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THE

PROBLEM OF EVIL.

THE
PROBLEM OF EVIL.

Seven Lectures

BY

ERNEST NAVILLE,

CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE, LATE PROFESSOR
OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA.

Translated from the French

BY

EDWARD W. SHALDERS, B.A.,

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE Lectures collected into this volume were offered to the public of Geneva, and afterwards to the public of Lausanne, under the title of *The Problem of Evil, a Philosophical Study*.

Very large audiences having responded to this invitation, it became necessary to lay aside scholastic terms and expressions, in order to present the results of scientific investigation in a literary form, and in a style intelligible to all. It was no less necessary to preserve the philosophical character of the proposed study, to grapple with the difficulties of the problem, and to refrain from substituting rhetoric for argument. I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to meet the twofold requirements imposed by the nature of the subject and the composition of the audience.

A special meeting at the end of the course was devoted to the free discussion of the doctrines set forth in the previous meetings. In reviewing the shorthand notes of my Lectures, I have given my most attentive consideration to the objections advanced, for which I thank the authors.

ERNEST NAVILLE.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE accomplished Author of these Lectures on the Problem of Evil is well known to students of moral philosophy as the biographer of Maine de Biran, and the editor of his philosophical writings. In the department of mental and moral science M. Naville has earned a high reputation, not only in his own country, but also in France and Germany; and as an eloquent expositor of the truths of philosophy in popular forms he is probably without a rival. His work on Modern Atheism, entitled "Our Heavenly Father,"¹ and another on "Eternal Life,"² both of which have found English translators, deserve to be better known. They are frequently referred to in the Lectures contained in this volume.

The enthusiasm kindled by the delivery of these Lectures in Geneva and Lausanne recalled that pro-

¹ Macmillan.

² Dalton : London.

duced in Paris by Cousin's famous Course on the History of Modern Philosophy. Immense audiences, consisting entirely of men, including representatives of all ranks of society and degrees of culture, crowded to hear these eloquent expositions of Christian doctrine in the form of philosophy. The Lectures were fully reported in the journals of the day; but, notwithstanding, the Author's revised publication of them has commanded a very large sale. These facts are mentioned because they contain a verdict, expressed by competent judges, that M. Naville's thoughts on the Problem of Evil are highly worthy of attention.

The Translator, pressed by the duties of a laborious pastorate, would not have imposed on himself the task of presenting M. Naville's work in an English dress but for a very deep conviction of its adaptation to be useful in the present state of thought in this country. Young men especially, perplexed by the sophistries of an unscrupulous and daring infidelity, will find their account in the perusal of this volume, while all who have felt the terrible fascination of the subject may find some instruction and help.

M. Naville's style, though lucid and eloquent, is somewhat diffuse. It should be remembered, however, that the following pages represent spoken dis-

course; and thoughts addressed to the ear are not readily understood if too closely packed,—like words on a placard, designed to be read at a glance, they need to be spaced by indifferent matter. The Translator might have remedied this diffuseness by condensation, and by the suppression of certain repetitions characteristic of the orator; but he has preferred to make his work, as far as possible, a counterpart of the original, lest its admirable perspicuity should be sacrificed in the process of translation.

Several quotations of French poetry occur in the volume. The necessities of the argument have generally required that they should be literally rendered; and though they are given in verse, it is scarcely necessary to say that the Translator has had no pretension of imitating the originals.

NEWBURY, *November*, 1870.

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ERRATA.

- Page 22, Note, line 4, for *the*, read *this*.
 " 36, line 3, for *ever*, read *even*.
 " 56, " 15, for *plants*, read *planets*.
 " 69, " 28, delete *but*.
 " 84, Note, for *Eunéade*, read *Ennéade*.
 " 153, line 24, for *one*, read *our*.
 " 211, Note, for *Cherbulier*, read *Cherbuliez*.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.



FIRST LECTURE.

Good.

GENTLEMEN,—It does not require much art or many words to impress you with the importance of the subject we have now met to consider. The Problem of Evil! who has not often pondered it? Some, contemplating human society from a political point of view, complain of its numerous forms of tyranny and frequent revolutions; while, from an economical point of view, they deplore its extremes of luxury and wretchedness. Too often the history of nations is nothing but a web of crimes and a tissue of disasters. To the convulsions of society must be added the disturbances of nature—the hurricane which engulphs our ships, the earthquake which destroys our cities, the famine which decimates their inhabitants. Thus, wherever in history or nature we direct our gaze, the Problem of Evil presents itself. If we look into ourselves, we meet with pain. Indeed, to suffer, and (what is much harder for some of us) to see others suffer, does it not seem our

very destiny? Last of all, when a man searches his conscience, and places himself in the presence of duty,

A voice there greets him with incessant cry:—
What hast thou done with life and liberty?¹

and the Problem of Evil confronts him once more in the grief of repentance, and the bitterness of conscious helplessness. It is not the curiosity of the mind merely which raises this question. In view of Evil, assuming such proportions within and around us, it may even come to this, that at last the conscience may hesitate to believe in Good, the heart grow discouraged because it can no longer believe in happiness, and the soul end with doubting whether there is a God. The poet's words, therefore, awaken a deep response when he exclaims:—

O wherefore, Maker, Lord of all!
Hast thou made Evil grow so great
That reason, yea, and virtue, fall
Affrighted back, amazed thereat?

Why, in the holy light of day,
Are deeds so hideous revealed,
That wretched men who fain would pray
Beholding, feel their lips are sealed!²

I hope, Gentlemen, that no one here accuses me of so much presumption as to oblige me to say, that in handling the problem which is about to occupy us, I do not pretend to lift every veil, unravel every mystery, and answer all questions. But this is what I desire and hope. The study of this sad subject has been profitable to me. After fixing a lengthened gaze on the dark

¹ Alfred de Musset,—*La Nuit d'Août*.

