the soil is to be taken into account; the seed is not responsible for what springs up with it and tends to choke it. It is different when certain evils are clearly inherent in the spirit of a religion. The religion of Mohammed is not responsible for many of the vices, which are rather of the East than of the Prophet. But it is responsible for the vices which it takes under its wing and fosters, or to use the words of a great authority, consecrates. "It has consecrated slavery; it has consecrated polygamy; it has consecrated despotism[31]." Here are three evils which go to the degradation of man in the three spheres of his life—the individual, the social, the political. Man is degraded by slavery, the family by polygamy, the nation and the government by despotism. The system which consecrates these makes them of her essence and must be responsible. If, then, the accusation be true that

[31] Freeman. Saracens—quoted by Dean Church—*Influences of Christianity on National Character*, p. 8.

Mohammedism has consecrated these, she has woven them into her creed and made them her own. But who will say that Christianity has consecrated persecution? If wild fanatics and slaughterous renegades loved to baptize their foes in flames, they were not true disciples of that creed which sought to baptize with that Holy Spirit, whose first-fruits are love, joy, peace, longsuffering.

But there is a third objection. Christ's kingdom it is said must be pronounced a moral failure, because it has not yet abolished many of the unquestioned ills of society. The objection is not to what Christianity has done, but to what she has not done. It is said, 'If Christianity be a great social regenerator, how is it that, after eighteen centuries of trial, there yet remains so much undone that by all confession ought to be done?'

The objection is based, I think, upon a double misconception—a misconception of the aim, and a misconception of the method of Christ.

But, first, let me confess that the accusation, though not fairly chargeable against Christ and His Kingdom, is, alas! in much, fairly chargeable against His Church. Over and over again we have found in our own lives, and we have had exemplified in the history of Churches,

that the most indefensible result of our follies is that we have cast a stumbling-block in our brother's way. The self-seeking, the avarice, the truculence of the Church has too often created a profound distrust in men: the weak and oppressed looked to her as an ally, but they found, alas! but too frequently, a tyrant. But while all stand self-abashed, let us in our confession clear our Master from complicity in our weakness. If we have been selfish, worldly, oppressive; supple-kneed to the wealthy and iron-hearted to the weak; it was in spite of Thy word, against Thy will, O Thou who didst bid the weary and the heavy-laden to come to Thee!

The objection is based, I said, on a two-fold misconception—a misconception of the aim of Christianity and of its method. It is surely by its aim and method that we are to judge of a new system. Not our expectations, but its intentions and purpose, should govern our estimate of its value. Christianity did not design to be a legislative abolition act of all evil; it was not of the nature of an Act of Parliament, still less of an Oriental decree. It was rather to be an educational force, and to throw its influence into the slowly upward moving ages, and to guide and assist their growth into freer life. If it aimed to be an educational force, then in the

nature of the case must she not adopt a method adapted to the slowly developing capacities of those to be educated?

Thus the method of Christianity has also been misconceived. That method is not immediate, but progressive and ultimate. And it was scarcely open to choose another method. It might have seemed to some a more desirable way to bring about an immediate cessation of all forms of evil; but this could only have been done by an act of coercion; and God deals with us as with men, not as with slaves. The power of Christianity is this, that it is a power which waits on men. It promises much, but the promises are very largely contingent on man's co-operation. This the New Testament constantly warns us to notice. The abolition of war, pain, and disease was no doubt often longed for in early Christian days; and men looked, as we have seen, for an immediate millennium, but the golden age was not to dawn so soon. It might dawn at once if men instantly lived by the principles Christ laid down. Then indeed, when all men's good was each man's rule, would universal peace cast her shaft of light athwart the world[32]. But the early Christians were

[32] "But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal Peace

warned that these high principles would only be received slowly. Wars, famines, persecutions must take place before the true reign of Christ in its fulness and its beauty would be established. The sacred seer at Patmos beheld in the conquering white-robed horseman the emblem of an ultimate truth. Christ would be conqueror; but that vision faded and its place was taken by the emblems of war, death, persecution, and revolution, before the still peace of the heavenly reign could come[33]. For only as the moral power of men ripened would they accept and adopt the principles of Christ's Kingdom[34]. It is then always to be remembered that Christ deals with men who are free to choose, and with a race which can only grow in moral elevation by slow degrees.

> Lie like a shaft of light across the land,
> And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
> Thro' all the circle of the golden year?"
>
> Tennyson, *The Golden Year.*

[33] Rev. vi. and vii. 1.

[34] "It was in vain that Christianity had taught a simple doctrine and enjoined a simple worship. The minds of men were too backward for so great a step, and required more complicated forms and a more complicated belief."—Buckle, *History of Civilization*, vol. i. p. 259.

"Le Christianisme n'est pas été deposé sur la terre comme une borne avec une inscription divine, marquante la limite de notre activité; il est un principe de vie, un germe fècond appelé à pénétrer l'individu et la société come la levain pénétre la pâte, suivant une comparaison familière mais frappante de l'Evangile."—E. de Pressensé, *La Ruine Sociale.*

And when we turn to the positive side of the question and ask what Christianity has done, we find that she has achieved her work on this method of slow and well-graduated progress. It took generations for men to perceive that slavery was essentially at variance with the theological principle of a redeemed world. It took years before men perceived what a vast social revolution was effected by Christianity in the restoration of woman to her rightful place as the helpmeet of man. And slow as these have been, there is more to come. If war has not ceased, it is only because the moral sense of mankind is behindhand in this matter: the ideal world set before us is a world in which war shall be no more: an educated world will perhaps be able to realise it, and the day come when war will be reckoned as senseless a way of settling disputes, as duelling is thought now by all men when not suffering from the derangement of personal and political excitement. In this slow way Christianity accomplishes her work—what has been done is the pledge of what may be done.

We have touched on objections, but turn your glance upon the advance made, and see the positive evidence. Christ in establishing His Kingdom challenged the verdict of history;

and He triumphed; for He by His influence has changed the course of history, and spread a higher civilisation over the world. I will not claim what will not be conceded; but Christ's power over history is no fiction. He created the Church, and made her a nursery for good[35]. In spite of the recklessness of her sons, she has achieved much; the nearer she keeps to His spirit and instructions of His Word the more she will achieve. As it is, the record is a noble one. She diminished sensuality[36] by pointing to the true dignity of man. She made tyranny quail; for she witnessed to a righteous King. She smote the fetters from the slave. She vivified and extended, even if she did not create, the spirit of humane thoughtfulness for the afflicted. She placed the bright crown of domestic queenship upon woman's brow. She consecrated every honest toil; she has mitigated

[35] Mr. Eaton in his *Bampton Lectures* ("Permanence of Christianity," p. 8) quotes two witnesses on this subject. "All that we call modern civilization in a sense which deserves the name, is the visible expression of the transforming power of the Gospel." (Froude, *Short Studies*, ii. p. 39.) "Christianity," writes Mr. Lecky, "the life of morality, the basis of civilization, has regenerated the world."

[36] "It (the Christian religion) softens the character, purifies and directs the imagination, blends insensibly with habitual modes of thought, and without revolutionising gives a tone and bias to all the forms of action."—Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i. p. 205.

the ferocity of war, and she has called into being a noble rivalry of benevolence in the breasts of civilised men. "As a matter of fact," writes one whom all will acknowledge to be as erudite as he is impartial,—"as a matter of fact Christianity has done more to quicken the affection of mankind, to promote piety, to create a pure and merciful idea than any other influence that has ever acted on the world[37]."—Remembering Him, who cared for the bodies of men, she roused society to compassionate the sick and afflicted[38]: mindful of the brotherly love He

[37] *European Morals*, vol. ii. p. 163. Compare the language of M. Troplong:—"Christianity was really not only a progress in the truths received before its time which it enlarged, completed, and clothed with a character more sublime, and a strength more sympathetic, but it was moreover (and this is literally true even for the most incredulous) the descent of a spirit from on high on the classes disinherited by science and plunged in the darkness of polytheism. Ancient philosophy, with all its merits, was chargeable with the unpardonable wrong of remaining cold in the presence of the evils of humanity."—Quoted by Sir J. B. Byles, *Foundations of Religion in the Mind and Heart of Man*, p. 122.

[38] In an interesting article in the *Westminster Review*, entitled "Pre-christian Dispensaries and Hospitals," the influence of Christianity in the establishment of hospitals is admitted:—"Thus we see that the glory of Christianity does not lie in having originated the idea of hospitals, but in having seized it, like the runners the torch in the ancient games, and carried it forward with brighter flame and more intense enthusiasm." It was the earnestness of Christians which roused the heathen world:—"This work of the Christians excited the emulation of the Emperor Julian. These impious Christians give themselves to this kind of humanity; and although he thought their motives base, yet he orders

taught, she strove to awaken a true enthusiasm of humanity: believing in Him, who was the true light and life of men, she sought to kindle the flame of love and hope in every heart.

Such have been her achievements, and her achievements are the measure of the extent and duration of His influence, who has proved Himself king in the order of history, as He is king over the varied characters of men. He has made the tree of life to grow alongside the tree of advancing knowledge, that knowledge may not turn to decay. He has shone upon the world not only as a sun diffusing light everywhere, but His light has moved in the marching ages; never outstripping the growing thoughts of men, but casting a Shekinah glory upon their advancing footsteps through the wilderness of toil, to the Holy Land of Promise.

III. But there is another note of power in the Kingdom of Christ. One of the greatest difficulties of rulers is to treat adjusting rival claims. It is comparatively easy to do justice when one interest only has to be considered; it is the apparent conflict of interests and rights

Arsacius to establish abundance of hospitals in every city, that our kindness may be enjoyed by strangers, not only of our own people, but of those who are in need."—Vol. lii. pp. 445 and 444.

which tests the wisdom and impartiality of rulers.

Upon the life of man there are conflicting claims. There is the claim of an urgent present, but when we have devoted our thoughts to this, there rises up the awful and half-veiled form of a no less urgent future. Men have dealt in various ways with these rival claimants. "Live for the present, the future is unknown," is the language of the secularist. "Live for the future, the present is vanity," is the language of the religious fanatic. The outcome of these antagonistic rules of life is what might have been expected. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," is the verdict of the one; "Handle not, nor yet taste, nor even touch," is the conclusion of the other. The secularist developes into a voluptuary; the fanatic into an ascetic. These opposite developments are not to be ignored, for both are based on truth. Both have a measure of right in them. There is no time like the present; yet all the harvest lies in the future. The Kingdom of Christ was looked to by men to reconcile the opposing claims of the present and the future. Upon them Christ gives judgment, and in doing so He ignores the rights of neither. "Work while it is called to-day." Thus does Christ turn the stream of man's energy upon

the present. "The night cometh when no man can work[39]." Thus does He turn their thoughts to the future. Of the present He says—Do good: work, watch. This is the *season* of labour; to-morrow comes the harvest of fruit. The Present is the seed-time, in the Future we reap. Throw energy into the present, but keep an eye on the future. Let your oars plunge boldly into the waves which are around you, but keep your rudder straight for the haven. Live in the world, but always with an aim above the world. Thus does Christ reconcile what man will divorce: the ascetic and the voluptuary miss the meaning of life. Man lives in a present he cannot forego; and on the threshold of a future he cannot ignore. Christ would have men neither forego nor ignore. The way to to-morrow lies through to-day; the duties of to-day are the parents of to-morrow's powers, and the ancestors of the joys which will dawn hereafter.

But not only upon man's attention do the present and the future press their imperious claims; but the government of the world is distracted often between the rival claims of the individual and the race. The theory of the

[39] John ix. 4.

earlier empires preferred the interests of the individual; the growth of intelligence has learned to prefer the interests of the race. In the ideal kingdom the rule, which was for the interest of all, would be for the interest of each; and the Kingdom of Christ would fail of its purpose unless it had a message for man as well as for mankind, and for mankind as well as man.

Christianity has been accused of caring nothing for the race, but only for the individual. This seems to me a mistake. The welfare of souls and the welfare of humanity were alike dear to Him. But His method of securing the welfare of the race differed from the methods of men. Twice Christ refused to be a king; He would not purchase a sovereignty on payment of tribute to one single evil principle; He would not ascend a throne which was founded on a movement which could only mean the ascendancy of one nation over the world. His rule would have effected great social benefits; but He refused an immediate sovereignty that He might win a better sovereignty over the world. He refused to reign over all unless He might first reign in each. In that refusal He proclaimed His method. He had no faith in reformations

which were imposed from without. Conquerors and philanthropists—the most sternly practical and the most dreamy of men—have always imagined that a paradisaical community could be formed by bringing men to agree to unite themselves in some ready-made organisation; but the *phalansteries*[40] of the philanthropist and the "happy-family" sort of empire of the absolutist have been failures; for they are attempts to solve the problem in the wrong way. They are efforts to heal the diseases of humanity by external remedies; they work from the circumference to the centre. They fail who hope to make men happy and good by forcing them into confederacy. Coarse and brutal-minded conquerors might weld men together by the clumsy method of coercion. But Christ worked upon the opposite method. The disease was in the individual; the reformation must commence with the centre, that it might spread to the circumference: like one who understood the problem, He refused to

[40] The name given to a social organization after the plan of Charles Fourier: it was the supposed Firm Phalanx of people who united their capital and energy in common: the building where all the members dwelt together was called by the same name. The reader of *Aurora Leigh* will remember Romney Leigh's enthusiasm in this social direction:—

"His phalansteries there, his speeches here,
His pamphlets, pleas and statements, everywhere."

P. 93.

work from without; He would work from within[41]; the good within would blossom outwards: He sought to cleanse the system; for thus the painful sores on the surface would one by one disappear. He did not try to elevate individuals through society first. He knew that the elevation of society could only be effected really and enduringly by the elevation of individuals; then as their influence spread, the moral tone would rise and react upon individuals, for the moral level of society is the average moral level of the persons composing it. By the regeneration of the individual then He would regenerate society. But to force reformation upon unwilling people and upon unripe generations was to lose the moral value which the slow dawning of higher ethical conceptions would bring to the race. The method might be slower than the rougher and readier one of compulsion, but it was surer, and it effected more completely the desired social results. Each Christian was to be the pioneer of greater progress, the centre of light, the diffuser of the preserving influence of a high moral and social life. Every regenerated soul became in the highest sense a philanthropist. It

[41] "Ah! your Fouriers failed,
Because not poets enough to understand
That life developes from within."—*Aurora Leigh*, p. 60.

was thus the good cause grew and the moral atmosphere was relieved of the pestilential fogs which a corrupt society had generated.

He surely cannot be accused of caring little for the race who loved it too well, and knew it too well to attempt to influence it, even for its own good, by means other than those which called into play its own moral sense in its own education.

But neither did our Master forget individuals. For what is His teaching? Every child of man has an Eternal Father, who has stretched out a hand to guide him through the intricate and perplexing paths of life. To all, He who is the Son of Man as well as Son of God has come with words fitted to all the varied needs of sorrowing and sinful hearts, and with power to remove the three-fold mystery and pain of our life. For upon all of us lies in some form the three-fold pain of life—the pain of an irrevocable past, of an unsolaced present, and of an uncertain future. For each of these Christ bears in His hand the fitting remedy; and in touching upon these in future lectures we shall see the adaptation of Christ's Kingdom to the individual wants of man. But meanwhile let us recall the ground we have travelled. We have passed rapidly over the surface of a widespread territory. We

have noted the varieties of its external features, the gradations of climate, and the rich diversities of its produce; we have beheld its lofty ranges, its broad plains, and its verdure-clad valleys; we have asked what single stream can bestow a treasury of waters full enough and diffusive enough to preserve in life and vigour such a noble variety of produce spread over such an ever-altering land. We have seen that there is a river of water of life, unsealed by the pierced hand of Jesus, which will flow through every channel that men will dig for it, which runs into the little valleys, which makes the pastures soft with its touch, and bids the hills rejoice on every side. This is the river which makes glad the city of God; this is the river of God which is full of water; this is that stream which Ezekiel saw spreading through the wilderness, and turning its barrenness into beauty; this is that living water which a man may drink and never thirst; this is that stream which flows to-day close to the oracle of God, and still has power to heal and to refresh the wounded and weary spirits of men. If it seem at times insipid and tasteless, the salt of a little moral earnestness, or better, the salt of the Holy Spirit given in answer to prayer, will heal the waters and restore the verdure of holiness to a

barren life. This is the stream of life which seems at times to disappear beneath the flood and sea of human history, but carries yet its unpolluted course to rise up in some new land or age and cheer earth's exiles with a sweet liquid music that tells Christians of their home. The power of that life-stream is not gone: it makes music at our feet; but we must stoop if we would drink of that brook and go on our way with uplifted hearts. For it is not with pomp or shout, with profound knowledge, or erudition, or culture, that the Kingdom of God comes; not with observation or outward show, not in ceremonial however splendid, not in sermons however oratorical, not in orthodoxy however dogmatic, not in modern symposiums, though the voices we hear may sound like a revival of the sad eloquence of the Gironde; not in these will the Kingdom of God be found. If you ask, where, if not here? the answer comes back across the centuries. The Kingdom of God is an everlasting Kingdom. His Kingdom ruleth over all; but if that Kingdom is to be realised by you, the Kingdom of God, lo! it must be within you; and if not within you, then though it is everywhere, it is for you—nowhere.