² Alfred de Musset,—*L'Espoir en Dieu*.

regions of Evil, I have always found the light of Good shine clearer. This experience has given me courage to face the great difficulties of the inquiry which we commence to-day. And my simple aim will be to familiarise you with profitable thoughts, and with what seem to me healthful sentiments. I am not an orator seeking to captivate you by beauty of speech, nor a learned divine speaking with authority, but a simple travelling companion, who, in the dark valley we are about to traverse together, thinks he has made some little way towards the light, and wishes to shew you the path.

We will endeavour to-day, first, to define the idea of Good; next, to determine its nature; and, lastly, we will inquire what guarantee we have for the reality of this idea. Definition of Good; Determination of the Nature of Good; Guarantee of the Reality of Good; such will be the order of our inquiry.

I. DEFINITION OF GOOD.

If light did not exist, we should have no idea of darkness. Nor can we clearly comprehend what Evil is, without we have an exact idea of Good. This word, which plays such an important part in human speech, is used in different significations. These significations, if I am not mistaken, may all be reduced to three.

When man prepares to act, he hears an inward voice, which addresses him with authority, and says—Do this! Do not do that! This is the voice of conscience. What constitutes conscience, in the moral sense of the term,¹

¹ The French have but one word for Conscience and Consciousness.

is the immediate feeling of an obligation binding our will to an act which it ought to accomplish. This obligation is not a desire, for it often contradicts the most ardent desires of our hearts; neither is it a constraint, for it addresses itself to our freedom; we can violate it, and in fact do; the obligation is a primary fact, distinct from every other, the foundation for us of duty, that is, of a command which we recognise as legitimate. We are free, but we are not the masters of our freedom. "We must not, like volunteer soldiers, be so proud as to set ourselves above the idea of duty, and assume a right to act according to our own will, without needing any word of command. Duty and obligation, these are the only words suitable to express our relation to the moral law." It is the philosopher Kant who thus expresses himself.¹ He says, "Our relation *to the law*." Conscience, in fact, commands us in the name of a universal law which, in identical circumstances, prescribes to all precisely similar duties. A law exists which prescribes to free-will its duty, and we say that the will is good when duty is accomplished.

I am aware that duty and law have been denied. It is asserted in the writings of certain philosophers, and in the speeches of certain men of the world, that these terms, duty, virtue, and moral law, are deceptive words, which are never anything but a cover for self-seeking or for empty speculations. We will not undertake here the general discussion of this doctrine. We will confine ourselves to a single remark. The idea of Good alone

¹ *Critique de la raison pratique*; pages 262 and 263 of M. Barni's translation.

imparts dignity to life. Those who deny the moral law and duty have no alternative but either to contradict themselves by being better than their doctrine (and this they often do), or to wrap themselves, as in a shroud, in their own shame and in general contempt. To do good is to fulfil our duty. Good, in the first sense of the word, is the law of our will.

We employ the word in a second sense when we speak of the good things¹ of life, such as health, fortune, pleasure, reputation, power. What do we ask of fortune, or power, or reputation? What, alas! do we seek from the gratification of envy, or from the pleasure of revenge? Always one thing. In the objects of our various passions, whether bad or good, we only seek one thing,—joy. Whatever we desire is desired as a means of enjoyment. If a miser sacrifices every pleasure to the possession of his gold, it is because the possession of gold is for him a pleasure surpassing all others, and for no other reason. Joy is the food of the soul; deprived of this nourishment, it languishes; and so ingenious is the heart in seeking its food, that it manages to find it even in suffering; the poets, therefore, can speak, in all soberness, of the pleasures of melancholy and the charms of sadness. The desire of happiness is as truly a primary and indestructible principle of our nature as the feeling of duty. You could sooner stop the current of a river from following its course than man from seeking happiness.

Here again we encounter a philosophy which sets itself athwart the path of truth, a false wisdom the

¹ *Les biens.*

error of which needs to be pointed out. True wisdom teaches us that they are only false forms of happiness which need to be renounced in order to find the true, because true happiness, that for which our nature is made, can only be found in a life regulated by duty. Further, true wisdom teaches us that the soul, called to sacrifice all outward enjoyments for the sake of duty, may find in the simple fulfilment of duty a joy surpassing every other. The experience of life confirms these lessons of wisdom; the satiety and disgust produced by vicious pleasures send men back, in the very nature of things, to those purer pleasures for which they were intended. Such is the common conclusion of the reflections of the wise and of general experience. But it has been said, further, that the desire of happiness may be eradicated from the soul, and that we may bring ourselves to a state of absolute indifference. This is the idea of some of the ancients, the cherished thought of mystics in every age, and of a few modern moralists. This thought lies at the foundation of the famous doctrine of Buddha, who proposed to obtain from man a universal renunciation of every desire. Now, Gentlemen, if you read attentively the expositions of this theory, you will find that its defenders invariably speak after this fashion:—"In the way we point out you will find repose, you will obtain peace." In other words, they say:—"Renounce happiness, and you will be happy!" In order to encourage us to sacrifice every joy, they offer us joy itself as our reward. Thus nature triumphs in the self-contradictions she inflicts on those who contradict her dictates. The soul

seeks joy as its own Good, and, therefore, in the second sense of the word, Good is joy.

There is yet a third sense. We make use of it when we employ the idea of Good where neither the will nor the feelings are concerned, and where, consequently, there can neither be joy nor duty. In this third sense we call a thing good when it answers its intention. A lamp is good when it gives light properly, because a lamp is made to give light. A road being a means of communication, we say that a road is good when it admits of prompt and easy transit. In saying that a thing answers its intention, we have in view a certain order by which the intention of things is appointed, and we affirm that this order is realized. In the third and most general sense of all, therefore, Good is order.

There are, then, three kinds of Good:—Duty, which is the Good of the conscience; joy, which is the Good of the heart; and order, which is the Good of the reason. Here are three senses of the same word; but for this single word can we not manage to find also a single meaning? The employment of a common term always indicates a certain community of ideas; for languages, which are the expression of human thought, are not formed at random. The general definition of Good which I offer is this:—Good is *that which ought to be*; consequently, *Evil is that which ought not to be*. Weigh well these two definitions, for they contain and sum up my whole teaching. As a question of practice, we ought to do Good and avoid Evil; this you all know, and I have nothing different to teach you. As to theory, the rule by which I shall be guided is this:—I shall reject all

doctrines that deny that Good ought to be, and aim at proving that Evil ought to be; and I shall abide by that doctrine which leaves our two fundamental definitions undisturbed. Since these definitions are of such great importance in the inquiry we are commencing, it is essential that their sense and scope should be clearly determined.

In order to pronounce with certainty on what ought to be, it is necessary, as we have just observed, to have in view a plan indicating the legitimate order and intention of things, so as to be able to say whether or not their condition is in conformity with this plan. Suppose an object, of the intention of which you are entirely ignorant; you will not be able to pronounce it good or bad. Take, for example, a machine. You cannot say whether it is a good one without knowing what it is for. It may be a sewing-machine, or a thrashing-machine; but as long as you do not know which, it will be impossible for you to say whether it is good or bad, because, while you are ignorant of its intention, you cannot say whether it answers to it.

If Good is always that which ought to be, in the sense we have just pointed out, it appears that the Good of the reason must furnish our general definition of Good. Yes, Gentlemen, Good being always the realization of an order or plan, every form of Good partakes of the character of the Good of the reason; and we can see at once that the idea of answering to its intention includes the two other senses of the word Good, provided we admit that duty is that for which the will is intended, and that the heart is intended for joy. But it is essential

to observe that the *ought* affirmed by the reason would have no existence in our minds, unless conscience had first given us the idea, at once primitive and peculiar to itself, of moral obligation. Where the idea of obligation has no place, there is no room for the ideas of Good and Evil. If we imagine a being capable of thinking and feeling, but without any sense of moral obligation, we can understand how he should have notions of what is agreeable, useful, true, or beautiful, but not how he should have such an idea of Good as we possess; for this idea, as it exists in us, proceeds from the conscience. From the law of our will we advance to the conception of a general law of things; from the idea of what we ought to do to the idea of what ought to be done. Good judgment, in its widest and most general sense, includes the thought of an obligation for some will; bad judgment, also, always includes the thought of a fault of some will. The idea of Good, then, is conceived by reason, but only on condition that reason is associated with conscience. There is a moral element in every judgment that is concerned with Good.

What has often deceived philosophers in regard to this matter, and even led them to insist on a complete separation between moral Good and another Good which they term metaphysical, is the fact that we apply the idea of Good to things destitute of will, and which, therefore, could not be the *subjects* of an obligation. But these things may be the *objects* of an obligation to voluntary agents. A house, for example, sustains no obligations, but the epithet bad, applied to a house, really implies a complaint against the architect who

ought to have made it good. In the idea of "*ought*," as conceived by the reason, there is always an element of conscience, since, apart from conscience, the word "*ought*" would have no meaning. The idea of Good, therefore, is the result of an intimate union between the reason which conceives of a plan and the conscience which attaches to it the idea of obligation. When the reason forms a conception of Good, it becomes, in some sort, the organ of the absolute conscience, and pronounces an ought which extends to the whole universe.

These assertions may be justified, I think, by a review in detail of all the cases in which we make use of the idea of Good. It may be clearly shown that, whenever the term is not diverted from its original and direct signification, the use of the word supposes, along with the idea of a plan, that of a power which ought to fulfil it, and which is to blame if it does not fulfil it. To demonstrate this would demand lengthened and subtle analysis; I limit myself, then, here to tracing in joy, which is the Good of the heart, and, in order, which is the Good of the reason, an "*ought*," which belongs to the conscience.

It seems a hard paradox to look for a moral obligation in joy, and to want to identify conscience with the heart. From the ravings of the Cid, in Corneille, distracted between his honour and his mistress, down to the case of a student who hesitates in the morning between his professor, who is expecting him, and the charms of his bed, is not our whole life a struggle between these two elements, whose agreement I assert—between the conscience and the heart? Undoubtedly,

there are vicious joys; undoubtedly, also, the law of the heart is not the law of the will; and if we say that joy is obligatory, the obligation will not always be for ourselves, and it can never be our duty to go in quest of every joy. "Do what you ought, come what may," is the single formula of conscience. But because there are vicious pleasures, and because our personal happiness is not the law of our will, it does not follow that joy is not obligatory in any sense, and on no will whatever. We see at once that the happiness of one person may be the duty of another. Is not the happiness of a father the duty of his son? and is not the happiness of a wife the duty of her husband? Let us take the question in its widest scope. You will not contradict me if I say that, when the law of the will is accomplished, the law of the heart ought to be realized, and that happiness ought to follow duty done, so that joy, without being the aim of our will, ought to be the result of a good volition. We have some experience, in what we call the satisfactions of conscience, of the fact that joy accompanies the practice of duty. But I do not speak of the fact; often this is but very imperfectly realized; I speak of the right. On the supposition of every duty being done, we affirm that happiness ought to follow, and this connection of happiness with duty is conceived of by the reason as one of the elements of the universal order. Plato has pictured an imaginary just man, worthy of all the rewards of virtue, but covered with all the opprobrium of vice.¹ Imagine that you have to deal with the case of this just man. Can you fail to

¹ In the second Book of the Republic.

perceive at once that the world in which this just man suffers is a bad world? Whenever a creature suffers, there must be a will in disorder somewhere; his suffering must either be the consequence of his own fault, or of the fault of others; otherwise we should say that injustice exists, and that the nature of things is bad. But the nature of things is nothing but a phrase which expresses facts; it does not explain them. Moreover, if there were a world in which, when every duty had been done, the result was nothing but pain, the man who suffered such injustice would feel himself better than the principle of the universe; he would rise against the Creator of all things, and "cry, with groans, Thou hast deceived me!"¹ A world morally in order, but given over to suffering, would be a contradiction of Providence. Joy ought then to follow duty done; it constitutes a part of our destination in the plan of the universe; it ought to be, and in this way it enters into our definition of Good.