LECTURE II.

"The kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.

THE wide spread of Christianity, her power to adjust herself to advancing ages and to reconcile rival claims, are witnesses of her fitness to be the helper of man. It is said that Richard Baxter in reviewing his life related that in his early years the miraculous evidences for Christianity influenced him most; in his middle life the prophetic and historical; but in his later years, the fitness of Christianity to give rest to his spirit was to him the most convincing evidence.

A similar progressive estimation of the relative force of evidences may perhaps be traced in the history of Christendom: in its youth, perhaps the miraculous appealed to it most strongly; in its middle life, the wide range of prophecy and history; in this, its eventide, it seems more disposed to rest in its moral fitness for man. But this must be a fitness for man

as he is, not merely for man as he is painted; for man with thoughts now high and now low, for man with his moral weaknesses, his strong affections, his dark faults and his lofty hopes. It is for us to-day to consider this fitness with reference to moral evil in man. We shall see that her work must be with individual man when she undertakes the task of moral regeneration.

I. The main work of Christianity is with individuals. It has been said that Christianity cared nothing for the race, but only for the individual[1]. The accusation is not in itself true, and yet it contains a certain truth. It is not in itself true: Christianity did care for the race. Christ Himself set the example to His Church. Twice I read that the Lord of Life shed tears while upon earth. Once it was at the grave of an individual; once it was over the opening grave of a nation. He who wept over Lazarus could weep over Jerusalem. Those tears of His are the witnesses that He, who had a heart for the secret sorrow of souls, had a heart also for those wider troubles which afflict a people. Those tears were the prelude of la-

[1] "Christianity cared nothing for the species, and had only the individual in its eye and mind." Feuerbach, quoted in Eaton's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 104.

bours which Christian men undertook on behalf of races; for the genius of Christianity is on the side of all those movements which tend to bring peace and freedom to the world; the foe of anarchy, she is the advocate of liberty; her sons laboured for emancipation; her sons rebuked the tyranny of princes; the foe of cowardly weakness, she is yet the advocate of peace; and it will be from her hands that men will receive the boon which makes wars to cease unto the ends of the earth[2]. She fosters principles which lie for a season dormant in the world: she waits her time: she watches by the icebound fountains till the temperature of the moral sense rises and breaks the seal and lets them loose. The accusation that she cares nothing for the race is not true.

But there is a truth in it. The individual was the chief object of Christ's care. To Him who moved through earth refreshing the weary, the sick, and the toiling, the sorrow of the individual appealed, and to the relief of these He turned His first thought. And there were

[2] "Centuries on centuries will be required to discipline fully the human faculties that are to grow into the faith thus prepared for them." Hutton's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 122, quoted in Eaton's *Permanence of Christianity*, p. 24. Mr. Eaton well remarks that one of the tests of the vitality of any religion is the "power of assimilating healthfully the altered conditions of advancing civilisation."

reasons for this. He adopted a method different from that of the conqueror and the sentimental philanthropist. It is singular how men of totally opposite mould of character adopt the same method; both the ambitious ruler and the benevolent dreamer have thought that by welding men together in an ideal community they could attain their aim. But the result has always been failure. Neither the barbaric splendours of the East with its sumptuous tyrannies, nor the imperial energy of Rome with its inexorable yoke, nor the mild and well-meant absolutism of the Utopianist could really bind together the social fabric. The witness of all history is that the bond must be supplied from within; it must be the allegiance of loyal hearts, of common sympathies, of congenial aspirations which alone can cement the national or imperial structure. This Christ knew; and, therefore, He sought His Kingdom not through external force, but through inner conviction; not through magnificent displays of power, but by arousing united affections and harmonious aims. From this centre He might influence the circumference; from the circumference He could not hope to reach the centre. It was a wise policy which sought to reach the race through the individual.

But there was a personal reason also. All progress towards wide-spread social happiness must in the nature of the case be slow. It takes generations before men perceive that their passions are hindering the advance of the world. Only one by one are those great and much-needed reforms adopted which secure personal safety, personal freedom, personal happiness. It was long, very long, before the sanctity of human life was realised, and the sin of sacrificing it to a fictitious sense of honour was perceived, but now, except where political passions rob even great men of their better judgment, duelling is reckoned ridiculous as well as disgraceful; and more slowly still will it dawn upon men's moral sense that war is as foolish a method of settling disputes as duelling. Thus the progress of social reforms must be slow, and they are usually the outcome of some great social or political commotion; but meanwhile individual life is sacrificed, and individual interest is forgotten. As at the Pool of Bethesda, the angel of reform descends and stirs the stagnant water of human opinion, and then some single boon is won for the world: he who steps down first after the troubling of the water secures the benefit. But the sufferers still lie round the Pool, unblessed; there are multitudes who can-

not endure to struggle in the great arena of conflict to snatch at their brothers' expense the reluctantly conceded boon; the individual is thrust aside; the good of the race or of the community must be secured. It is right; but the sufferers who lie looking on in pain have hearts, and hopes, and throbbing sorrows and fears; they can feel, and they can love: are these to die without help or hope? Politicians must perhaps sacrifice the individual to the race; they can only consider the general weal; but a religion surely must carry a message to such. Philosophers may ignore individual sorrow; I speak it with reverence when I say—Philosophers may; but God dare not—and therefore among the individual sufferers went Jesus, with a word and a blessing for those who could not grasp the struggled-for benefit of life, with the blessing of health and hope for the sick and the sad[3].

But there is another reason also. And this arose from the view Christ took of life's troubles.

[3] "Observe,—it had not much
Consoled the race of mastodons to know,
Before they went to fossil, that anon
Their place would quicken with the elephant:
They were not elephants, but mastodons;
And I, a man, as men are now, and not
As men may be hereafter, feel with men
In the agonising present."—*Aurora Leigh*, p. 54.

He recognised sorrow in its various forms: His sigh broke forth at the sight of withered limbs, and palsied hands, and sightless eyes. But dark as these troubles were, they were not to Him so dark as moral evil. A withered hand was a sad sight, but a withered heart was worse; a maimed body provoked the pity, but degraded characters and diseased affections were sadder spectacles. Death was painful; but sin was more so. Over the one, He wept; over the other, He sweat great drops of blood; for a Magdalene was a more pitiable sight than a paralytic, and a Judas more terrible than a leper. But this moral malady must be touched by reaching the individual; it lay too deep for statutes or decrees or reforms to move. And thus, because the moral evil was the greatest foe of human life and happiness, Christ made the individual His first care; and sent forth a Gospel, not only for all nations but to every creature; to regenerate man became His first and highest aim, to combat moral evil in man His grand object.

We may notice, then, that no estimate of Christianity will or can be a just one which ignores this fundamental aim of Christ. We ask that Christianity shall be judged as other movements are, by their aim; and we affirm

that it is manifestly unfair to make some other supposed end or aim the standard by which to try her. We always judge things by the purpose for which they are designed. We judge of the eye by its power of seeing, of the ear by its power of hearing. We judge of the telescope by its power to reveal to us distant landscapes of far-off worlds: we judge of the microscope by its power to display to us the subtle work of darkly-veiled nature beneath our feet. But we do not judge these by what lies outside their purpose. We do not ask the microscope to show us the rings of Saturn, nor the telescope to reveal to us the beauties of a butterfly's wing. We limit our expectations by the aim or purpose of the instrument. Each thing is perfect as it fulfils its end[4]: our criticisms outside that end must be irrelevant. It is as wise as looking for scientific accuracy in a fairy tale, or dramatic power in a proposition of Euclid. We should deem it elaborate trifling to exert our ingenuity in pointing out the astronomical blunders of the "Arabian Nights," or complain of Spenser's "Faerie Queene" because the poet did not give us the data for calculating the transit of Venus. The aim or

[4] "Each thing, said the sage who taught me, is perfect if it can fulfil its end."—Lessing's *Philotas*.

intention in view limits the right of criticism to that aim. So none can fairly judge of Christianity and her fitness for her work who will not realise that she puts upon the forefront of her advancing standard that her war is not against institutions or men, but against sin wherever found, and sin therefore most and chiefest where Christ warned us its deadly roots were planted, in the heart of man, whence Christ would fain expel the foe and establish that kingdom which now as always is a kingdom within you.

II. The view which Christianity takes of life's troubles, then, is one which puts moral evil in the front, as the worst and most dangerous foe. This view has been questioned. Three objections have been urged. It has been said (i) that the power of moral evil has been exaggerated; (ii) that the conception of it involves fictitious notions; and (iii) that the enterprise which assails it is Quixotic.

We may freely concede the right to criticise the aim of Christianity. It is not indeed fair in estimating the force and value of the Christian religion to ignore that her efforts are mainly directed against moral evil; but it is perfectly legitimate to open the question whether this aim is in itself a desirable one. We may be

assured that the machinery is perfectly adapted to its purpose, but we may fairly question whether the purpose itself is one worth the expenditure of the time and force involved. For there is a great deal of misplaced ingenuity in the world; the ingenuity is not condemned, though the purpose to which it is employed may be so. The implement of a burglar may be well fitted for his work; but we have the right to disapprove of the work itself. We may criticise the aim as well as the execution. A man may be a brilliant colourist, and capable of producing the most astonishing combination of effective contrasts; but it is still open to us to doubt whether in limiting his aim to so poor a result he is fulfilling the highest purpose of God's great gift of art. We freely concede the right to criticise the aim of Christianity in waging war against moral evil.

(i) Christianity, it has been declared, by exaggerating the power of moral evil stereotypes morbid ideas, and darkens man's life with an unkindly needless shadow. The whole earth is full of beauty and sunshine: we lie in the sweet deep shadow of a grove of trees: we watch the morning sunbeams wandering elf-like along the grass, or glancing on the ripples of the brook that keeps sweet and melodious accompaniment

to the music of the birds among the boughs; and upon our calm and happy retreat the gaunt shadow of some ascetic Christian falls[5], and shuts out the sunlight from heart as well as life by telling us that we are sinners, the victims of moral evil. I admit it is hard to be disturbed in so quiet and peaceful a resting-place. I admit that Christians who have taken an inverted view of their Master's teaching have written and spoken as though the fair things of earth were wicked, and trees and flowers and sunshine were carnally-minded vanities. But we must not make Christ, who blessed the trees and flowers, and gave them fresh voice and fuller teaching, and made them whisper of the Father who clothed the grass and fed the birds, responsible for the distorted thoughts of those whose tastes have been so far depraved that they can find no joy in the works of

[5] "Sin, Lord Allen, said Mr. Storks, is a word that has helped to retard moral and social progress more than anything. Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so; and the superstitious and morbid way in which a number of innocent things have been banned as sin, has caused more than half the tragedies of the world. Science will establish an entirely new basis of morality; and the sunlight of rational approbation will shine on many a thing hitherto overshadowed by the curse of a hypothetical God."—*New Republic*, by Mr. W. H. Mallock, pp. 64, 65. It may be said that this is caricature; but it would not be difficult to find opinions substantially the same.

God. It was not evil in things which Christ assailed; but evil in man, and the moral evil which perverts and pollutes God's richest and purest blessings. And I am prepared to maintain that Christianity has done wisely and well in giving this prominence to moral evil, and teaching us to see in it the real and most dangerous foe of life. And for this I shall advance some reasons. Christianity is right in giving this prominence to moral evil, because it is a subtle and insidious power. For what is the Christian idea of sin? It is the transgression of the law: it is the open violation of the decorums of life, of those restraints which by all admission preserve the peace of society. In this we have little difficulty. But Christ points us further back. The outward life may be unpolluted: men may be great and excellent: their lives may be full of benevolent exertions on behalf of their fellow-men, and yet the inner and hidden currents may be all wrong. The motives may be polluted; the decent restraints of life may keep back lusts from violent outbreak, but they may still be aglow with hidden fires: the heart may be wrong, though the life may seem to be right. It is not merely Christianity that teaches us this. The observers of human life and character pierce below the spe-

cious surface and find the evil beneath. They remind us that the most illustrious patriotism may be the offspring of the most paltry ambition;" and a modern and justly honoured novelist has reminded us that the fear of social ostracism and not any very high standard of virtue keeps many a man from petty pilfering[6]. What is this but telling us that the moral evil may be uncured though the life gives us no clue to its presence. It is a subtle foe, this moral evil. It is not a symptom; it is a disease; we, like men ignorant of medical science, have our attention naturally drawn to the more conspicuous symptoms: the discoloured skin, the loathsome sore, these catch our eye: the well-skilled doctor sees in these the tokens of a virus in the blood, and turns our thought to the root of the disorder. So does Christianity with regard to sin. She condemns acts, but she asks us to see in men's acts the tokens of a poisonous tendency in their nature. This is the reason why St. James speaks of a man who is guilty of one breach of the law as guilty of

[6] "You don't think he could do anything mean, or dishonourable?" "I think his own good opinion of himself would guard against that," said Harding with a laugh; "self-esteem, and not any very high notion of morality, keeps many a man from picking a pocket."—*Madcap Violet*, by Mr. W. Black, pp. 120, 121.

all: the one act is like the single black spot upon the chest or cheek which betrays the subtle working of life's most awful poison. Christianity does right in putting this moral evil into prominence because it is so subtle a foe to men. But she is right also because this subtle foe is the most fertile cause of earth's misery. Religion, history, literature, science all will witness to this.

Common experience will witness that the real pain comes from within. Take a single simple fact. What does all life teach us but that the real sorrow is that which springs from the heart of man himself? There are shadows in life which men speak of with pain. Physical suffering, disappointed expectations, love snatched away. These are bitter, very bitter; the words of woe rise from every poet's lip; when he sings, he sings of vanity and vexation of spirit—of the inevitable shadow of multiform trouble which haunts the paths of human life. Man is crowned with gifts of sorrow—

> Before the beginning of years
> There came to the making of man:
> Grief with a gift of tears,
> Time with a glass that ran.

But the pain which is within is harder to bear than the pain without. Do we doubt this?

Take a simple fact of experience. No amount of happy circumstances can in themselves make men happy; no loss of them can of themselves make men unhappy; man is proved to have sources of happiness and unhappiness independent of facts outside himself. There have been men dowered with every gift, rank, wealth, intellect and power; yet not one or all of these could chase the care-lines from the brow. It is utterly insipid to talk like this. You are impatient with me because I repeat what is so true: we all know that the splendour of his palace, the beauty of his harem, the wealth of his kingdom and the vastness of his knowledge could not make Solomon happy: we know that there have been men endowed with colossal genius who have most sadly declared that they could count their happy days upon their fingers [7]. External circumstances cannot give happiness to an unquiet spirit. But reverse the picture, and we see those robbed of all outward ministrations of happiness and yet able to keep

[7] "I have been esteemed a man specially favoured by fortune; and I neither wish to complain nor to murmur at the course of my life. But, in reality, it has been nothing but pains and labour, and I may truly say, that during my seventy-five years I have not had four weeks of real pleasure. It has been the perpetual rolling of a stone which has to be picked up again and again."—Goethe, *Conversations with Eckermann.*

a deep and abiding calm within the lake of their heart. It is from within that the disturbing fires arise: it is within us the shadows lie, which no outward cheer can charm away: it is within us the sunlight dwells which no sorrow or pain can ever fully or finally overshadow. It is the inner power of moral evil which makes the heart fretful. Do you ask more impartial evidence? Exaggerated self-love is written down by a wise and able medical[8] man as one of the causes of that mental care which, and not any real hard mental work, is a fertile cause of insanity. History proves that the true disturbing causes of public happiness lie in moral evil. Where do the vastest troubles spring from? Not from the volcano or the earthquake, but from that which devastates more than the volcano and overthrows more than the earthquake, the tremendous passions of men. When the sacred seer saw the many-headed beast which was the symbol of all man-degrading power, he beheld it rise from the

[8] "When persons are said to have gone insane or to have committed suicide, from mental overwork, the truth in nine cases out of ten, if not in all cases, is that anxieties and apprehensions, disappointed ambition, envies and jealousies, the wounds of an exaggerated self-love, or similar heartaches, have been the real causes of their breakdown."—Dr. Henry Maudsley, *Responsibility in Mental Disease*, p. 299.

waves of the sea, the fit emblems of that madness of the people out of which most despotisms have grown. When a historian whom none will suspect of partiality or a fondness for Christian ideas took a survey of the great and brilliant epochs of history, and showed us the golden ages of the world—the golden age of Greece, glorious with its teachers and its artists—with Aristotle and Plato, Apelles and Phidias—the golden age of Rome, the age of Cæsar and of Cicero, of Lucretius and of Horace—the golden age of Florence, with its architects and its poets, with Pico and Brunelleschi—the golden age of France with Racine and Corneille, with Bossuet and Bourdaloue—he closed his pictures with the sad reflection—All ages resemble one another in the wickedness of men. When a greater historian than Voltaire took up his pen and gave to the world his calm and philosophical history of Greece[9], he told us in effect that the worst trouble from which Athens suffered was the want of moral integrity among her public men; for he related that uprightness of character was more valued than great abilities, for this quality was rare.