Let us refer now to this same sense the Good of the reason. We will shew that the order of which reason conceives is only good, because conscience attaches to it the feeling of obligation. Wherever we see order accomplished, we approve of the agents who have realized it. We judge thus in the case of the works of man; and when we behold the grand spectacle of nature, unless the natural feelings of our soul are paralysed, we adore the Architect of the worlds and the Supreme Artificer. Wherever, on the other hand, we meet with disorder, we instinctively look for some responsible will. No sooner

¹ Rousseau, *Profession de foi du Vicairé savoyard*.

does anything go contrary to our wishes, than we are disposed to blame somebody. When the waters of Lake Lemman rise a little too high on the Vaudois banks, our Confederate neighbours betake themselves to the authorities of Geneva, who, they say, have obstructed the course of the Rhone at its outlet from the lake; and when the Rhone floods the streets of Lyons, our French neighbours blame, and not without reason, the imprudence of the people of Valais in stripping their mountains of trees. Wherever we see wrong, we are impelled to blame some will, and this instinct does not deceive us. Where we are deceived is that, in a vast number of cases, we blame others when we ought only to blame ourselves, either for our own faults, or for the presumptuous rashness of our judgments, which is after all a fault. If it is a question of some disorder, shewing itself in a region in which neither our own will nor that of others can avail anything, what happens? We impeach Providence; and it is this fact which has led me to the course of instruction we are commencing to-day. It was in reply to an objection against the existence of God that I undertook to discuss the Problem of Evil.¹ If Evil is an objection against the existence of God, it is because we think that Good ought to be, and that it would be, if any power existed capable of securing the order which we conceive to be right. On no other ground is the objection intelligible. Let us speak out man's whole thought. Wherever we see Evil out of the range of all human power, we think that it is God who has failed in His duty. This expression astonishes and

¹ See *The Heavenly Father*, Seventh Lecture. Macmillan, 1865.

offends you. We hasten to explain it. Creatures derived from nothing, as we are, have no rights in relation to the Almighty; and God being originally the sole and absolute existence, there could be no duty for Him, since duty cannot exist towards nothing.

If the eternal power of God, which first created man,
Had limited our term of life to just a two days' span,
We still were debtors to His grace, and bound these days to spend
In pleasing and in loving Him, who is our Life's true end.

It was no bigot who wrote these verses; they are Voltaire's.¹ But, on the other hand, as Jean Jacques Rousseau² has justly observed, God has bound Himself, if we may use such an expression, by the way in which He has constituted our soul. Whatever He has Himself made us deem Good is the counterpart of His own will, or, as it is said, of His own glory, which He must accomplish. Is it not in this sense that the Hebrews sang, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory?"³ Thus we conceive there is for the Absolute Himself, not indeed an obligation to a rule foreign to Himself, which would completely contradict His nature, but an obligation of which He is Himself the author.

To sum up, Gentlemen, these considerations:—There is a Good for the conscience, a Good for the heart, and a Good for the reason; but these three Goods may be reduced to one. Good is *that which ought to be*; and it always implies an obligation for us, for others, or for the Supreme Will in the sense we have just indicated.

¹ *Discours en vers sur l'homme*, Sixth Discourse.

² *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard*.

³ Ps. cxv.

Good is not a being or thing; it is an order determining the relations of beings to each other, relations which ought to be realized by voluntary agents. Whenever this order is fulfilled, when the law prescribed to moral freedom is carried out, happiness must follow. Good, therefore, answers to all the tendencies of our nature, and assigns to them severally their proper place. It is the common object of the reason, the conscience, and the heart: of the reason, as order; of the conscience, as duty; of the heart, as joy.

You can now understand one of the most beautiful conceptions of ancient wisdom, the comparison in which Plato sets forth Good as the sun of the mind.¹ You know the office of the sun in nature. When Melchthal, in Schiller's *William Tell*, learns that a ferocious tyrant has put out his aged father's eyes, he cries:—

O sweet and noble gift of bounteous nature,
 Clear-shining precious light! the happy creature
 By thee alone has life; while towards the Day-star
 The modest field-flower lifts its gaze from far.
 All things throughout the world greet thee with love and praise.²

The sun of nature holds inseparably in its ray both heat and light, and this is why the flower turns towards it. Good, the sun of the mind, the true light of reason, holds inseparably in its ray duty and happiness; and this is why our souls turn towards it. Yes, our soul, save when it is diverted from its natural bent, ever turns towards Good, and we love it. You are surprised, doubtless, that I should say this. It would scarcely be sus-

¹ Allegory of the Cave in the viith Book of the Republic.

² *William Tell* Act i. Scene iv.

pected, certainly, from our way of acting, and we should hardly perceive it in ourselves by looking into our own hearts. It is very certain that we do not often love Good with that effectual and vigorous love which produces good works. Our position is just this: We dread Good under the form of duty, because it commands and condemns us; but we love it in itself, because it is the highest beauty, and, wherever our own interest does not stand in the way, this natural love makes itself felt. Oh! if we could only be good without effort and without sacrifice, what incredible affection virtue would inspire! We see it clearly enough in circumstances where we have no personal interest. Cicero relates, "that one day an aged Athenian came into the theatre, but not one of his fellow-citizens, in that immense crowd, would incommode himself to make room for him; as, however, he approached the ambassadors from Lacedæmon, who had their own special seat, they all rose and received him into their midst. The whole assembly burst into applause. Whereupon somebody said: The Athenians know what is good, but they will not practise it."¹ How many of these Athenians there are elsewhere than at Athens! See what takes place in our theatres. Let the scene represent a young girl struggling with the most terrible temptations of life, exposed to the seductions of gold, to the most delicate flatteries, and most diabolical machinations,—on the one hand vice and fortune, on the other her conscience and poverty. Make her keep true and pure, pass through corruption without being stained by it, and stand by her conscience at the cost of poverty,

¹ *De Senectute*, xviii.

and if you have any spark of the genius of art in your composition, you will succeed in winning the applause of even hardened libertines, perhaps in moving them to tears.

This explains to us one of the secrets of Providence in the government of the world. How does it come to pass that the moral law holds its ground? Many centuries ago, the poet Sophocles celebrated, on the Athenian stage, this sublime law which no neglect can ever abolish.¹ It abides for ever, the law! Time has overturned many thrones and republics, many charters and constitutions, but the moral law still stands unshaken. Yet what other law has been more frequently broken, denied, attacked? And still there it remains, with its two satellites: remorse, which punishes the perpetration of crime, and ennui, that avenger of the neglect of Good, which seizes on wasted lives. How does it come to pass? In this way: Efforts are always being made to set up false maxims in order to justify bad conduct, and are only too successful in obtaining some credit for them. The moral law, however, is never more strongly affirmed than when exceptional circumstances are pleaded as a valid excuse for its violation. People wish for what is good and right; they approve, they even love it . . . in others. The statesman, for example, who is bent on deceiving his fellow-statesman, and making good the maxim, that speech was given man to disguise his thoughts, think you that he intends to set up the lawfulness of falsehood as a universal maxim even in political affairs? Wait until one of his subordinates makes

¹ Chorus of *Œdipus Tyrannus*.

him a false political report, and you will see how rigorously he will maintain the law which prescribes the duty of truthfulness. The banker who is enriching himself by criminal speculation with the property of his clients, and who is bringing about at once their ruin and his own dishonour, do you think that he raises theft into a moral law of universal obligation? Wait until one of his clerks steals some money from his cash-box, and you will see how well he remembers the answer in the Catechism which enjoins respect for the property of others. His clerk is a thief; but as for himself, his is an exceptional case. In this way we seek to excuse ourselves from minding our duty, without denying the validity of duty in general. We proclaim the law, we apply it to others, we uphold it in the world, but we take care to reserve a dispensation from it for ourselves. All the sophistry, then, to which we have recourse is so much homage which Vice renders to Virtue. We are made for Good, and when it does not happen to interfere with our evil inclinations, we desire and love it.

Good is an order which ought to be: such is its definition. This definition unites the reason which conceives of an order with the conscience which declares it obligatory; and as Good appeals to our heart by its own proper beauty, all the powers of the soul, unless perverted from their legitimate aim, are turned towards Good. We must now determine more exactly its nature, by inquiring, What this order is which ought to be?

II. DETERMINATION OF THE NATURE OF GOOD.

The fulfilment of the moral law is that which ought to be in a society of intelligent creatures.¹ Can the various precepts of this law be reduced to a single precept inclusive of them all? I think so, and propose for your acceptance this idea, that the duty which includes all duties is the consecration of each member of a society of intelligent creatures to its general good, that is to say, to its happiness; meaning by the word, not such fleeting joys as may be found apart from duty, and even in contradiction to it, but a state of happiness, only to be reached by conforming to the order embodied in the moral law.

All duties may be reduced to three classes: duties of self-respect, which forbid our lowering ourselves to the level of the brute, by making the soul the slave of the body, and prostituting speech, the organ of thought, to the service of falsehood; duties of justice, which require us to recognise in our fellow-creatures the self-respect and rights of our own nature, and to respect the persons, property, and reputation of others; duties of benevolence, which command us to relieve our fellow-creatures in all the necessities of their bodily and spiritual life. Such is the classification of our duties which, after a very long study of the matter,² commends itself to me as the best. Now, the formula I have offered contains these three classes of duties. In fact, in order to the realization of

¹ (*La société spirituelle*).

² In a course of Lectures on Moral Philosophy delivered at Geneva, 1865-1866.

the Good of intelligent society, each one of its members must assert the spirituality of his nature by withdrawing himself from a life of animalism (self-respect); mutual respect on the part of the several members of the community must make it truly spiritual, that is to say, free (justice); lastly, each will must be governed by a view to the common good (benevolence). Imagine a society of intelligent creatures, exhibiting the growth and progress characteristic of life, in which mutual regard, resting on a just recognition of each other's rights, is continually acquiring strength; would not that be a good society?

What name shall we find to designate this consecration of the individual to the common good, this supreme virtue which includes all the rest? The founder of positivism, Auguste Comte, set himself this problem, and this is his solution of it. He gave to this master virtue, in which conscience, enlightened by reflection, recognises the general expression of moral good, the name of *otherhood* (*altruisme*). Moral progress consists, according to the opinion of the chief of the positivists, in selfishness (*egoïsme*) continually giving place to *otherhood*, which means being absorbed in the good of others. Now the word Charity, which, in common use, has too often parted with its primary signification to become the synonym of almsgiving, originally denoted, not in the language of the Gospel merely, but also in the writings of Cicero,¹ true love, the sincere devotion of a man to the good of others. This word has usage in its favour, and *otherhood* (*altruisme*) is not a new coinage sufficiently eupho-

¹ " *Caritas generis humanii.*" *De finibus*, B. v. § 23.

nious to favour its adoption. Let us rest content with the old term, and say that the law of charity is the general expression of those relations which ought to unite the members of a society of intelligent creatures. If this be so, then Good, in all that concerns the mutual relations of men, is the realization of charity, or the consecration of each individual's will to the promotion of the general happiness.