Literature proves the same. It is moral evil

[9] Grote, *History of Greece.*

in man that the dramatist and novelist acknowledge give them the power and right to speak. It is against moral evil in man that the satirist directs his sarcasm; it is moral weakness in man that the comedian exhibits to our ridicule; it is moral evil in man that the tragic writer unfolds to us in more awful aspects. One of your own sons has told us—"The voice of law addresses us even from Athens. There is a stern and dark side to the Greek view of life. The 'Prometheus' and the 'Seven Ages of Thebes' contain a 'natural testimony of the soul' to the reality of sin and the inevitable penalty which it carries in itself, and to the need which man has of a Divine deliverer to check and control the consequences of violated law[10]." I take up a popular newspaper[11] and I find the acknowledgment—"It is difficult to see where the dramatist is to find materials, if not in breaches of the moral and social law, tragic in their consequences, ludicrous in their incidental aspects. People who keep the letter and spirit of the ten commandments do not furnish any very promising dramatis personæ for either comedy or tragedy."

Philosophers have noticed the same. The

[10] Prof. Westcott, Æschylus as a Religious Teacher, *Contemporary Review*, vol. iii. p. 373.

[11] The *World*.

many-headed heart of evil in man was a subject of Plato's reflections; the natural love men have for the lie itself gave food for thought to Bacon; and the philosophical poet of France remarked that man was like ice to truth and a flame for falsehood [12].

Religion witnesses the same. It is no matter in this whether we cite in evidence true religion or false, because the witness of the less enlightened creeds is only the inarticulate acknowledgment of that which a higher faith freely admits. Let the early and degraded religions speak; and they tell you that there is that in man which they feel needs to be driven away: they speak of purgations, lustrations, of bathing in consecrated streams, of lacerating and subduing the offending flesh. What did it all mean? Too often the worshippers had little knowledge of deep moral need, but all this anxiety, all these cleansings,

[12] Mr. Buckle, who declares that there is more of virtue than of vice in men, yet admits that "whatever may be the case with individuals, it is certain that the majority of men find an extreme difficulty in long resisting temptation. And when the temptation comes to them in the shape of honour and emoluments, they are too often ready to profess the dominant opinions and abandon, not indeed their belief, but the external marks by which that belief is made public. Everybody who takes this step is a hypocrite, and every government which encourages this step to be taken is an abettor of hypocrisy and a creator of hypocrites."

were witnesses to some ancient instinct that there was an evil in man which needed to be cleansed, and which was a fertile cause of human misery. Saintliness proclaims the same. If you turn to enlightened men, you find a clearer witness—and the witness is one which is entitled to be heard. We give a higher credence to those who have turned their attention to the special subject on which we seek information. We take a lawyer's opinion on a law question; we rely on the doctor's opinion on a medical question; their special training and attention entitles their opinion to a higher place than that which we accord to men who have never had any professional education. It is in the same spirit that we should interrogate the saints of the earth. The men who have made holiness their study and devoted their attention to the eradication of sin are entitled to be heard on the subject[13]. I am

[13] "And is it not just they who have made the greatest advances upon the path of morality and sanctification who most lament the distance which still separates them from their goal?"—Luthardt, *Lectures on Fundamental Truths of Christianity*, p. 33. The same writer in another work (*Saving Truths*, pp. 344, &c.) gives the acknowledgment of Jakobi. "It is very easy to do all kinds of good, and it is always a pleasure to act nobly. But to live without sin, without transgression—how difficult, but how surpassing all else! To avoid evil demands powers of quite another kind, for this the whole man must collect all his strength, must exert himself often

not speaking of casuists, who reduce sin to a science and pride themselves on a morbid anatomy of unwholesome subjects; I mean simple and holy men who have been the salt of the earth; and when I hear them bewailing, not the troubles of earth, not their losses, not their sufferings, but their sins, I think that that must be evil which these who are so holy call evil. When I see men who have been pure and self-denying, with their clear eyes detecting the flaw and blemish in their moral nature, I feel constrained to feel that there must be defects in me which my sin-blinded eyes cannot detect. And from these comes this witness. Saintly Bishop Wilson, heroic Henry Martyn, holy Bishop Beveridge, pure and brave Bishop Ken, chivalrous men of God like Charles Kingsley and Robert McCheyne, all combine to tell us that the contest they have to encounter is the moral evil within.

Nor need we wonder when science herself witnesses to the fatal power of this inward poison. She rises with the calmness of her sovereign knowledge, and tells us that there is

almost to his destruction, to find after all that the energies of his whole manhood were too feeble." The man who wrote thus was declared by Niebuhr to be "a man of unusual purity, who seemed like a being from a better world."

that in man which can work his deterioration; that it is untrue to say, as men have vainly talked, that every fall is a fall upwards: she notes the aspiring growth of all created things; she records that along the centuries there have been upward aspirations in the universe: but she also bids us see that there is an element in man which makes degradation possible[14]; that the laws which men may bind to their service they may also arm with the poignard of inevitable retribution against themselves. She tells us there is an evil disposition born in men and growing with men which destroys health and degrades the race.

"The moral element is an essential part of a complete and sound character; he who is destitute of it being unquestionably to that extent a defective being, is therefore on the road to, or marks, race degeneracy; and it is not a matter of much wonder that his children should, where better influences do not intervene

[14] "Whatever may be said about the possibility of such Simian development, the possible human deterioration is an inevitable attribute of the rational moral free agent man; capable of the noblest aspirations and of wondrous intellectual development, but also with a capacity for moral degradation such as belongs to him alone of all created things. The one characteristic as well as the other separates man by an impassable barrier from all those other living creatures that might appear in some respects gifted with endowments akin to his own."—Wilson's *Prehistoric Man*, p. 182.

to check the morbid tendency, exhibit a greater degree of degeneracy." Such is the language of one well entitled to speak on this subject[15]. Nor is this all. Idiotcy, he tells us, is a manufactured article[16]; and if we ask concerning its origin we shall find that moral irregularity in earlier generations has been in an appalling proportion the parent of mental defect or weakness; for he tells that Dr. Howe, of Massachusetts, found that about fifty per cent. of the idiots he examined were the offspring of intemperate parents; and that a French physician of eminence traced the defective intelligence and final imbecility of one family back through the hypochondria of the parent to the intemperance and immorality of previous generations[17]. It is one of the awful witnesses

[15] Dr. Henry Maudsley, *Body and Mind*, Lecture ii. p. 67.

[16] *Ibid.* p. 44.

[17] "Morel has traced through four generations the family history of a youth who was admitted into the asylum at Rouen in a state of stupidity and semi-idiocy; the summary of which may fitly illustrate the natural course of degeneracy when it goes on through generations.

First generation: Immorality, depravity, alcoholic excess, and moral degradation in the great-grandfather, who was killed in a tavern brawl.

Second generation: Hereditary drunkenness, maniacal attacks, ending in general paralysis in the grandfather.

Third generation: Sobriety, but hypochondriacal tendencies, delusions of persecutions, and homicidal tendencies in the father.

of modern investigation, which men must see unless they are blind, that God answers us with wonderful things in His righteousness; that He shows on a vast and terrific scale around us, that not on the intellectual depends the moral power of men, but that the disregard of the moral law is sure to be followed by the decline of the mental, and the dwindling of the mental by the enfeebling of the physical from generation to generation. Do we wonder, then? Do we not at once acknowledge that Christianity is right in directing the strength of her attack upon the moral weakness in man, and affirming that the Kingdom of Christ must be a kingdom within?

(ii) But it is said: We do not deny the facts, but we object to the way in which Christianity asks us to regard the facts. We think these conceptions involve fictitious notions. We know too well the terrific desolations which moral evil has wrought; but we deny that they ought to be called sin. There is here an objection to the use of the word sin in connection with inherited evil. The sin here spoken of, it is urged,

Fourth generation: Defective intelligence; first attack of mania at sixteen; stupidity, and transition to complete idiocy, and furthermore, probable extinction of the family."—*Body and Mind*, p. 45. The whole lecture should be read, especially pp. 43–53.

is the inherited tendency for which no man is fairly responsible. Is it my fault if there are dipsomaniacal tendencies in my blood? Surely a man is no more to blame for this than that he is born dumb, or blind, or crippled?

The answer is—Christianity does not blame man for what he cannot help. There is no ground for the statement that she does so: but Christianity is bound to call things by their right names, for all that. We do not blame a cripple, but surely we must call him deformed. Christ did not blame men for the tendencies of their birth, but He most emphatically refused to call evil good, or to say that such tendencies were morally good. We are justified in calling defects in moral tendency immoral, just as we are in speaking of physical defects as deformities. There is no more reason for not calling such tendencies immoral than for not calling a lame man a cripple. Christianity affirms that these moral traits are tokens of a moral failure in an earlier generation; and the analogy of all scientific investigation goes to show that she is right; this inherited bias she calls "original sin," which is the theological equivalent for inherited moral defect. To say that it is not moral because the seat is largely in the physical nature is only to play with words,

because whatever materialistic theory we hold we must distinguish between inherited vicious dispositions and inherited bodily weakness[18]. We call the first moral though it may have a powerful ally in the physical constitution; we call the second physical though it may be conditioned by the moral temperament.

If it be objected that it is the word sin which should be struck out, we have a right to ask the sense in which the word is understood. We understand it as the aspect of moral evil, as a discord in the Kingdom of God. It is the idea of God which gives us the right to call moral defect sin, because we are sure that however it may have been originated, it is an element out of harmony with His righteous kingdom. To him who believes in God moral evil will always have the nature of sin.

It is of course open to a man to speak otherwise: it is open to a man to say that a breach of the seventh commandment is not sin: he may call it anything he pleases; he may say it

[18] "That 'the distinction between right and wrong must remain' is admitted. We thus see that even under the utmost possible exaggeration of the doctrine of necessity, the distinction between moral good and evil in conduct would not only subsist, but would stand out in a more marked manner than ever, when the good and the wicked, however unlike, are still regarded as of one common nature."—Ribot, *English Psychology*, p. 112.

is not sinful, but only unhealthy to society. But when he speaks thus he only affirms that society calls that unwholesome which the moral sense of men calls sinful; or he witnesses that physical science calls that unhealthy which conscience calls sinful; or in other words, that obedient nature registers the decrees of her king, and that the physical world is the executioner of the decrees of the moral world.

(iii) But there is a third objection: it is said that the enterprise which seeks to regenerate man is Quixotic. It is the philosophy of despair which speaks thus: it is the philosophy of paganism which speaks thus: it is the warped utterance of the determinist, not of the Christian, which says 'I am as I am, and I can no more help being what I am in character, than I can change the colour of my hair[19].' It was a Pagan writer who ridiculed the idea that a change of character was possible. The ancient as well as the modern acknowledged that a regeneration of character would be good, but they proclaim that it is impossible. "Those who are disposed by nature to vice, and ac-

[19] "Man is NOT FREE. He is as little responsible for his acts as the stone which wounds our head by obeying the law of gravitation: a crime is the necessary effect of a law of nature."—Dankwardt, quoted by Luthardt (*Saving Truths*, p. 345).

customed to it, cannot be transformed by punishment, much less by mercy." That is the voice of an ancient[20]. "It is folly to think one can change his own character or that of another." That is the voice of a modern[21]. It is not thus Christianity speaks[22]. She calls to men, and refuses to regard them as other than men—men with strong passions, men with often base thoughts, men with eager and ambitious temperaments, but yet men capable of recognising the right and the holy, the true and the good—men dowered with God's great gift of choice—men who, whatever their past life or their antecedents may have been, still largely hold in their hands the making and the marring of their fate. She knows the strength of the evil in man; yet she refuses to treat man as the sport of fortune or the slave of fate. She will not suffer man to unman himself by blaming heaven. The fault, she cries—

> "The fault is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves that we are underlings[23]."

[20] Celsus. [21] Schopenhauer.

[22] "A nature once thoroughly vitiated became altogether incapable of appreciating it (virtue), and the transformation of such a nature which was continually effected by Christianity was confessedly beyond the powers of philosophy."—Lecky, vol. ii. p. 4.

[23] Julius Cæsar.

She scans the world, and sees all the environing evils which may assail men: she looks into the horoscope, and gives her answer to expectant and eager men.

> "'No horoscope makes fate,'
> 'Tis but a mirror, shows one image full
> And leaves the future dark with sullen 'Ifs[24].'"

And in this she is right; and in this the better sense of mankind has expressed itself. Ever since the dark cloud of necessity has fallen athwart the world, men have felt that they could not fight when the stars in their courses fought against them. But the strong and guiding light of an inspiring star has led them to a better mind and a higher hope; and they have learned that the only foe whose alliance with the power of evil they have to fear is the weak vacillating will within them. They have learned to bear in mind that there is a difference between moral tendencies and physical or mental defects. Two sources of evidence will suffice. Let once more literature and science speak: for in these we have witnesses who have thought and observed. And what do we find from these?

I find that the dramatist and the novelist do not select the physical or the mental weak-

[24] *Spanish Gypsy*, by George Eliot.

ness of men for sarcasm: the play-writer that ridiculed the idiot or the cripple would be hooted from the stage; but the moral weakness of men—the conceit and bluster of Parolles and Bobadil and Sir John Falstaff—the unctuous hypocrisy of the hollow religionist are considered fair subjects for satire and jest. But if the conceit of the former and the hypocrisy of the latter are only the inborn necessity of their organisation, what right has dramatist or novelist to ridicule them? It is the deep-rooted conviction that these men deserve ridicule and are only preposterous egotists and self-made Pharisees which makes it possible to caricature their defects upon the stage.

And the power of self-culture which the dramatist or novelist assumes is affirmed by the deliberate voice of thoughtful men. Man, writes one, can by acting upon circumstances which will in time act upon him imperceptibly modify his character[25]. Another reminds us of the moral nature which enables man "alone of all

[25] "The free-will doctrine, by keeping in view precisely that portion of truth which the word necessity puts out of sight, namely, the power of the mind to co-operate in the formation of its own character, has given to its adherents a practical feeling much nearer to the truth than has generally, I believe, assisted in the minds of necessarians."—Ribot, *English Psychology*, p. 110.

created beings to classify his emotions, to oppose the current of his desires, and to aspire after moral perfection[26]." Thus do the students of human nature stand at one with Christianity in refusing to regard man as mere driftwood on the relentless ocean of inexorable destiny.

III. But if Christianity in giving prominence to the fact of moral evil spoke even more strongly than she does, she at least of all others might claim the right to do so; for she alone claims the power of removing this evil. It is idle for those who have no power to charm away the plague to dilate upon its terrors: it is allowable for the physician to describe minutely the symptoms. Thus it is with Christianity: she may speak plainly, for she holds the healing power in her hand. No other influence has been able to check the tide. Philosophy gave it up in despair. "Philosophy was admirably fitted to dignify and ennoble, but it was altogether impotent to regenerate mankind[27]." Such is the comment of a recent and impartial writer. Nor could culture or the worship of the beautiful work this change. "Through the Beautiful, that door of dawn, we are to enter

[26] Lecky, *European Morals*, vol. i. p. 4.
[27] *Idem.*

the land of moral freedom[28]." But there is that in the very worship of the beautiful which draws men away from duty: the stern realities of life are set on one side by æsthetic principles as painful and incomprehensible. Disagreeable duties are disregarded. Nor could pride work the change[29]. Pride could indeed crush the affections, and set up its own throne in the place of the love and the pining weakness which it had displaced. But besides that such a method could only be adopted by heroes or stoics, and was not fitted to the ordinary mind; it is well to remember that to exchange one vice for another is not to regenerate the heart. Nor could Law do it[30]. The sarcasm of Burke might

[28] "Schiller supposed that æsthetics possessed this power: he puts these in the place of Kant's categorical imperative. It is through the Beautiful, that door of dawn, that we are to enter the land of moral freedom. But this has proved a delusion. No natural ability, no power of the human mind, can make us other men."—Luthardt (Lectures on Fundamental Truths of Christianity, p. 191), who quotes in a note Schiller's essay on æsthetic education as follows:—"On the other side the civilised classes present the repulsive aspect of a laxity and depravity of character, which makes us the more indignant because it has its source in culture."

[29] "Stoicism made Pride the first of graces and reduced virtue to a kind of majestic egotism; proposing as examples such men as Anaxagoras, who, when told that his son had died, simply observed, 'I never supposed that I had begotten an immortal.'"—Lecky, *European Morals*, p. 201.