Now how should we conceive of Good in the relations of nature to humanity? The body ought to be the instrument of the mind; external nature ought to be the condition of the body's life, and should excite the mental toil which gives birth to science, the labours of industry by which man's empire over matter is established, and the instinct of art which, not satisfied with material beauty, turns its longing gaze in every direction in search of the ideal. Nature in subjection to mind, and minds governed by the law of charity, would that be a good state of things? It is for you to say, Gentlemen; I do not come here to teach you new things, so much as to remind you of what you already know, and help you to brush away the dust which accumulates within the depths of our souls, so that you may read the characters inscribed there. I ask you then: Do you see, not in your practice, but in your conscience and reason, the image of Good which I have set before you? Do you admit it as a certain truth commanding your assent, that properly, in any well-ordered condition of the world, bodies are made for minds and minds for charity? Would this be an arbitrary, individual, or national conception? Is it I, or is it any of you? Is

it Paul, John, or Alfred? Is it a Frenchman, a Russian, a German, who conceives of Good as we have just defined it, or is it the man which exists in each of us, underneath all our individual or national diversities? Further, can you not distinguish the profound voice of human nature from its noisy superficial utterances? This voice is too often drowned in the din of passions and in the tumult of uncontrolled desires; but it makes itself heard at last in the calm and serious moods of the soul. Mind is intended to govern nature, and the supreme law of mind is to desire the general Good. Do you not feel that these thoughts find an echo in the innermost recesses of your conscience?

We here come into conflict with a doctrine as old as human literature, and which seeks, very absurdly, to resuscitate itself under the title of modern science. We are told that there is no real and absolute Good; that there are customs, and that these customs vary; but that beneath these customs and their history there exists no permanent rule of Good, no absolute Morality. We are reminded that many things which are considered bad in Europe are considered good in Asia. Among the Redskins, a young lad wins his father's approbation and his mother's smile by bringing home the hairy trophy of a head he has scalped, an action which European parents would not approve. From an array of facts of this kind, the conclusion is drawn that conscience is so much soft wax, that will take just any impression. On this point let us hear Pascal, who has put into his own words the thought of Montaigne: "We

hardly know of anything, just or unjust, which does not change its character with a change of climate. Three degrees of polar elevation overturn the whole system of jurisprudence. A meridian decides what is truth. . . . Pleasant justice which a river limits! Truth on this side of the Pyrenees is error on the other this grim pleasantry is so prevalent, and the humours of mankind are so capricious, that there is not a single law which is universal. Theft, incest, the murder of children and parents, have each been ranked amongst virtuous actions.”¹ On the strength of considerations of this nature, it is maintained that Good is only a general idea, at once variable, local, and temporary, so that it is impossible to determine what it is generally. These are serious assertions, and, were they admitted, they would undermine the very foundation of our work. Let us examine them briefly but attentively, remembering that we have met, not for a parley of words, but for earnest, honest discussion.

Morality varies. In order to have a thorough understanding of the nature and bearing of this indisputable fact, we must define the character of moral phenomena with greater precision.

What we term precisely conscience is the feeling of obligation which enjoins on us certain acts and forbids others. Apart from this particular feeling of obligation, as far as we are concerned, there would be neither Good nor Evil, esteem nor aversion. Now, the ideas of Good and Evil, and the feelings which are associated with them, constitute an essential characteristic of

¹ *Pensées de Pascal*, édition Faugère, II., 126 and 127.

humanity, and an individual destitute of them would be what naturalists call a *monster*; but the existence of monsters does not destroy the existence of the species to which they are exceptions. The idea of Good exists wherever man exists in the integrity of his nature; in this respect there are no variations. But what is Good? or, in other words, What ought we to do? It is here that the diversity appears. We care for our aged relations, and we think we act properly. Certain savages kill them to spare them the sufferings of old age, and they think they act properly. Whence arises the diversity of these rules of conduct? It arises from a difference of doctrines. We think that the life of man does not belong to man; the savages who kill their aged parents have a different idea on this subject. It is the variety of doctrines respecting the nature and destination of creatures which produces the various forms of morality. Conscience has no power to originate ideas; it applies the feeling of obligation to the realization of certain relations; it attaches itself to truth, but it does not originate it. Truth is the food of conscience. There is not one morality of the conscience and another of the reason. Reason by itself has no morality, and conscience by itself contains nothing but the feeling of obligation, the object of which could not be determined without the participation of the reason. This is why the rule of manners necessarily falls under the influence of doctrines. So, we may remark in passing, the contemporary theory of *independent morality*, which professes to sever the tie that connects morals with beliefs, requires its disciples to be ignorant or

forgetful of the most certain results of the study of man.

Moral ideas vary then. It is easy to demonstrate this fact against theorists who deny it. But here are three reflections which will prevent you, I hope, from drawing from this indisputable fact the consequences which scepticism deduces from it.