[30] "A metaphysical theory cannot restrain the fury of the passions: as we'l attempt to bind a lion with a cobweb."—Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 531.

be applied to this. He broke forth in his scathing way against those who thought to check the aspirations of an infant empire by dockets and briefs, by Acts of Parliament and blue book reports. No statute can control the passions of man. Fine-spun decrees will not curb men's passions, and even wise laws cannot reach men's hearts.

But Christianity can work this regeneration: where law and pride and song and culture have failed, Christianity has succeeded. Her moral influence has given a fixity to advancing civilisation and has pushed forward the regeneration of the world.

It is said indeed by one who undervalues Christian influence, that seeing that moral truth remains the same whereas intellectual knowledge advances, we must attribute the advance of civilisation to the growing intellectual and not to the stationary moral powers. This is like saying that a number which remains a constant factor of a whole and enlarging expression does not add anything to the value of the expression, though it is multiplied into any new term. It is like saying that the horse-power of the engine adds nothing to its force because it has hitherto been moving at half-steam. It is like saying that the mortar

adds no strength to the building because the building increases by the addition of stones, not of the mortar. Whatever of firmness there is in moral civilisation is due to its improved moral tone. Wherever the moral tone is low, the decay of society is at hand. It was sensuality and sin which killed Rome; it was corruption and vice which sold Athens into the hands of her enemies; it is always vice, vice, vice—moral evil in society—which casts down empires and overthrows the Babylons of history.

But it is not in supplying the outward moral strength to societies, it is in supplying the regenerating power to individuals that Christianity shows her chiefest power. Men said it was impossible to change the heart, and truly it is hard, where passions are strong and sin abounds; but the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. The touch of Christ bid the palsy and the fever cease; the touch of Christ bade also the fever of covetousness and the palsy of timidity disappear from men. He drew Matthew from the absorbing interests of his gain; He gave hesitating Nicodemus the courage of his convictions. And these witnesses of His earthly ministry were but the earnest of later triumphs of His Cross on earth. Far over

the world in every land the sons of men groaned beneath the yoke of sin's tyranny; but Christianity draws near, the dead in trespasses and sins are quickened into life. She points to the Cross, and she asks: If the Divine can drink the cup of death, the human may take the cup of life? If Christ can die, surely man may live in newness of life? She bids us look upwards and see the glorious company of the redeemed, and she tells that they were men of like passions with ourselves. Pharisees like Saul of Tarsus are there; sensualists like Augustine and Newton are there; Nothing is impossible, she cries to the sin-burdened—nothing is impossible if you will but unbar the gate of your heart and let Him in whose right it is to reign; and there in your heart He will set up His throne, and there will He commence His regenerating work; and there will you learn how He meets you in the very lowest depths of your being, and know Him to be divine because so suited to your human needs, and behold with opening eyes the spreading borders of His kingdom and the shining glories of His palace walls! Do you ask where? Again the answer comes back, across centuries of human experience and from thousands of regenerated souls, His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His kingdom

reigneth over all: but it comes not with outward pomp; and though it be everywhere, and build its walls in every mountain and show its beauties in every flower, yet if you are to behold it it must be within you, and if not there —then, though everywhere; for you—nowhere.

LECTURE III.

"The kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.

ONE of the greatest of the sons of song has told us that it is not enough that poems should be beautiful; they must be sweet also. It is true of all art that it must have a sympathetic touch. Without this we may admire, we may wonder, we may criticise, but we are unmoved. We can forgive rudeness of execution, we can pass over even grotesqueness, if only the affections are appealed to. Brilliancy which dazzles, faultless composition, exact portraiture we appreciate, we praise. The eye may be satisfied with beauty; the heart can be satisfied with love alone.

That which is true of poesy and painting is true also of Religion. Religions may be beautiful; their mythology may be replete with exquisite legends; their worship alive with fresh, joyous, or gorgeous ceremonial; their

teachings full of profound thoughts; but the worshippers will go home with an unsatisfied hunger of spirit: for a religion must not merely attract or astonish, it must have that sweetness which goes to the heart; it must appeal not to wonder or splendour only, it must appeal to love also: for man is not a mere compound of mind and body; he has also affections, and the great world moves forward on the wheels of love.

And the religion of the Gospel is adjusted to this craving in man. Love has been the method of Christ. It is needless to stop and prove this. The whole New Testament bears on every page a proof that love lies at the heart of Christ's system. The first movement of the Gospel is love—"God so loved the world[1];" the bond of discipleship was love[2]; the motive of obedience was love[3]; the inspiring power pervading the spirit of His religious system was love to God, love to man[4]; the first of the fruits of the Spirit was love[5]; the last of the Christian excellences was love[6]; the highest of the Christian graces was love[7]. When the Apostles reached their happiest moments their words ran in the strain of

[1] John iii. 16.
[2] John xiii. 35.
[3] John xiv. 15.
[4] Romans xiii. 10.
[5] Gal. v. 22.
[6] 2 Pet. i. 7.
[7] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.

love—"He loved me;" "we love Him;" "Thou hast loved us and washed us." The song, then, that Christianity sung in the ears of a sad world was a love song. Humanity had sunk low; the crown had dropped from her brow; the freshness had left her heart; she toyed with flowers that faded, and with fruits that turned to dust; pain and folly and disappointment had made her heart proud and hard[8]. He whose throne was in the realms of light laid aside His robe of splendour; veiled He came, a harp of sweetness in His hand; in the night and in the storms He sang, and His song was love, love evermore; they were chords of home and words of tenderness that floated to her ear; she paused, from her wearying tasks and more wearisome pleasures, to listen; the gaudy toys she played with began to lose beauty in her sight; visions of a nobler inheritance and purer life began to rush upon her mind—she wept. Was the harper wise?

[8] "In the reign of Augustus violence paused only because it had finished its work. Faith was dead: morality had disappeared. Around the shores of the Mediterranean the conquered nations looked at one another — partakers of a common misfortune, associated in a common lot, not one of them had found a God to help her in her day of need. Europe, Asia, Africa were tranquil, but it was the silence of despair."—Draper, *The Intellectual Development of Europe*, vol. i. p. 267.

Such is the method of Christ[9]. Let us dismiss imagery, and see

I. Whether it was wise,

II. What objections have been raised against, and

III. How far it has been successful.

I. The method is wise, whether we turn our attention to the nature of man, or the nature of the evil which has to be vanquished.

(i.) It is wise when we consider the nature of man.

I have in part anticipated this. The nature of man demands love. We do not comprehend the deep and awful meaning of this in early life. In our young days we are as insects sipping honey from every flower; we like the glimpses of the fair and beautiful; we love the sunshine and the birds, the grassy uplands, the patient browsing cattle, the ever-moving sea; it is the Wordsworthian epoch of life; we are impatient of machinery and chimneys and smoke and turmoil, the roar of the crowd, and the fierce heats of toiling life. But there comes a change; we

[9] "To the sorrowful in spirit and the weak in heart, to the weary and heavy-laden Jesus appeared as a shining angel with words sweet as the honeycomb and bright as the golden day. He laid His hands on the head of the lonely; He bade the sorrowful be of good cheer, for that the day of their deliverance and their glory was at hand."—Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 222.

must enter the arena; the education of the taste, or the sensibilities, or the sentiments is not the whole of life; we have no right to pamper

> "the coward heart
> With feelings all too delicate for use."

We must face facts and we must see humanity: we must leave the God-made country and enter the man-made town. What does it teach us? It teaches us to abandon the misleading phraseology which speaks of flowers and birds and hills and mountains as the works of God, as if these only were His works; it shows us human life—its eagerness, its fevers of hope and fear, its agonies, its failures, its terrible isolations; and there begins to break upon us slowly the conviction that the thing we perhaps thought least of—which we have trifled with, flung away as useless because over-abundant—is the most priceless heritage of man. We are taught in the stern and real battle of life that there is something for which the bravest heart longs, without which his struggles may be courageous and patient, but must be cheerless: we are taught that the heart looks evermore for some star of love upon the black dome of night. I say life, as it enlarges, teaches us that. In life's infancy we take the warm love which surrounds us as a matter of course, but when Nurse Time

bids us go forth from the shelter of the home, we then see how scarce and precious a thing it is. In our childhood, we thought love looked forth from every flower, smiled in every sunbeam, and sang by every stream; our fresh hearts saw love everywhere; but our vision grows keener with advancing years, we see with clearer, aye terribly clearer vision; the enchanter has vanished from the landscape. All round is a realm of death: death has built up the mountains; death has bidden the fair islets rise like jewels from the ocean depths; death with his skeleton fingers has fashioned the noblest things that survive in nature[10]; the ground beneath us,

[10] Luthardt (*Saving Truths*, p. 331) gives in a note the views of Professor Röper on this subject:—"The notorious liana, a plant like our ivy, crushes the tops of the proudest trees; others absorb the bark, or consume the vital juices after the manner of fungi. The magnificent clusia, which grow upon the trees themselves, conceal them like coffins. . . . Most beasts live upon animal, some upon living food. Those who serve as food to others are often slowly tortured to death. The pretty, and, in some varieties, tuneful nine-murders, impale their prey—butterflies and other insects—upon thorns and prickles where they may live for days. And then the great massacres of the little ants who make regular war on each other, unmercifully slaying their grown-up adversaries, and bringing up the kidnapped larvæ as slaves! The ichneumon fly lays its eggs in caterpillars, &c., and the larvæ then consume the body of their host. . . . In short, here too there is no stability. All is groaning for redemption. Nature 'preaches the most crushing fatalism, the most inexorable necessity and predestination.' In God alone is peace." In the same note he refers to the saying of Schopenhauer. "If God made this world, I should not like to be God:

the air around us, yea, the very starry worlds which are so bright above us, are worlds of storm and death; the leafage of the forest conceals the coffins of earlier growth; the bright insects, which hover joyously over every sweet flower, live too often but for martyrdom. "Life is one long tragedy," "its joys but pretty children which grow into regrets[11]." We are

its woes would break my heart." With this we may compare the words of Strauss: "It must have been an ill-advised God, who could fall upon no better amusement than the transforming of Himself into such an hungry world as this, which is utterly miserable and worse than none at all." (Quoted in *British Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1877, p. 146, article Herbert Spencer.) What a relief to turn from words like these and hear Him, who spake not as man speaks, saying of the sparrows sold in the market, "Not one of them is forgotten before God."

[11] The law of Murder is the law of Growth. Life is one long tragedy; creation is one great crime. And not only is there waste in animal and human life, there is also waste in moral life. The instinct of love is planted in the human breast, and that which to some is a solace, is to others a torture. How many hearts yearning for affection are blighted in solitude and coldness. How many women seated by their lonely firesides are musing of the days that *might have been*. How many eyes, when they meet these words which remind them of their sorrows, will be filled with tears. O cold, cruel, miserable life, how long are your pains, how brief are your delights! What are joys but pretty children that grow into regrets? What is happiness but a passing dream in which we seem to be asleep, and which we know only to have been when it is past? Pain, grief, disease and death, are these the inventions of a loving God? That no animal shall rise to excellence except by being fatal to the life of others, is this the law of a kind Creator? It is useless to say that pain has its benevolence, that massacre has its mercy. Why is it so ordained that bad should be the raw

disenchanted; the mask has dropped from the scene and its hideousness is revealed; we thought love was everywhere—we find it scarcely anywhere. Nature has lost her love-notes for all except the childlike that have childlike ears; and she speaks not love and life; her utterance is death and sorrow. And yet we crave for love; it is warmth more than light we want within the heart. We crave for love—yet there is no undying love in nature. And meanwhile years go by and the voices which whispered love in our ears have one by one been silenced by the hand of death. Yes! we with hearts that can love strongly, tenderly, fiercely, patiently, are bidden to look into the world's face and see every lineament of love fading from her features, and hear every note of tenderness die out of her song, and feel every warm touch of love turn to the icy grasp of death itself—and still we can love and we do; and with passionate obstinacy hungry love rises up within us and turns to the cold stars and the cruel world, and cries out that still, though powers too strong have smitten our loves into ashes,

material of good? Pain is not less pain because it is useful; murder is not less murder because it is conducive to development. *There is blood upon the hand still, and all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten it.*"—Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 520.

though the wicked winds cast their dust into our faces, we hold fast to love, and will not let her go: and though we are bidden to walk through a world turned to wilderness, all the more it is love—love we seek in our lonely pilgrimage, love that we pine for in our solitary heart—for love is stronger than death.

Is that a true picture of life? Is that a true story of the tenacity of love? Let only the eyes that have wept look up to answer. Let only the hearts that have been broken form the reply, and I know it will be—"Yes, yes! a thousand times yes." There is but one passion, one power, one strength, and that is love.

Was it not wise then? Yea. Was it not but tenderly wise that the Gospel should run in these words—"God so loved the world." Is not that just the utterance that broken, stumbling, and sinful men are yearning to hear? Is not that the word which vindicates the obstinate immortality of love which refuses to believe in love's death, and clings with resolute tenacity to the thought —Love is nobler than dust, love is nobler than suns and starry worlds; these live on, and therefore love, being nobler, cannot die. God by Christ vindicates this faith. The universe moves on the wheels of love; death and sorrow are but shadows, and there must be light be-

hind. In God we live and move and have our being; and God! O! Glorious Evangel of the broken-hearted and the sorrowing, "God is Love."

(ii.) But the method is wise if we consider the evil to be vanquished.

We have seen what the evil is. It is not in the tempest, the earthquake, the pestilence, not in the pains and sorrows which we cry aloud against, that we are to see life's worst evils. There is one worse than all—it is the moral evil which we call sin; and, though many will not agree with us respecting the nature of sin, yet moral evil, by the admission of men of scientific thought, is the seed which blossoms into pain and death. Moral depravity is the parent of intellectual imbecility, and mental imbecility is the precursor of physical decay. The spread of immorality sows the seed of race degeneracy[12]. It is a fact for the world to face, for philanthropists and philosophers to consider; it is the foe against which Christianity makes war. Now the enemy must be encountered upon his own ground. When we go in pursuit of him we must fight him where we find him. The fortress in which this foe, sin, has entrenched him-

[12] See Lecture II, pp. 78, 79.

self is the heart of man. Such is Christ's description[13]. Out of the heart come those worst evils, which alone defile the man. It was perfectly natural therefore in the development of spiritual strategy that our Lord should proclaim that heart of man as the battle-field of the spiritual conflict. The Kingdom of God might rule gloriously in sky and sea and earth; but the Kingdom of God as Christ wished to see it and as Christ meant to establish it must be where the encamped foe held his strongest positions. The Kingdom of Christ, if anywhere, must be within us.

Nor was this merely a teaching we hear from the lips of Christ, and of which we can find no confirming evidence in ourselves. We all know perfectly well—and the very advance of moral civilisation forces upon us the conviction—that the true haunt of the enemy is within the heart. The decorums of life may be observed; we cannot, perhaps, charge ourselves with gross sins, but it needs not the keen eye of satirist or cynic to see that the foe lurks in ambush behind the ostentatious decencies of life. Why should the conviction be so strong among us that we are all very largely hypocrites, that we speak

[13] Mark vii. 14-23.

not what we have seen, known and believed, but what we think will be acceptable, or expected or popular? Why do we talk about "the muddy source of the lustre of public actions," unless we know how true it is that the tainted motive is too often there? One who has been called the Butler of our age[14] has warned us in words of profound and sagacious piety that earnestness in religion is not necessarily religious earnestness, and that philanthropic enthusiasm may be only a thin veil of paltry ambition. A modern novelist[15] has, as we have seen, reminded us that "Self-esteem, and not any very high notion of morality, keeps many a man from picking a pocket." And do

[14] "Is there not as much human glory in the brilliant summit of religious proselytism, as in the triumph of a certain set of political principles? Is it not a temporal, an earthly, and a worldly reward to be called Rabbi, Rabbi? Christ said it was. If then one of the great critics of man could speak of 'the muddy source of the lustre of public actions,' the scrutiny may be carried as well to a religious as a political sphere. The truth is, wherever there is action, effort aims at certain objects and ends;—wherever the flame of human energy mounts up; all this may gather either round a centre of pure and unselfish desire, as round a centre of egotism; and no superiority in the subject of the work can prevent the lapse into the superior motive. In the most different fields of objects this may be the same: it is a quality of the individual. Whatever he does, if there is a degeneracy in the temper of his mind, it all collects and gathers, by a false direction which it receives from the false centre of attraction *round himself*. The subject or cause which a man takes up makes no difference."—Mozley, *University Sermons*, p. 80.

[15] See p. 72.

not all these point us back to the heart as the true and only possible arena of the conflict? Yes! the Master was right. There in the heart is the fountain of human energy; there from the heart streams forth the subtle poisons of vanity, conceit, petty selfishness, which corrupt even the purest of our actions; and therefore into the heart, into the very spring of our moral vigour, must the healing salt of His grace be flung, that so, there where God would have it, and there where He is most honoured in having it, God's throne may be set up and His kingdom established within us.

(iii.) Nor must the enemy be thus pursued into his stronghold only; it is needful when there that he should be encountered with weapons which are fit. It is too often forgotten that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. Material weapons will not vanquish moral evil. Physical means may suit physical evils; they belong to the order demanded by the conflict. It is through moral avenues that the heart must be reached.

This will be the more apparent if we consider the evil against which we have to contend. What is sin? The answer which has been given by the most eminent student[17] on the subject,

[17] Müller, *Christian Doctrine of Sin.*

and which has been adopted I think by the majority of Christian thinkers, makes it to consist in selfishness. For the present (though we shall enlarge our view later on) let us take this definition—the essence of sin is selfishness. It is the following of our own hearts and passions and desires, heedless of right and heedless of the good or well-being of others. It becomes instantly apparent that love is the true antagonist of this spirit. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Love is the antidote of selfishness: selfishness establishes an empire of sin: love will establish the kingdom of God within.

But let us take another aspect. Those who have taken pains to investigate man as he is (I am not speaking of professional theologians, but of professed men of scientific or philosophical attainments) have reached as the result of their analysis this conclusion—that the weakness of human actions may be traced to the supremacy of passion—that the passions are too strong and carry away the will with them—that the will as a regulative force in man is crippled. But I do not wish you to have this in my own words. Let me quote an independent witness—a Frenchman, who has given us a capital resumé of the views of many of the most eminent modern

psychologists. These are his words giving the result of these men's psychological investigations: "The root of our volitions is desire[18]." And again, giving a final summary of the concurrent views of those who are entitled to speak with authority as independent witnesses, he writes, "The will has its source in the activity either of the organism or of the instincts, appetites or passions." Now, these opinions, if they mean anything, mean that the will of man is a crippled thing, too often the victim of desire. It is true that the opinions here expressed make the will to be nothing more than the mouthpiece, so to speak, of aggregate passions, appetites, and instincts. This is going farther than the Christian view of man's depravity as it is called, and in the minds of many is little more or less than the extinction of manhood, by making the will merely a convenient term for the resultant of our clustered passions. But in any case the opinion points to this, that strength of passion and feebleness of will combine to work those moral weaknesses which are the dishonour of mankind. Pre-

[18] The whole sentence in the English edition is as follows: "The phenomena of affective life are the source of voluntary development, and the root of our volitions is desire."—Ribot. *English Psychology*, p. 173. Compare also Prof. Tyndall's words, quoted on p. 115.

cisely in harmony with this speaks one of the wisest and greatest of living English physiologists, whose carefully and earnestly prepared writings form a treasury of information. He warns us that frequently we mistake children and call that wilfulness which is in reality just the contrary of will-*full*ness, being the direct result of the want of habitual control over the automatic activity of the brain[19]. His advice then follows naturally enough that it is by guiding the activity with kindly suggestions that we shall be pursuing the wisest course. Similarly later on he tells us that in dogged natures, in whom the sense of duty is dead, we ought to search out the impressive parts of such natures, and appeal to some feeling which may be roused into motive power. Weakened will, swept away by powerful passions, is the analysis of moral weakness given not by theologians, but by men of scientific thought. There is an avenue to the will through the affections; and this is only saying that the method Christ adopted is scientifically defensible—that the way to capture the citadel of man's being and win it

[19] "What is called wilfulness often is in reality just the direct contrary of wilfulness, being the direct result of a want of volitional control over the automatic activity of the brain."—Carpenter, *Mental Physiology*, p. 134.

back to right and to God is through the affections. Thus Christ has acted. Like the ancient conqueror, who knew that the surest path to victory lay by the river that flowed past the temples and palaces of the city, and along its dried bed poured his troops and captured the capital: so Christ knew that by the stream of human affection lay the road to success; along the bed of that stream (dried up, alas! by burning passions) He poured the fresh full river of His all-conquering love, entered in triumph the heart of man, and established His kingdom within [20]. And this method gives the security of permanent success. If through the channel of the affections the will is to be reached, so also by the establishment of the higher love and the higher principle is the heart fortified against the intrusion of lower loves. It is the universal experience of men that no object of affection can be dislodged effectively or permanently unless another is given to take its place. The child will not abandon the injurious toy willingly unless you substitute another. The taste for the higher expels the taste for the lower. This was

[20] Compare the closing words of the Paradiso:—

"Here vigour fail'd the towering fantasy:
But yet the will roll'd onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the love impelled,
That moves the sun in heaven and all the stars."

Christ's method, and this too was the tenor of His teaching. The expulsion of the evil spirit was not enough; the good must dwell there, or the seven devils more wicked than the first would enter the empty and garnished chambers of the soul[21]. You cannot kill a lust unless you create a love to take its place. You may kill the body, but if you destroy the organism you make its regeneration impossible. Evil cannot be eradicated merely; nature abhors a vacuum; the heart cannot feed upon itself. Evil must be overcome not by law, force, annihilation; but expelled by good. Overcome evil—hate evil; these are good precepts, but vain; you must add the higher and active precept—overcome evil with good; ye that love the Lord—having Him to love—you and you only can truly learn to hate evil.

A commentary of a practical character has been made on this principle by a great philosopher of modern times[22]. He tells us that the

[21] Matt. xii. 43–45.

[22] "Capacity for the nobler feelings is in most natures a very tender plant, easily killed, not only by hostile influences, but by mere want of sustenance; and in the majority of young persons it speedily dies away if the occupation to which their position in life has devoted them is not favourable to keeping the higher capacity in exercise. Men lose their high aspirations as they lose their intellectual tastes because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them."—J. S. Mill, *Utilitarianism*, pp. 14, 15.

ascendency of lower tastes in young men is too often the result of the lack of the opportunity of educating the higher. Flung early into business, all love or prospect of cultivating higher tastes is starved out, and then having nothing else left, the craving heart and restless affections turn to the lower. Food for the higher is needed that the love of the lower may be overcome. Surely in this the wisdom of the gospel is vindicated. By love Christ will vanquish. By the higher love, not by law, or force, but by the sweet persuasion of love He will rule in the hearts of men. He will not destroy nature or close up the avenues of affection in men to obtain a mutilated conquest; He will not bind man to the mast or fill his ears with wax, lest the siren voices of life seduce him from his high and lofty purpose. He will take His seat amongst the rowers, and seize His harp and sing of higher joys than can be found in the arms of earth's sirens. He will carry the ravished hearts of men with Him safe through the snares of the world, because He will unseal their ears to the higher melody, fill their hearts with a truer love, and shape their lives to a nobler purpose.

II. The objections which have been raised.

(i.) The motive power evoked is called an immoral one[23].

To plain people, who only understand man's nature as they see it in every-day life, it seems perfectly natural that God who is love should work through love. They see that love is indeed the greatest power of the world—that it is love that moves the young man to his noblest efforts, that it is love which holds homes and nations together, that all the purest and most glorious things of the world's story have been wrought by love. They see love standing by the bright hearth, they see love leading the soldier through snowy heights and amid merciless artillery, they see love urging even the clear intellect of the man of science; nay, they have the confession from the philosopher's lips, "Indeed, I believe that even the intellectual action of a complete man is consciously or unconsciously sustained by an undercurrent of the emotions[24]."

[23] "The current of religion is indirectly adverse to morals, because it is adverse to the freedom of the intellect. But it is also directly adverse to morals by inventing spurious and bastard virtues."—Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 520.

[24] "But man is not all intellect. If he were so, science would, I believe, be his proper nutriment. But he feels as well as thinks; he is receptive of the sublime and beautiful as the true. Indeed, I believe that even the intellectual action of a complete man is, consciously or unconsciously,

Seeing in every spot the wondrous and all active energies of love, it is no surprise, but only the simplest thought, that God should seek to reach man through that great and all pervading power. The wonder of those who thus note love's power, if they have a wonder at all, is the delighted wonder at finding in the work of an infinite Creator a method so simple and so heart-fitting. But the simple folk may love simplicity; there are critical spirits who are not thus satisfied. It may satisfy the weary children of sorrow that God speaks to their heart, calls them His children and bids them trust Him in the dark, and love Him still through all the strange changing scenes of life; but this appeal to affection and love and reverence seems to some an immoral proceeding. This is the first objection. Right should be, it is said, done for right's sake; it is immoral to ask men to do right out of regard to another, however exalted or however good. The Christian scheme is, therefore, highly immoral because Jesus Christ said, "If ye love Me keep

sustained by an undercurrent of the emotions. It is vain I think to attempt to separate moral and emotional nature from intellectual nature. Let a man but observe himself and he will, if I mistake not, find that, in nine cases out of ten, moral or immoral considerations, as the case may be, are the motive force which pushes his intellect into action."—Tyndall, Address to Students in *Fragments of Science*, p. 102.

My commandments[25];" and the Apostle was moved by unworthy motives because he declared that this love impelled him forward in his glorious and evangelical philanthropy, for did he not cry to those who thought him a mad enthusiast, "The love of Christ constraineth us[26]." The system which thus inspired men with a new spirit of philanthropy, and sent them forth full of zeal for the lost, the sad, the sinful, eager to gather into the fold of safety the wandering and the lonely, is declared to be a system which is at root immoral, for it degrades the true conscience of men by leading them to do out of deference to another that which they ought to do out of a native sense of right. This is the indictment against the Kingdom of Christ. It is no exaggeration, I give the words of the accusers: "Children are taught to do this and that, not because it is right, but to please the King[27]." Hear another:

[25] John xiv. 15. [26] 2 Cor. v. 14.

[27] "Religion is mere loyalty.... This King it is true forbids immorality and fraud. But the chief virtues required are of the lick-spittle denomination—what is called a humble and contrite heart. When a Christian sins as a man he makes compensation as a courtier. When he has injured a fellow-creature, he goes to church with more regularity, he offers up more prayers, he reads a great number of chapters in the Bible, and so he believes that he has cleared off the sins that are laid to his account. This then is the immorality of religion as it now exists. It creates artificial virtues and

"Next I saw very painfully (I mean with the pain of disgust) how much lower a thing it is to lead even the loftiest life from regard to the will or mind of any other being than from a natural working out of our own powers[28]." In the same spirit a Frenchman has written a book in which he affirms that the rule of morality is not to be found in any impulse external to man[29].

But surely this is a confusion or an over-refinement. No one denies that when right is ascertained it ought to be done for its own sake, even were there no other motive in the world to command the course; but it seldom happens that there is no other motive at hand. It is not conscientious knowledge alone which urges man to act; there are impulses which move him as well. The act is right, and my conscience says it should be done; but the act will benefit father, brother, sister, country,

sets them off against actual vices. Children are taught to do this or that, not because it is good, but to please the King." —Reade, *Martyrdom of Man*, p. 533.

[28] Miss Martineau.

[29] "This rule [i. e. of Morality] is not external to man: it dwells altogether in him. Impersonal and obligatory, *per se*, carrying with it its own sanction, it imposes itself necessarily on all things endowed like man with freedom, and like him having the consciousness of their destinies and their ends."—M. de Boutteville, *Études Critiques*, "La Morale de l'Eglise et la Morale Naturelle."

and my affection says it ought to be done; for there is an obligation of motive as well as of judgment. It would be a most pedantic morality which would exclude all motives of love from our actions. It would be a dismal and grave sort of human life which would rise up out of such theories. The child would have to say to the father: "I do this not in the least to please you, or because I love you, but only because I think it is right; and if I thought I was only urged to it by my love for you I should refuse to do it at all; for such an act would be most immoral." Love of home, love of friends, love of country, these have hitherto been considered powers which have breathed life through the mechanism of life, and put the pulse of healthy activity into our manhood, and inspired the dead code of mere moralism: but now these must be looked upon as immoral incentives; and we are to bow down before the fetish of self-evolved legalism which can scarcely fail to grow into an insufferable egotism. And surely if such a state of things would be intolerable, we may proclaim it equally so in the sphere of religious action. On any assumption of religion as a thing possible—setting aside Christianity altogether—and coming to the most naked Deism, it is simply monstrous to

declare that actions born of love to the great Father Spirit of all are *ipso facto* immoral. There is a Creator, but it is immoral to act out of love for Him; there is a Spiritual Father of human-kind, but we must not call ourselves children lest we should recognise a relationship which would give Him a claim of affection over us, and might sway our actions. Can the denaturalisation process be carried further?

Nor is this all. This view ignores the grand solidarity of creation. It is to invent a God, whom we denominate an absolute tyrant, whose will and fancy may take Him out of range of right, and the love of whom may lead us to act wrongly; but this is to ignore the unity of nature and nature's system. There is a solidarity between the Throne and the cottage, between the King's Heaven and the most distant parts of the realm; the good of the hamlet is one with the good of the metropolis; wrong to the subject is wrong to the sovereign; that cannot be His will which is not right; His will is ever in harmony with the highest good, and is the exhibition of the highest right; and in acting out of love of Him we receive not only an impelling motive, pure as the motive of the love a child bears a father, but also a spirit more

zealous to serve the world, more keenly jealous not to transgress the law of right.

For the motive of love to God is a pure and elevating one. Proof of it we shall find in another way. It is an axiom which I am not afraid to lay down—that a deterioration in the quality of man's acts is a consequence of deterioration of a man's motives. For a long time man may detect no weakening in the moral force of his actions; but in the end it will tell. The poet who sings for hire will soon take a lower flight; but he who sings because he is God's singer will mount up like the lark to the very gate of God's paradise. "A man," said Dr. Johnson, "is never lowered in his capacity till he is first lowered in his tastes." The man who sets his reward in the claps of the crowd will soon learn to prostitute, like Dryden, his glorious verse to unworthy ends. And the deterioration of the motives will betray itself in weakened and worthless song. But where has the motive of love to God proved itself the source of deterioration to the quality of the work of any human being? When Haydn does homage to God before composing does he sing less loftily of the verdant glories of the world, or the poet voices of the stars? Does not the power of that motive—love to God—heighten

by a holy and noble heroism the hearts of men? Since the day the Apostle declared "The love of Christ constraineth us[30]," the aim of all human life has been raised to a higher level, and the streams of human charity have flowed in broader and deeper channels. No deterioration of life has betrayed the immorality of this motive.

But it is a fact that men must have motives; and when we are told that loving God is an immoral motive, we perhaps may venture to examine the motives which must be accepted in its place.

We are to follow the natural working out of our own powers. This must mean that there is a law within which, left to itself, will mould our life to its fullest beauty, if we will only let it work itself out naturally. But this working out of our own powers must either be one in which we voluntarily co-operate, or which is a mere blind force. The law must either be an irresistible necessity, or it must be a law voluntarily acquiesced in and co-operated with by our own will. If it be a law of our being and irresistible, then it is difficult to see why obedience to it should be called noble, or a higher mode of life

[30] 2 Cor. v. 14.

than a life which has been shaped by a spirit of love to God. An act or life cannot be considered morally low, or unusually lofty, if that life could not be other than it is; and it is strange that lives which are the out-working of non-moral forces should be denominated noble, and Christian lives called immoral by those who obscure all morality by destroying all differences between necessity and free moral action. But if it be a law within which is voluntarily adopted or acquiesced in by the will, then who is to judge of the code of right which is thus adopted? There is, it is said, the inner light in man's soul, and this, and this only, should we follow. We grant an inner law, a moral code within; but the whole history of the world shows us that this, though sufficient to recognise what is right, has never, without external aid, been sufficient to lead men to do right. One truth of all religion is that the soul must remain barren of all high and noble deeds unless some outward stimulus quickens it into activity; some love must move the spirit into work.

But another objection to the method of Christianity is that it is unnecessary. We can satisfy all the conditions requisite for establishing a pure religious morality without having resort to Christian theology, for we can have our

supreme moral centre of emotion—love; and we can have our intellectual centre of thought in a dominant power without us. Humanity shall supply these; the love of race shall be our motive force, and the good of the race the aim of our morality.

There is so much beauty in this that it seems ungracious to point out that we have no security that this so-called love of the race may not be a very defective moral motive. Cynics have told us that our hatred of injustice is little more than our dread of suffering injustice. If there is any sting in this, the truth gives the sting. But more than cynics have spoken the same, and showed us that the jealousy with which moral interests are guarded is very largely due to our deeply-rooted self-interest. The love of humanity, the enthusiasm for the race, is not, then, so wondrous a motive force as to be absolutely above the possibility of being marred by unworthy elements.

But the difficulty here seems to be to settle the code of action. The interest of the race is to be the guiding thought in the working out of this morality; and men have thought that by a careful survey of human needs and character they might establish a scientific basis of morals, which could be applied to govern all the actions

of men. For this system to reach perfection we must wait till history has unrolled her scroll to its fullest length. The interests of the race can only be the interests of the majority of the race; but what majority? The majority of the now race, or the majority of the race including those who are yet unborn?