FIRST REFLECTION: Variations in morality, although real, are not so extensive as a superficial examination would indicate. Everywhere in the moral order there exist two very distinct currents. One is formed by customs and institutions and by the maxims which are designed to justify them. This is the morality of the world, and it varies immensely, but the cause of its variations is easy to be seen. Only lately, for example, certain public men of the Southern States of America produced the theory of slavery. The pressure put upon the conscience by institutions and interests was, in this case, obvious enough. An analogous fact is daily manifested in the work of political writers, who seem to have a set of moral rules, variable at will, to explain and justify the various events of which they are the narrators, and, in part, the actors. But by the side of this wavering and changeful current there exists another—a morality which we will call the morality of the conscience, without forgetting that it supposes the participation of the reason, and is subject to the influence of doctrines. This second morality varies less than the first, and in all its changes it develops itself in a uniform direction. We are mistaken when we attribute to the morality of the conscience variations which only belong to the

morality of the world. The institutions and customs of a people do not always give an exact idea of their true thoughts. Our foundling-hospitals, for example, do not prove that the duties of the family form no part of our morality. Now we often judge half-civilized people, who have no literature, by their customs and institutions; and perhaps, amongst these very people, the conscience finds representatives whose protests against certain immoral customs remain altogether unknown to us. Wherever a written tradition exists, it is easy to establish the fact, that the morality of the conscience varies within narrower limits than is ordinarily believed. The ancient books of India, Persia, and China contain some very pure rays of Truth and lofty conceptions of Good. To cite only one example, the ancient Indian poem, entitled Ramayana, contains some traits of exemplary virtue in the midst of many fantastic conceptions. Sita, the heroine of the poem, is a woman of spotless purity, and the author more than once bestows on the personages whom he desires to commend to us as worthy of praise the eulogium, that they found their pleasure in promoting the pleasure of all creatures.¹ Under considerable varieties of customs and institutions, and of maxims employed to justify them, we find then in mankind a basis of moral ideas in which the conception of duty is expressed with great precision. The progress of

¹ Ramayana, a Sanscrit poem, by Valimki, translated into French by Hippolyte Fauche. M. Fauche has conceived the happy thought of publishing a smaller edition, for general use, of this great work. Two vols. in 12mo, Paris, 1864. See, for example, in vol. 2, p. 26: "The penitent, faithful in the pursuit of duty, and who finds his pleasure in that of all creatures." The same thought occurs elsewhere in the poem.

thought disengages and reveals with increasing clearness these elementary bases of morality, and wherever civilization has made any considerable advance, this work has been accomplished. The Christian morality alone, as I believe, has brought into vivid light the fundamental law of the moral order, and by dispersing the clouds that enveloped it, has given full satisfaction to the conscience; but in the sages of Greece and Rome, as well as of the East, there are to be found rays, feeble and scattered it is true, but nevertheless real, of the light which illumines us at the present day. The impression that morality is liable to unlimited variation arises from a superficial examination of facts; a more attentive study of them destroys it.

SECOND REFLECTION: Conscience recognises truth when it is presented to it, adheres to it, and, with some exceptions, such as continually occur in the moral order, owing to its being the sphere of liberty, never lets it go. When a man, led away by his passions, turns aside from the Good he has known, it very often happens that his conscience continues to remind him of the rules his conduct violates. This is one cause of that craving for dissipation which characterizes bad men; they assiduously shun the company of their own thoughts, that they may escape the sight of a troublesome light which rises from the depths of the soul as soon as it is calm, and darts a too vivid gleam on the darkness of a lawless life. The general history of civilization clearly manifests the same truth. When it is affirmed that every nation has its own morality, just as it has its own religion, and that we have no right to suppose that the truth is with us

any more than with the Hindoos, the Chinese, or the Greenlanders, it is forgotten that different civilizations do not enter as equal factors into the development of humanity. What takes place when two civilizations meet, and at length combine to form a new civilization? In the sphere of morals it is sometimes the more corrupt nation which corrupts the other. In the sphere of ideas, it is the more enlightened nation which brings the other to its light. Without examining the annals of history, only see what is taking place under our own eyes. The civilization of Europe, or, to call it by its true name, which it derives from its origin, the Christian civilization, is visibly making the conquest of the world. Its triumph is only a question of time; no one doubts it. It spreads, it attacks, but it has not to defend itself. We feel compelled to abolish the immoral and cruel customs of Asia and Africa; but India makes no attempt to introduce amongst us the distinctions of caste, or human sacrifices, and the dusky inhabitants of the Equator do not send us missionaries to bring over the people of France and England to their barbarous customs. The principles of self-respect, justice, and benevolence, which are the basis of our morality, are the only principles in which conscience recognises its true nature. It is vain to object that this is our opinion, and that contrary opinions have precisely the same value for those who adopt them. We throw into the discussion the weight of a great and indisputable fact. Our principles are extending over the whole globe; Asiatics and Africans could prove it as well as we can. The future of the world belongs to our moral ideas; our

sceptics themselves do not doubt it. Would you like a proof of it? Hear what they say, and read what they write, when, without any thought of upholding their particular views, they show what they really think. Both the history of mankind and the observation of their actual condition forbid the admission, that conscience lends its support equally to all and every doctrine of morals. That moral doctrine, which has power to destroy all others, and by degrees to gain possession of the whole human race, is plainly the doctrine which is made for man, and one which man never renounces when he has once accepted it. There is the fact for our enlightenment.

THIRD REFLECTION: When we have ascended a step or two in the scale of moral conceptions, we can understand how the idea of false virtues originates in the regions beneath us, but the inverse of this does not hold true; the mind occupied with the idea of a false virtue, not only cannot understand, it absolutely misconceives the nature of true virtue. The man who believes, for example, with the Zamore of Voltaire,¹ that revenge is a virtue, sees only weakness and cowardice in the conduct of the forgiving man. But when Augustus pardons Cinna, who after being loaded with kindness had plotted his assassination; when, after a violent and triumphant struggle, he can cry:—

Of self I'm master, as of all the world,
And so will I remain. Let time for aye
Preserve my last and greatest victory.

¹ "And I thought to satisfy, in this frightful abode, two virtues of my heart, revenge and love."—*Alzire*, Act ii. Scene 1.