But supposing all were fixed — the true scientific code arranged and its infallible interpreters appointed, what would it amount to? It would be found that the true scientific code of morals was simply an enumeration of those rules of life which were in conformity with the laws of the universe. The utmost that we could ascertain, in the widest and fullest induction, would be that line of conduct which was dictated by the general effect of those laws which make up the order of creation, and we should reach by this means a scientific confirmation that all the high and holy laws which Christ had sanctioned and taught were precisely those the observance of which would, when scientifically considered, promote the happiness of man. The experience of the Jewish ceremonial code would be repeated. Many of those laws which the Jew was enjoined to observe appeared to him simply religious ordinances. The eye of later observation has seen what the Jew, perhaps,

never saw—that the laws he so religiously observed were largely sanitary laws, enjoined for the health and happiness of the people. Thus would it be, I believe, with a full and complete code (were such possible) of all the laws which would promote human happiness; they would be found just those which are now commanded as the laws of moral and religious life. It is in this sense true that no new discoveries are to be made in morality. The discoveries of science will serve to exhibit the wisdom of the moral code Christ gave to man.

And when this discovery was made, would an obedience to such a code—an obedience only rendered because the code does promote happiness and is in harmony with the order of the universe—be one whit more moral than that which Christians follow when they say, "We follow these commandments of God because we know He guides us right, gives us laws which are in harmony with the order of the universe, which He understands fully and we do not, and which, observed by all, will promote the truest good and highest happiness of all"?

But I think we may venture to go further, and say that the code of Christ, which puts happiness before us as the aim, is a more fertile one than that which speaks only of aggregate

happiness, and that because it starts from a higher platform. The axiom of the modern philosopher would be—Whatever promotes the greatest happiness of mankind gives us the true code of holiness. The Christian starts from the other side. Whatever is holy must contribute to the general and ultimate happiness of the world. Both are at one in the belief that the law of holiness and the law of happiness will be found identical. It is a truth which faith believes and which science may demonstrate. But, meanwhile, it seems that the old impulse—this is right, this is holy; it must, therefore, end in the happiness of men—is the higher and the truer impulse; while, on the other hand, the very instinct which seeks the good of humankind—and which is to take the place of religion and faith in God—is an instinct which owes its origin to Christianity. This enthusiasm of humanity is a noble impulse; it is a true instinct; it is in the moral world as a most fair flower; but it is a flower which was plucked from the garden of Christ, and I think that those who plucked it have left the root behind; for no force, no motive which merely puts before us the far-off good of a far-off humanity, will ever completely supplant the affection which is personal between the soul and God, or create

an enthusiasm equal to that which Christ created when He said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these, ye have done it unto Me[31]."

(ii.) A second objection is that the command to love is impossible. It would be good to be able to love God; the scheme is beautiful; the method is fair and theoretically wise; but it is impossible, whether we consider the nature of God or the nature of man.

1. The nature of God. It is, I grant, very difficult, if not impossible, to love God when He is represented to us as a God of definitions, as unfathomable, infinitely great, infinitely powerful, eternal; for those words convey ideas of vastness and force; they may command our awe, they cannot command our love. But it is forgotten that these terms are only the technical side of Christianity; these are terms which are most needful in discussing the scientific aspect of religion; they have served a good and useful purpose in defining and defending the faith; they are as useful as the technical terms and scientific classifications of botany; they are essential to the philosophy or science of religion, but they are not in the least necessary for its

[31] Matt. xxv. 40.

enjoyment. There is all the difference in the world between knowing about God and knowing God, between being able to discuss His attributes and really loving Him. It is in Christianity preeminently that the loving God, the living to Him, is put forward and made greater in importance than the being able to define and to argue. Knowledge, prophecy, tongues, the erudition, the gifts, the theology of the Church are nothing compared with charity. Christ's commandment is not "Thou shalt be able to define God, and to hedge Him round with the fences of your ingenious definitions;" but "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God [32]." It is indeed curious to note that the very schemes of thought which are most hostile to Christian theology are those which are slowly substituting deities of definition for the Father of the spirits of all flesh, whom Jesus Christ

[32] "To know is not to have a notion which stands in the place of the true object, but to be in direct communion with the true object. And this is exactly most possible where theory, or complete knowledge, is least possible. We know the 'abysmal deeps' of personality, but have no theory of them. We know love and hatred, but have no theory of them. We know God better than we know ourselves, better than we know any other human being, better than we know either love or hatred, but have no theory of, simply because we stand under, and not above, Him. We can recognise and learn, but never comprehend."—Hutton, *Theological Essays*, p. 82.

revealed to mankind. It is in the writings of theosophists, not in the writings of Christian men, that we hear a jargon prolific of technicalities; it is there that we read of "streams of tendency," the relation of man to "the unseen," to "the unknown," to "the invisible," to "the unknowable." However useful such words may be, they are not the terms in which Christianity tells her message to mankind. She no more thinks of adopting even her treasured expressions of theological truth by the bedside of the weary and the sad, than the doctor does of perplexing his patient with the dialect of the lecture-room. Practical daily Christian teaching in its work among men uses plain speech, and discards the cant of the Schools, and leaves to the cultured few to regenerate a world and comfort human hearts with longitudinous phraseology[33],

[33] "From the point of view of those who know, or have ever known, the majestic symmetry of any organised religion, how flippant are the terms in which we so often hear religion described! 'The relation of man to the unseen,' 'to the unknown,' 'to the invisible,' say many; and one philosopher has gone so far as to assure us that it is 'the relation of man to the Unknowable.' Another declares that it is 'what the Immensities have to say to us.' Another that it is 'the sense of the stream of Tendency,' &c. One who has written more about religion than ten theologians deliberately assures us, at the close of thirty volumes, that it is 'a great heaven-high Unquestionability,' or 'the inner light of a man's soul.' Well, but the inner light of some men's souls tells them to get on in the world—to eat, drink, and be merry. The Immen-

and so help men towards some great and heaven-high unquestionability. Ordinary Christianity has eased our shoulders of such burdens and delivered us from making pots among the children of a strange language. "Fitness and kinship are the truly great things for us, not force and massiveness and length of days[34]." The words are not the words of a Christian believer, but a Christian believer would willingly adopt them when he feels that his message is not to explain to men infinite and eternal force or all-pervading might, but to tell them of a Father, who is strong enough to save them, who loves and longs for love in return, who needs nothing, and yet finds nothing as it should be till the love of His creatures is given back to Him, who feels that one alienated heart in His universe is as a discordant note in the great harmony of worlds and spirits, and who, fatherlike, cannot endure that any

sities tell many men to make hay while the sun shines; the greedy speculator finds the stream of Tendency take him into swindling adventures; the utter reprobate has long set his teeth with a curse, that religion certainly *is* the Unknowable, and treats of the Unknowable only. Now, I say to men who have known what a working religion is, how hollow would such phrases ring! Take such men as St. Bernard or Aquinas, or Cromwell, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Ken, to speak only of Christians. They were not to be put off with only a phrase."—Mr. Fred. Harrison.

[34] The late Professor Clifford in the *Nineteenth Century*.

child of His should meet Him with averted face [35].

And does not this very difficulty, that we cannot love mere abstractions, spiritual essences of unknown and infinite greatness, teach us an argument in support of the Christian faith? It is true, perfectly true, we cannot love the infinite and incomprehensible; and it is out of this, among other things, that the fitness of the Christian creed is seen. Here is the very spot where the incarnation becomes not a mere doctrine, but a fact for which human hearts yearn. God, not far off, not dwelling in "the solitary amplitudes of boundless space [36]," but

[35] By the early Christians all these things were directly traced to the Master they so dearly loved. . . . The universe to them was transfigured by love. . . . Christianity offered a deeper consolation than any prospect of endless life, or of millennial glories. It taught the weary the sorrowing and the lonely to look up to heaven and say "Thou God carest for me!"—Reade, *Martyrdom of Man.*

[36] "God is so great that he does not deign to have personal relations with us human atoms called men."—*Ibid.* p. 537.

Against this idea of God the whole teaching of Christianity protests. If there is one sheep lost, the shepherd will seek it: there is joy over one sinner that repenteth: there is nothing too small, there is none too insignificant for Him to notice; for His tender mercy is over all. The French lines quoted by Pressensé are nearer the truth:—

> "Tous les cieux, et leur splendeur
> Ne valent pas, pour ta gloire
> Un seul soupir d'un seul cœur."

With this we may compare the remarkable language of John

God manifest in the flesh—looking into our faces with eyes of love that can read our soul's depths, and saying in effect, "I know you cannot love the distant, the impalpable, the infinite, the Omnipotent; but behold! see Me! handle Me! feel the touch of My hand upon your hand, the breath of My spirit upon your brow; look upon Me as manifest in your midst, sighing over your sorrows and sharing them, visiting you in the robe and veil of flesh, which proves and establishes kinship with you." "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father[37]." Truly, when I hear men crying we cannot love infinitudes and vast magnitudes and oppressive Omnipotence, I think I hear a voice speaking sadly as it spoke eighteen centuries ago in Judæa, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet have you not known Me[38]?"

2. But it is declared impossible, because of the nature of man. Love cannot be commanded. Even were it possible to love God, it is not

Stuart Mill: "It is the God incarnate, more than the God of the Jews, or of Nature, who being idealized has taken so great and salutary a hold on the modern mind. And whatever else may be taken away from us by rational criticism, Christ is still left; a unique figure, not more unlike all his precursors than all his followers, even those who had the direct benefit of his personal teaching."—*Essay on Religion*, p. 253.

[37] John xiv. 9.

[38] *Ibid.*

possible to love Him by command; for love, true love, is a free and scornful spirit. Nay, she is too noble to be bound or bought; she scoffs at your command; she spurns your bribe; she laughs alike at the treasure poured at her feet, and the lash and chain brandished over her head. She must be free, or cease to be. I grant it. God did so make love; she rises in the heart often the solitary witness of the departed virtues of the heart of man. But mark that if she be true, free, and noble, it is no immoral method to hold parley with her. If she is pure, strong, and scorns to be commanded, she becomes the best and most fitting ambassadress between the exiled heart and its God.

No, she cannot be commanded; and though the Christian precept is, "Thou shalt love the Lord [39]," &c., yet it is not to be understood as being an enslaving command. There is a reason, a fitness, an inducement, an appeal to love. God, indeed, might well look for the love of His creatures; but apart from this, there is that in Him which, as we say, commands love. When we speak of a man commanding our respect, we do not conceive of an angry coxcomb hectoring us into a servile and sycophantic adulation; we

[39] Matt. xxii. 37.

think of a man so just and true, so honest and generous, so pure and high-minded, that it would argue a fault in ourselves if we did not yield him the unbidden homage of our respect. It is but a faint illustration: but it will suffice to warn us that God does not issue a naked and inconsequential command, an arbitrary and unreasonable precept. He made the heart, and He knows well enough that to do this would be to mock the heart He made. He bids us look and love; for He knows that when our eyes will but look to Him and see Him as He is—not as we have painted Him to be—we cannot but love Him [40], for as He has revealed Himself to us in His Son, so shall we find in Him all those elements which are the fit and needful inducements to love—which the heart seeing must, unless sodden with sin, love. And what

[40] "No power is so fresh and living as the power of His name to those who have learned to know Him as He appears in the simple and touching story of His disciples. He is represented now as a mild effeminate Christ who repels men of mind and power; or as a kind of irascible pope, demanding an unworthy subservience; and the religion He founded is stigmatized as fit only for an age of barbarians. But if from this Christ of human invention you turn to the Christ of the gospels you will find the reverse of all these misconceptions, which arise not from the progress of science, but from the shameful religious ignorance which prevails among us. You will then recognize the manly strength which blends itself in Christ with infinite goodness."—Pressensé, *Jesus Christ*, p. 9.

are these essential elements to love? Roughly speaking—There must be beauty to awaken admiration, wisdom to waken reverence, character to waken respect, personal kindness to waken attachment. It is through these that love not only grows, but must grow. Beauty to catch the eye, wisdom to enchain the understanding, character to impress the conscience, kindness to rouse the heart. Love cannot withstand a siege with these forces, if she be love at all. And this we find in Christ. Behold Him: has He not beauty? His life is like an idyll: there is the freshness of the morning upon Him. He has evermore the dew of His youth, the charm of it is perennial. "All true moral progress is made through admiration, and it is characteristic of our religion that it makes a greater use of example than any other system[41]." The beauty of that life captivated the most recent philosopher of France; the "Imitation of Christ" was his book companion during his closing years. And, behold, here is wisdom also: "He is the wisest among the holy, and the holiest among the wise," is the exclamation of one himself a wise man. Christ's words have a quiet force in them; they have sunk deep into the

[41] Prof. Seeley, *Lectures and Essays*, p. 262, quoted in Eaton's *Bampton Lectures*, p. 35.

mind of the world; we use them and are hardly aware of it; we scarcely know how much even as a thinker Christ has moulded the thoughts and the phrases of mankind. Behold, also, here is character to waken respect: "It was reserved for Christ to present to the world an ideal character, which, through all the changes of eighteen centuries, has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love." So writes an impartial historian [42]. "Christ is the one character without the idea of whom in the mind personal piety is impossible." So writes a German sceptic [43]. And here, finally, is loving-kindness in all its force, acting, suffering, and dying; a love which dwells not in lofty regions, nor on celestial heights alone, but which goes about doing good, which endures the pain, the sorrow, the shame, the cruel thorns, the piercing nails, the painful cross. It is not from the throne of the universe that God calls most strongly for love. It is from Bethlehem, from Nazareth, from Calvary,

[42] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i. p. 4.

[43] Strauss. Compare the language of Napoleon Bonaparte: "Across a chasm of eighteen hundred years Jesus Christ makes a demand which is of all others difficult to satisfy. He asks for the human heart; He will have it entirely to Himself. He demands it unconditionally, and forthwith His demand is granted, millions of men to-day would die for Him. This it is which proves to me quite convincingly the divinity of Jesus Christ."

for here are written these sweet incentives to love, a beauty to win us, an eloquence of loving deeds to woo us, and a life of suffering and a death of pain to call forth gratitude and affection to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.

And this appeal has not been in vain.

Time fails us to point out its strength in contrast with the weakness of other creeds. There have been splendid religions, full of noble thoughts and sad pathetic utterances, and wondrous heroism, but they have been objects of contemplation rather than forces of action. They have beauty, proportion, strength, but it is a beauty which is unfinished and a proportion which is incomplete. They are as a splendid torso, in which we can trace the hand of a master-genius in delicacy and force of touch, in vigorous attitude, and well-moulded form; but its power has gone, the well-poised head, the strong-planted feet, the pliant mouth, are not here. They are creeds, but they have no "speculation" in their eyes; they are beautiful, but they are dead; they are grand, or poetic guesses, but they are only partial. There have been noble conceptions of the religious kingdom, just as there were wonderful guesses at the order of the heavenly kingdom, all of them based on some fact,

or bringing to light some truth. God is beauty, said some; for see, all things are fair in form and colour; these are the varied hints and movements of His presence; and all this trembling beauty is but the heaving bosom of God. God is harmony, said another: listen how all nature teems with music—the trilling brook, the many-voiced ocean, the loud-speaking thunder, the heart-pleasing cadence of falling rain; it is melody which presides over all: God is harmony. Then said a third, God is thought: I pierce beneath all sight and sound; I detect the profound significance of things, the wondrous unchanged thought which lies beneath all changing phenomena; God rises before me as my thoughts evolve, and God is thought. But to all the answers came, "Eye hath not seen His beauty;" ear hath not heard Him; mind hath not conceived Him.

God is beautiful indeed, and His ways are ways of harmony, and His thoughts are not as our thoughts; but He is not beauty, nor harmony, nor thought: He is love; and love is pure; so He came as a little child, swaddled in a manger, and stretching forth a hand of help to humankind. And love is almost ever sorrowing, so He came as a man of sorrows. And love here is always suffering, so He suffered

the thorns, the scourge, the cross [44]. And thus men learned to love, through a love which did not slumber, nor sleep, but which laboured, and wept and died. Thus Christ's power grew. From His cross He reached "His pierced hand and lifted the old world" from its base. He transformed all things. He gave to poetry her highest themes. He gave power to art; He became a well-spring of inspiration; He guided the hand of Raphael, and the chisel of Michel Angelo; He gave unwonted pathos to the brush of Rubens, and refined the coarse genius of Murillo; He drew confessions of love from men of thought; He put high and calming hope into weakened and desponding minds; He gathered round His cross a great multitude, which no man can number, and one song rises from their various voices, "Thou hast loved us, and Thou hast washed us from our sins." The chorus so rises in marvellous harmony because one love animates them all, and one—the King of Love—has set up His throne in the hearts of all.

Again, then, we ask, Where is the Kingdom

[44] "All human heroism pales before His sacrifice. He died to deliver souls, and never was moral freedom more gloriously asserted than on that day of His agony."—Pressensé, *Jesus Christ*, p. 10.

of God? Again we say it is within—it is in human hearts touched with gratitude and tuned to love. If you look for it elsewhere, without first looking here, you will mistake the scaffolding for the building, and be scandalised by its ungainly features and human advertisements which spread themselves over the hoardings. But if you will first look within, you will find it afterwards without you; for it is in the heart, transfigured by love divine, that the dawning of God's day is first seen. If you will recognise His Kingdom, and know that you are in it, behold, before all, the Kingdom of God must be within you.

LECTURE IV.

"The kingdom of God is within you."—LUKE xvii. 21.

A RELIGION for man must be fitted to man: it must address him as a being living in the present, but as one who ever faces a future. I know that it is sometimes thought and sometimes said that man is of the present alone: there is a sense, but it is a very limited sense, in which this is true enough; we cannot be sure of more than the present. Of all human work and human effort it is as true as it is of religious opportunity, that To-day is the Day of Salvation. It is only in the sense, then, that the uncertainty of life gives us no security that the morrow shall be ours, because God doles out to us the golden hours one by one, that we can be said to be of the present alone. We are beings with a future, and our connection with that future is written upon half our language and half our thoughts. Our daily words tell us this. Wish, desire, hope, fear, suspense, am-

bition, prudence, all rise up before us and prophesy to us as beings that are not of the present only, but of the future[1]. Now to every period of our life there is a presiding angel: over the past Memory presides; over the present Duty; and over the future Hope. And therefore it is not enough that a religion should be a code of morals, or an elaborate ceremonial, or a forgiveness, or a love: it must also be a guide, and have a message for Hope. All religions have in various ways tried to say something to men's instincts of Hope. Every scheme which ignored it, or deceived it with false promises, has ended in failure. The cry of disappointment, of expectation, of sorrow, of bereavement, has been ever a cry addressed to the future; but the iron doors of the Hereafter remained fast closed till Christ opened the Kingdom of Hope and Heaven to all believers. Christ came with a message of Hope: He brought life and immortality to light: He told mankind that Death was a defeated foe: He gave a future to man: He pointed out to him a destiny and a home.

No part of the Christian scheme has been so

[1] "Que chacun examine ses pensées, il les trouvera toujours occupées au passé et a l'avenir. . . . La présent n'est jamais notre fin; le passé et le présent sont nos moyens; le seul avenir est notre fin."—Pascal.

strongly assailed as the Christian Hope. It has been represented as being enfeebling to man's moral nature, impoverishing to his social instincts, and gross in its form. On the contrary, I believe that it is elevating to man's character; quickening to his sense of social duty; and that while satisfying his legitimate hopes, it presents to him a large and an ennobling prospect.

I. The Hope is elevating to Man's character.

It is needful to keep in mind what is the true glory of man: too often we find that the glory of man is made to consist of that which is not his glory, but only his good-fortune. The worship of man is prosperity, success, advancement: but these are full often but the accidents of life, or we would not so often say that there is nothing so successful as success. Does it not force itself upon our attention as a truth, that the greatness of men does not consist in their position, or the dignities of life conferred upon them? The man is as truly great, or as truly little, being himself and none but himself, whether the high place or the dignified rank be added or not: these may be gratifying recognitions of power and usefulness, but they do not make him one whit more truly great than he was before. The greatness must be within—a part of himself, which the world-powers can

neither give nor take away. Is the true glory of man, then, in those inward gifts of genius or intellectual power? These are helps to greatness, but they are not that greatness. These cultivated by patience and conscientious care may prove avenues to real greatness, but the glory of man lies not in these: it is the character which cultivates them which is the true self. Squandered talents, revealing an ill-balanced character or hastily-performed work, betraying strength of egotism rather than conscientious genius, achieve no real greatness. There is a need of moral worth to give weight to ability: there is a moral force requisite for all the higher manifestations of greatness.

This has been recognised by many. "A man's power in England," said an eminent judge, "will depend upon his knowledge, his eloquence, and his moral worth." The last is, of course, the crown of the whole. Eloquence without knowledge is only vapid declamation, but knowledge and eloquence without moral worth is but skilful rhetoric: there is no oratory without moral force, for there is none without earnestness. It is the character which gives the power to man. The same has been recognised in one of the noblest anecdotes of modern days. When a great Frenchman lost all in the days of

political change, and found himself obliged to turn his back upon his country and his home, a penniless exile, one asked: "What is now left you—when riches, influence, and favour are gone —what is now left?" "Myself," was the reply. It was just so. When the true self is left, and that self still preserves untainted its priceless treasure, the character, then all remains that need remain; for then has man that which really makes him man: his moral power is left to him, and character which is the true glory of man. This is it which adds strength and consistent force to genius; this is it which sits as a crown, richer than gold, upon a peasant's brow; this is it which has given commonplace ability a rank above erratic or corrupt genius. Do you doubt it? Ask the philosophic historian of Greece[2], and he will tell you that men in Athens valued moral worth more than talent among their statesmen; the genius of Alcibiades was nothing compared with the simple integrity of Nikias. Do you doubt it? Ask one of the healthiest of modern novelists, and he will tell you that the slightest stain upon the character, yes, even a heedless action, works upon the mind the painful feeling of self-contempt, to

[2] Grote.

which no honeyed words or approving smile can avail to remove. "Nobody need know," he represents a young man saying to a high-spirited girl who has joined him in a silly escapade. "Don't I know it myself," is her reply [3]. This is the sting within—our moral character is wounded; we know it ourselves; our true glory is impaired. It is in a well-balanced character that the true glory of man consists; for genius is a gift; character is self-discipline: genius belongs to a man; character is the man himself: genius is the colour of the robe of life; character is its texture; and the fading of the colour will not rob the robe of its use; but when the texture is frayed or worn, the most imperial purple becomes a rag, and not a robe. Character is the glory of man, and it is to character-culture that Christianity devotes her aim [4]. This is no ignoble aim.

[3] Mr. W. Black, *Madcap Violet.*

[4] Compare Dr. Henry Maudsley's words: "The question to be entertained and decided at the outset will be, whether this aim (i. e. a worthy aim in life) shall be internal or external—whether the individual shall seek first the completest development of which his nature is capable, other gains, such as riches, reputation, power, being allowed to fall to him by the way; or whether he shall seek worldly success, the formation of character being allowed to be a secondary and incidental matter? It is a vital question, the practical answer to which must influence most materially the training and cultivation of the mind."—*Responsibility in Mental Disease*, p. 294.

This character-culture is a noble aim; but it is also most needful, and of this needfulness life makes us only too conscious. For what is character? I answer it is the product of disposition into circumstances. One of the most eminent sons of Ireland [5] defined knowledge as the product of mind into nature: let us define character as the product of the will into circumstances. We shall not have reason to quarrel with the definition; the growth of self-reflectiveness will show us its truth. The actions of childhood are actions of impulse; as the whim or the fancy sways him, so he acts. In later life, prudence aims to direct his acts, for he has learnt that his actions produce approval or disapproval, praise or blame from others; his interest has learned to reflect upon the influence of his actions on the minds of others: later, perhaps benevolence teaches him to reflect upon another influence, the influence of his actions, not upon the judgments, but upon the moral character of others. But besides these there is another, the influence of our actions upon our own character. There is a reflex power in every human act; we act upon circumstances and circumstances act upon us: and character is thus gradually built

[5] Archer Butler, *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy.*

up: it is a product—the product of our will into circumstances. Under the influence of circumstances characters change[6]. This is a trite observation, daily experience graves it upon our minds. Time sours many a disposition; the bright, free, generous temperament of youth has become the sad or morose character of age; or the impetuous, self-asserting tone of young life has become the gentle, strong, judicial firmness of age. And it must be allowed that too often the power of circumstances is apparently against the character. The hopefulness of rising years is gone, the checks and disappointments, the hardships and the disloyalties of life, have beaten down the spirit; time is too much for many, even though the time be but the brief space of threescore years and ten; "it is difficult," well has it been said, "it is difficult to grow old gracefully[7]." The victory of circumstances over the will may be seen in a debased character. Is it then desirable that God should

[6] "Every man is the son of his own deeds."—*Spanish proverb.*

[7] "The ills which are the inevitable result of failing strength are but the lesser sorrows of age. Far bitterer are the disappointments, the misconceptions, the neglects, which age so often has to experience. How seldom is even the most prosperous life followed by a pleasant evening! And how difficult is it—how far more difficult than the young suppose—to grow old gracefully."—Luthardt, *Saving Truths*, p. 292.

alter circumstances, seeing that they are too strong for human character? That would be a method, perhaps, of easing men, but it would not be a method of helping their character-growth. It is not easy circumstances which protect men's characters from deterioration. Unfortunately ease is most deleterious; prosperity may harden men's hearts, luxury may enervate, comfort may deprave. The weakness lies within, the changing circumstances develop, they do not cause or create character, the fault lies in ourselves; the will is weak, and too often fails to use any modifying force upon surrounding circumstances; and so it is constantly reaping in itself the reward of its weakness or its folly. There is a tendency in the laws around us to bring to light the slumbering energies of the good and evil seeds in human character; the influence is strong to bring forth into light the little unsuspected root of bitterness, we scarcely note them in early life, the wilful ways of the child are pretty and taking:—

"In love's spring all good seems possible;
No threats, all promises, brooklets ripple full
And bathe the rushes, vicious crawling things
Are pretty eggs: the sun shines graciously
And parches not[8]."

[8] George Eliot, *Spanish Gypsy*.

But the slow character-forming years hatch the beauteous eggs, and bring forth the viper brood. The little pleasing fault grows to an ugly heart-killing vice. There is a fertility in the growth-power of evil. Hear how St. Chrysostom brings out into terrible force the outgrowth of luxuriousness: "The luxurious soul is unable to hear or to see anything. It becomes weak, ignoble, unmanly, illiberal, cowardly, full of impudence, servility, ignorance, rage, violence, and all kinds of evil, and destitute of opposite virtues. The body grows sleek and gross, the soul lean and weakly." So does luxuriousness tend to deprave the character, and character is the true nobility of man. But hear another, a woman of high character, shrewd insight, large and even vehement sympathies. She writes not in the fourth but in the nineteenth century, not for the ladies of Constantinople, but for the ladies of England; and she attacks the foolish fashions, and the self-constituted and would-be ladylike invalidism which is partly true, and partly imaginary; and she shows with unsparing severity its fatal effects upon the character. The mere indulgence of the spirit of this agreeable invalidism brings about a degeneracy of moral tone, a want of ingenuousness. "It leads to self-indulgence, and self-indulgence to selfishness, and selfishness

(invariably) to deceit and affectation, till the whole character crumbles to pieces with dry rot[9]." So does self-indulgence deprave the character, and character, we repeat, is the true nobility of man. It is the terrible witness how true it is that our actions are daily building a character and circumstances are building with us. "Every action becomes more certainly an eternal mother than an eternal daughter." Such is the significant utterance of Jean Paul Richter[10]. It is but saying that the influence of an action is never limited to itself, for man is the product of his will and the circumstances outside himself. And the fixed type of character towards which we grow is daily made more plain. The will, indeed, should exert more modifying force, but alas! in the majority of cases the power of some inner evil or the simple love of idleness and pleasure carries away the will, and the character is but the full growth of the long enshrined seed. Like vegetables, we passively submit to the influences around; we exert neither will nor conscience to shape our heart-growth; the lines of character constantly be-

[9] "Chronic petite santé leads to self-indulgence," &c. Article on "The little health of Ladies," by Miss F. P. Cobbe, *Contemporary Review*, vol. xxxi. p. 278.

[10] Quoted in Cook's Boston Lectures, Series i. p. 55.

come clearer, and the looker-on can prophesy the final form which it will assume.

> "All characters
> Must shrink or widen as our wine-skins do,
> For more or less that we can pour in them
> To fixed prediction[11]."

The awful prediction is the mere manifestation of the destiny which is ours, not by reason of any previous forecast or inevitable decree, but because we have trifled with our will, or left it at the mercy of passions; and uncontrolled passions are always at the mercy of circumstances[12]: we have sown—heedlessly sown—and we have reaped the fruit of our own actions in the features which impartial time has stamped upon us; we have founded the type by which our own characters are printed where all men

[11] George Eliot, *Spanish Gypsy*.

[12] I again quote Dr. Henry Maudsley: "The matter is worse when a person has made success in business the one aim of his life, when he has by long concentration of desire and energy upon such an aim so completely grown to it as to have made it the main part of his inner life—that to which all his thoughts, feelings and actions are directed; then if some error of his own, or some misfortune beyond his control, shatters his hopes, destroys the pride of his previous accomplishments, lays low the fabric which he has been building with all the eagerness and energy of an intense egoism, he is left naked and defenceless against his afflictions, sinks into melancholy and from melancholy into madness. To neglect the continued culture and exercise of the intellectual and moral faculties is to leave the mind at the mercy of external circumstances: with it as with the body, to cease to strive is to begin to die."—*Responsibility in Mental Disease*, p. 296.

may read them: the secret things become manifest; our character is a fact known and read of all men; it is our own child, and we are ashamed of it. We shrink from the exaggerated resemblance, as a man does from the full-grown vices of the son whom he has trained in the way of wrong-doing. We have depraved our character by weakness, by waywardness, by sin; and character is the true nobility of man. It is here, then, that the need of help is to be seen. Circumstances cannot do more than co-operate with will: they cannot create what does not exist: they are powerful to aid the growth of good, as well as the growth of evil. It is within, that the help must be given: it is within, that the change must be: our will, our disposition is the force that needs aid and purification. If only we had the ally within, the law outside would be our ally too. It is the weak element within, which weakens the result. To give elevation to character we need therefore some assistant force within. It will not do to alter the outward forces; it is needful rather to regenerate the inner, that that which is without may be clean also.

This aid Christianity supplies. Its aim is to assist in this character-growth. Its aim is the bestowal of an assisting and co-operating spirit.

"Take heed unto thyself" is the language of the Apostle; let your aims be ever self-culture. Remember the outward influences, but remember the inward power which can change them to good or evil. To meet this, the Holy Spirit is bestowed, that the law of good may be the law of life; the law is written in the heart; God works with us to will and to do; and thus is there created a grace-formed individualism within man. He becomes gifted with an energy to transform the hard clay of life, and he is thus made spiritually the possessor of power like to that dreamed-of stone at whose touch all things become gold. Christianity promises the Divine Spirit which so gives compactness and purpose to man's will that all circumstances are ministers of stronger and nobler character-growth. All things work together for good. Thus the impossible, as our fainting hearts and baffled wills have called it, becomes possible; and the way to the truest and highest greatness is laid open to the weakest. All cannot be famous in earthly story; all cannot acquire earthly wealth; all cannot climb into the glittering uplands of life; but there is a glory which all may reach, the glory of the full growth of a God-like character —a glory better and more truly honourable than the glory of name or fame. To reach this full

and true flower of life, to achieve this the real end of our being, to ripen slowly through changing years, renewed to the image of Him who created us, is the Christian's aim; and who will say that it is needless or ignoble; that this is not the truest kingship, the kingship over ourselves; and that this is not the divinest kingdom, the kingdom of God which is within?

II. Neither is the hope selfish as regards others.

It is said that the Christian hope so concentrates men's attention upon the saving of their souls and the fitting themselves to live in another world that they are often unfit or heedless how to live in the present. Christianity, it is declared, teaches men how to die; it is time she took to teaching them how to live. She teaches men that they are strangers and pilgrims, that this world is not their home, that it is polluted, that their true rest and true home lies beyond, and that therefore she unfits men for the simple duties of citizens and friends; that in making them better Christians she makes them less useful men. But this accusation misconceives the meaning of Christian precepts, ignores the pervading motive spirit of Christianity, and shuts out from view the quickening power of the eternal hope.

(i.) It misconceives the meaning of Christian precepts. It is true that we are taught to love not the world, to regard the present life as a pilgrimage, but it is not true that we are taught to ignore either the natural enjoyment or the obvious duties of the present. We are told to take a true estimate of life, and to administer it after some settled system, to have some aim and worthy purpose in it. To love the world is to take its passing joys and pleasures as the terminus of our efforts and the culmination of our activities; it is to rest in these instead of subordinating all life to its fit and true end. Life is something which is worthy a wise aim, and its circumstances should be laid under contribution to help forward that aim. To live in mere enjoyment is to act like children who are pleased with coloured threads but never try to weave them to any pattern, or who seize the brush of the painter and dash the paint recklessly and aimlessly on the canvas; to live as God and Christianity, as reason and right would have us live, is to take the colours and lay them on the canvas in obedience to some high motive and in harmony with some noble design, and thus to subordinate all things to a great and well-wrought purpose: and if this purpose be character-culture and self-reformation, then surely it

is no ignoble or selfish one; it is not a purpose useless to mankind at large, but rather of the very highest use. The truest philanthropy is self-reformation. The weariness of the world is much made up of the multitude of preachers and the fewness of well-doers. Well has a modern man of science reflected on the few men who definitely set self-culture before them as an aim in life [13]. Well did Lavater exclaim, "The man who reforms himself has done more towards reforming the public than a dozen noisy patriots." The aim of self-culture and the building up of character by divine help to the true Godlike type is a noble one, and is fraught with the highest and most practical benefits to the public. Such a character will not be possessed by the feverish haste to be rich which is the source of commercial dishonesty and disaster. Such a character will not be betrayed into foolish and vain ostentations of unreal wealth which is the bane of so many circles of so-called good society. Such a character will not be full of vicious ambitions, or the restlessness which is born of conceited merit. The quietude and discipline of character is the elevation of self

[13] Dr. Henry Maudsley thus writes: "There is hardly any one who sets self-development before himself as an aim of life."—*Responsibility in Mental Disease*, p. 290.

and the guarantee of the peace and order of society.

(ii.) But the fear that Christian hope leads to selfishness, practically ignores the whole pervading spirit of Christianity. The spirit which looks to God, and which impelled by love to Him seeks to be like Him, is not a refined and elevated pleasure which diverts our love from mankind, it is rather a spirit which draws from a deep and unfailing spring the fresh streams of noble impulses. Love to man is not a precept added by Christ to balance the love to God in the fear of an undue preponderance of one command over the other. It is a natural corollary. The second command is like unto the first, because the features of the first are reflected in it, as in its offspring. So much was this felt by the sacred writers that St. John deems that love to God is impossible where there is no love to man. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen [14]?" "Whoso seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth (not the love of man, but) the love of God in him [15]?" The love of man is the natural outcome of love to God. Mankind is transfigured in the eyes

[14] 1 John iv. 20. [15] 1 John iii. 17.

of the man in whom the love of God dwells. A growing civilisation and a more philosophic view of life might show us the grand solidarity of the world, and teach us that he who lives by others should live for others. But it has been well said[16] that the thought has tenfold force with the Christian: to him humanity is not a mere aggregation of mutual interests or even mutual sympathies: it is a divinely formed family: no one member of it is to be despised: the same Father made all: the same Father loves all: the same Saviour redeemed all. The lingering touch of God's hand is upon all humanity: in the view of Him who is their Father all meaner distinctions die: there is neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian, bond or free: all are one in Christ Jesus. It is here where God made manifest His true Fatherhood that the true Altruism bears its fruit. We do not undervalue the Altruism of to-day: it is a noble thought; it may bear fruit; but while we admire the grandeur of the conception, we cannot help thinking that it is a conception borrowed from Christianity[17]; and when we hear it stated

[16] Prof. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, Appendix on Positivism.

[17] "Our present school of moralists are men who would still retain the moral passion, but at the same time they deny

without reference to Him who made of one blood all men to dwell on the face of the earth, we fear that it must lack the vital force which comes from Him alone. We admire the beauty of the flower, but we think it has been plucked from the garden of Christ, and that he who plucked it has left the root behind; we know at least that those who have loved God most have loved man most. He who loves the author most will value most the autograph; and the Christian sees in every man the autograph of God; and just as the meanest things are cherished by us and folded by in safe spots because they are hallowed to us by the memory and love of those who are gone, so however contradictory,

the existence of its only possible object, and set up others that are utterly inadequate either to excite or appease it. Such is the enthusiasm of humanity which is now offered as an explanation of it. This is really nothing but the desire of God, which will not confess itself. George Eliot's books, to turn to a striking instance, are really instinct with a latent Theism, with an unacknowledged religious dogmatism of the most absolute and severest kind. George Eliot is really, as Spinoza was, a person intoxicated with God. Mr. Frederick Harrison is another case in point. He too, like George Eliot, is a suppressed theist. He is full of a longing for God that declines to own itself, and when he tells us that all his fine feelings are due to the teaching of Positivism, the best reply we can make to him is in the lines of Byron, with the alteration of a single word:—

> If you think philosophy 'twas this did,
> I can't help thinking *Theism* assisted."

Article by Mallock in *Nineteenth Century*, Jan. 1878, p. 166.

foolish, feeble, and degraded men may be, yet do they become dear to us, because dear to Him who loved them. "He that loveth Him that begat, loves Him also that is begotten of Him[18]." All the most worthless and base are now kin to the Christian, because all are now dignified with the love of the unchanging God: we know that they must be precious because He so valued them: we know that they are not and cannot be vile: we dare not do aught to weaken or degrade any for whom Christ died[19].

(iii.) And the light which shines for the future gives new power to this thought. Man seen in the dim light of the clouded and fleeting present looks meagre and contemptible; but those who take lofty views of man's future see in him a dignity which is unseen by others. The bright light of eternal hope sheds a glory on all mankind. It is quite a mistake to think that the sense of a life to come makes this life look short and mean. Men speak as if the idea of an eternal life has made this life of threescore and ten years seem insignificant. They think that the untold splendours of the future cast into dimness the glories and kill out the interests of the present, just as the first shilling of

[18] 1 John v. 1.
[19] Rom. xiv. 15, 20; 1 Cor. viii. 11.

the child is nothing in the eyes of the millionaire. The comparison is unjust. Heaven is not as a vast fortune, and earth but a poor inheritance. The comparison would still be inaccurate but more near the truth were the shilling the first invested sum out of which the millionaire's fortune grew. Let that be the comparison and then we read in the single coin the promise of the stupendous wealth to follow. The life to come gives its significance to the life now present. It is the grand possibility which dignifies present labour. The work of the teacher draws its greatness not from the things taught, but from the serious and real life for which he is fitting his pupils: the life of manhood stands looking in at the door of the school-room; the spelling-book and the dull wearisome iterations of school routine catch a new dignity from the coming life; without it they would be meaningless, perhaps mischievous. So it is that man's life, short and painful as it is, gains new significance from the future life and the immortality to come. He who sees in man the noble promise of that future finds him invested with new worth: while "he who thinks meanly of man's destiny will think meanly of man." He who catches if it be but a glimpse of the love of God, and of a life to come, begins to comprehend

the grand future which remains. It is love only which can learn to comprehend the length, breadth, and depth and height of God's purposes of love. She can see in the unshapely masses of ruined life around her the lineaments of a transformed character, as the sculptor may read in the unhewn block of marble the swelling beauty and fair proportions of the statue yet to be.

Yes, the future which is of God, the hope which is of God, like the love which is of God, adds glorious meaning to human life. Love to man is on the obverse of the medal which wears the impress of the love of God on the reverse. Hope for man is the answering legend to the cry of the Psalmist, "My hope is in Thee, O God." Lovers of God have been lovers of men, hopeful for men and toiling for men; the labour of love and the patience of hope have sprung up in the hearts of those who learned that God was love. It is not true that Christian hope and Christian love make men despise the present or disregard the duties of this life. True there have been erratic Christians who have lost their power of sympathy with the struggles of men by withdrawing from the arena of conflict; but the ascetic, the mystic, the puritan have all in their turn been men of half-truths. The healthful

spirit of the Christian Church has, however, asserted itself elsewhere. Philanthropies have been the work of Christians. The pagan world could enjoy barbarities for amusement's sake, and let men be tortured for a Roman holiday. It was a Christian who broke the yoke of that tyrannous pleasure. Christian love and Christian hope joined hands and, foremost in the noble race of benevolence, laboured to raise the fallen and console the weary. "There is not a secular reform," says a wise and thoughtful writer, "in the whole development of modern civilisation which (if it is more than mechanical) has not drawn its inspiration from a religious principle. Infirmaries for the body have sprung out of duty to the soul; schools for the letter, that free way may be opened for the spirit; sanitary laws, that the diviner elements in human nature may not become incredible and hopeless from their foul environment. Who would ever lift a voice for the slave that looked no further than his face? or build a reformatory for the culprit child, if he saw nthing but the slouching gait and the thievish eye[20]?" But because they have seen more—seen the glitter of heaven and its true mint-mark beneath the dust and rubbish of

[20] Martineau, *Hours of Thought*, pp. 181, 182.

many a sin and many a crime—Christians have been forward in this work. Raikes in Gloucester, Howard among the lazar-houses and prisons of Europe, Clarkson and Wilberforce preaching for the slaves against selfish interests and heartless expediency,—let these stand for thousands more who are proofs that eternal hopes do not make Christians unmindful of the present world and its needs; but that the servants of Christ love with a love which has caught the reflection of their Master's; yea, precisely, because they love God they have learned to love their neighbours with a love stronger than before.

III. The hope in the future is not a base one.

Yet this is what it is accused of being. Christians, it is said, only live a life of self-denial here in the hope of having free scope for self-indulgence hereafter. Their lives are but the climax of prudential epicureanism. They deny themselves to-day in order to enjoy more thoroughly the good things of to-morrow. They do not live as men here, in order that they may live as luxurious men in a paradise where the joys will be precisely of the same kind, only far better than those which they have seemingly eschewed here. It is a hope of enjoying palatial splendours in another world which will last always instead of the limited chance and un-

certain tenure of similar splendours on earth. Such is the accusation.

It is perfectly true that uneducated Christians, in their feeble attempts to explain their thoughts of that home to which their hearts look forward, have used language which savours somewhat of a carnal paradise; but the thoughts of their hearts have infinitely transcended the words of their lips. It does not always follow that because a man's speech is vulgar, his thoughts and aspirations are base. The mind is often haunted by images and hopes which it can express only in wholly inadequate language or not at all. The true Christian, however feebly he may express his hopes, has hopes which are far nobler and purer than words can utter; and the very slightest attention would detect that he was speaking in metaphors, which could but imperfectly shadow forth his meaning. The representation of the hopes of heaven as merely intensified earthly enjoyments is a mistake which is based on a total misconception of the meaning of Christianity. There are hopes which the Christian entertains which he is not ashamed to avow. He does look forward to the vision of God: he does look forward to the society of the good and the great: he does look forward to the restoration of lost friendships

and too-early severed loves. If men call these base hopes, it can only be because they have no delight in the society of the good and great, and no joy in sweet human friendship. That which is noble and soul-inspiring here will not be reckoned ignoble there. To grasp the hand of love, to feel the thrill of that sweetest of human pleasures, the joy of a love renewed, is no mean or despicable hope. If it is so, then are all glad companionships and intense affections here to be reckoned base; and home and friendships are but tokens of weakness or of selfishness. These we look for; but the Christian's hope is to be found in more than these glad prospects; it is to be found in that holiness without which no one shall see God, in that character which has been slowly formed here, but which will be possessed in its fulness and beauty hereafter. The carnal or the worldly paradise is not to be found in the Bible. True there is the imagery of the Apocalypse which has been quoted as a sanction to such expectations; but the symbols, simple in themselves, reveal their meaning in the light of the real and acknowledged spiritual hopes of the Christian. The hope is to see God as He is and to be like Him[21]; to grow up unto Him in all things[22].

[21] John iii. 2. [22] Ephesians iv. 15; Philippians iii. 8–12.

The Apocalypse says no other—the happiness it holds forth is the happiness of holiness: it is a consummation of that which we have longed for: the character, the likeness to God will be ours: His name will be on our foreheads[23]. There may be physical emblems used. There is a river, but it is for those who have thirsted for righteousness[24]: there are fruits, but they are for those who have longed after knowledge[25]: there is a city whose walls are gemmed with various jewels[26]; and the names of Patriarchs and Apostles are written there[27]; but it is to tell us that all the types of human character, the weak but brilliant Reubens of life, the courageous but not unblemished Judahs, the pure, quiet, and persistent Josephs will be there: it is no place where pale counterparts of one another will endure the dull monotony of each other's society; but it is a spot where the valour of the soldier, the fidelity of the man of business, the achievements of impetuous love will be welcomed, and where all the Divine powers of holy men will blend in sweet and various harmony in that city which lieth four square, and whose

[23] Rev. xxii. 4. Cf. Hebrews xii. 14.
[24] Rev. xxii. 2; Matt. v. 6; Ps. xxxvi. 8, 9.
[25] Rev. xxii. 2; Prov. iii. 18.
[26] Rev. xxi. 19.
[27] Rev. xxi. 12, 14; comp. Rev. vii. 4-9.

gates face to every point of the compass, and are open to every son of man[29]. There no labour will be lost, no intellectual achievement will be found valueless: the sage will find new avenues of investigation open where there are new heavens and new earth: new fields of labour and new visions of hope will expand before us there, and everywhere the atmosphere will be that of righteousness and rest. This is no base and unworthy hope, which speaks no words of carnal delight, but promises only that the strivings after the true character of the Master will receive their satisfaction there. Thus the hope of the Christian lies in holiness, in likeness to God, in the shaking off of the defilements of our nature, and the rectification of the awkwardness and baseness of our character. "Heaven is principle," said Confucius; "Heaven is character," said a large-hearted Scotch divine[30]; "Heaven is likeness to God," says every Christian that ever breathed. It is no gross or carnal pleasure which lies before us. It is the realisation of ideals: it is the employment of powers apparently wasted for want of field-room in this life, the opening of the

[29] Rev. xxi. 12-16, 25.

[30] Chalmers, in his sermon, "Heaven a character, not a locality."

prospect of new spheres in which the energies which have found no scope here may find opportunity. For there is nothing which is so full of sadness as the spectacle, which is so often seen, of lives cut short when in the full force of true usefulness, and when their powers of sympathy and love seemed most needful to those around. It was said by one[31] who will not be thought to be a partial witness, that the thought of a life to come has no trifling influence for good in allaying the pain we feel at the irony of nature in snatching away fair and good lives from the world when they seemed on the road to higher usefulness. Such a thought receives an emphasis in our minds to-day[32]. Yes, it is well spoken—the hope does

[31] "The beneficial effect of such a hope is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings, and gives greater strength as well as greater solemnity to all the sentiments which are awakened in us by our fellow-creatures or by mankind at large. It allays the sense of that irony of nature which is so painfully felt when we see the exertions and sacrifices of a life culminating in the formation of a wise and noble mind, only to disappear from the world when the time has just arrived at which the world seems about to begin reaping the benefit of it. The truth that life is short and art is long is from of old one of the most discouraging parts of our condition; this hope admits the possibility that the art employed in improving and beautifying the soul itself may avail for good in some other life, even when seemingly useless for this."—J. S. Mill, *Essay on Religion*, p. 249.

[32] Dec. 15, 1878, the Sunday after the death of the Princess Alice.

allay the pain we feel at the irony of nature, when we see bright and useful lives cut short in the maturity of their usefulness, when we behold one in the noon of her life, endeared by her wise benevolence and her sweet womanly sympathy to the home of her adoption, and no less endeared by tender and touching memories of self-sacrificing filial love to the home of her birth—a nurse among princes, a princess among nurses, tender and heroic in her family, a mother among her people, whose mission was by the sick bed—falling a victim, on a day of dark remembrance, to the sickness from which her patient skill and loving hand had so often shielded others; it does let in one ray of light to feel that the subtle tact and right royal love, yea, all her powers of heart and tender life, seemingly robbed of their full fruit by being removed too soon, may find scope and occupation in a brighter and a larger sphere.

The instinct which feels thus our Master acknowledges, for He holds out the promise of hope—a hope which has been denounced as ignoble and selfish and prudential, but which, on the contrary, I have wished to show is noble and elevating in regard to man, allaying his natural anxieties and adequate to his legitimate expectations.

And now one word and I have done. We have seen the spread of the Christian faith, its wondrous adaptation to the needs of every race and climate, language and nation; we have seen man in his weakness, in his affection, and in his hope; and we have seen the fitness of Christianity to minister to his feebleness, his love, and his aspirations. We have seen that the gospel is not to be understood without remembering the nature of man. These two, man and Christ's teachings, have a mutual inter-adaptation. They fit as lock and key; and the one is scarcely to be understood, and certainly cannot be fairly criticised, without reference to the other; for it is to man as he is that Christ came. We have seen man the victim of a moral disease, and Christ the healer reaching forth His hand of love, saying, "I will, be thou clean." We have seen man with love in his nature, trying to find the truest and most abiding object of affection, finding in Christ one who can fill him with impassioned love. We have seen man with hopes, man with fitful longings to rise higher and be better than he is, and Christ standing by and putting into his hand the crown of saintliness; and in all this we have seen that it is not in outward show or pomp of circumstance that the Kingdom of God comes; but

that evermore it must be within—within, for within is the moral evil; within, for within is the power of love; within, for within is the will and the hope which must reach forth to the higher ideal of character. Thus once more the Kingdom of God must be within. It will indeed be seen around, outside, everywhere, broadening on our view in its ever-enlarging borders and its ever-varying beauties, but still the flowers of God's realm must ever blossom forth from a hidden seed, for the kingship Christ desires is the kingship within. Evermore He seeks to set up His Throne in the wills and affections of men, and though all power is given Him in heaven and in earth, and He is seated at God's right hand, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, and the angels of God worship Him, yet does He prefer before all temples the temple of the heart, and before all the thrones the throne of the kingdom which is within.

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