A righteous anger I this day subdue ;
Posterity with praise my act will view.
Be friends now, Cinna, see 'tis I who ask.¹

Augustus, speaking thus, shews how well he understands that revenge is a false virtue, from which it is his duty to free himself by a strong effort of will, and how clearly he discerns the error of the violent and passionate man, who sees nothing but weakness in the mighty effort of the soul to forgive.

I hope, Gentlemen, by means of these three reflections, to shelter you from the attacks of that moral scepticism which is the most dangerous form of the spirit of doubt. Doubtless we are far from possessing moral truth in its full development and manifold applications, because we are far from having made as much use as we ought of the light which we possess. But our Christian morality is making the conquest of humanity, and it enables us to understand all inferior degrees of moral order ; it enables us to explain satisfactorily the origin and nature of those false maxims, engendered by the passions, which cannot fail to be intelligible to us since they are a part of ourselves.

Conscience is not then so much soft wax, which takes indifferently every kind of impression. Another and more suitable comparison may be found. Those of you who have climbed our Alps have perhaps observed, near the limits of forest vegetation, certain trees, maples for example, growing with difficulty on heaps of rubbish that have fallen from the neighbouring rocks. The dry and unkindly soil has distorted their roots, snows and avalanches have twisted their trunks, the cold and wind

¹ *Cinna*, Act v. Scene 3.

have checked the growth of their branches, and the tooth of the goat has completed their disfigurement. These impoverished trees will bear all this disfigurement and distortion, for they survive it. Nevertheless, they have in them the principle of a larger and more luxurious growth. The magnificent maples of the forest required for their growth a warm sun and a fertile soil; still it was neither the sun nor the soil which determined their forms, but where they found suitable nourishment, with heat and moisture fitted to their development, they could realize their true nature. So is it with the human conscience. It is predisposed to the knowledge of moral truth, but it has no power in itself to produce it. It is readily warped by error, passions, and self-interest. Give it the soil of truth, and you will see it grow up and flourish in its natural form. Unless you accept this explanation you cannot comprehend the history of humanity. You can render no satisfactory explanation of its facts while you refuse to admit that the will owns a law after which it seeks, and that the conscience can only find its satisfaction in a definite and particular conception of Good.

There is a Good and an Evil, and in every variation of our doctrines and customs we are departing from or approaching to an actually existing rule. Notwithstanding the superficial doubts which may have crossed your minds, I hope to convince you that you have never, in your hearts, thought otherwise, and never could.

Observe that, if there were simply some variations in the moral order, but no permanent rule, the words *better* and *worse*, which imply a standard of Good that

is approached or departed from, would have no meaning. Some modern writers have wished to substitute for the idea of Good the idea of progress. This assuredly is sheer heedlessness of thought. Since progress is nothing but an approximation to Good, it could not be called progress unless a certain idea of Good, real, if not very distinct, were entertained. Unless there were some idea of Good in our mind, we should know nothing of either progress or decline, but should simply mark certain changes. Try and think after this fashion—that the generous and devoted man is *different* from the selfish egotist, who basely sacrifices the interests of his fellow-creatures to his personal inclinations, but not *better*; that the moral condition of the most brutal savages, who pass from murder to debauch, and again from debauch to murder, is *different* from the moral condition of the most virtuous people of Europe, but that it is not *worse*. Try and think thus; you cannot. You can say it, no doubt; but if upon serious reflection, after you have duly weighed your own thought, you continued to say it, one could only apply to you the remark of Spinoza, that to remedy a doubt which exists only in words we do not need arguments, but some remedy for obstinacy.¹

That progress and degeneration may be traced in the

¹ "I speak of that true doubt which takes possession of the mind, and not of that which we see produced in words, when doubt is expressed about a matter on which the mind has no doubt at all. It is not the province of method to correct the vice; it is simply a question of making some inquiries into the nature of obstinacy, and the means of curing it."—"Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding," in the *Œuvres de Spinoza*, Edition Saisset, vol. ii., page 303.

variations of customs and ideas no one can seriously dispute. Certain changes are generally recognised as indicating progress, and there are others which are as generally considered steps in the wrong direction. We will give some illustrations; and we shall in this way meet once more with the true idea of Good.

The employment of steam and of electricity, placed at our service by the agents of nature, are instances of progress of which our age is proud. We have no sympathy with those not very intelligent spiritualists who speak in a tone of contempt of what they call purely material conquests. On the contrary, what do we see in this order of things? We see the human mind continually acquiring a wider command of natural agents, subjecting them to its rule, and entering on a bold struggle, not unattended by success, to bring matter under its sway, conquer space, and triumph over time. Truly a fine and noble progress! Now if these advantages gained over external nature were employed merely to minister to bodily gratification, and multiply sensual enjoyments; if the telegraph and the railway carriage, instead of causing the intelligence, the will, and the entire activity of the soul's life to cover the globe, served no other purpose but to stimulate our craving for indulgence and increase the practical materialism of life, who then would hesitate to say that this was an instance of degeneration? You will not dispute these two assertions: that mind progresses when it obtains control over nature; that it retrogrades when it is enslaved by matter. We pass to the social order. When we see justice becoming predominant in our institutions, the poor and the rich

welcomed with equal favour into the sanctuary of the law ; when we see benevolence manifesting itself in the different ranks of society, each member drawing closer to the rest with a view to mitigate the evils inseparable from our journey through this world, instead of destroying each other in mutual conflict, we say there is progress. You think so, and you cannot think otherwise. Can you possibly admit that it is good that might should be substituted for right, and justice be trodden under foot ; that hatred and war should take the place of mutual good-will ? Can you maintain that barbarism is not a recoil from civilization ? You cannot.

There exists, then, an indisputable progress. In our relations with nature it consists in the development of the dominion of mind over matter. In the relations of men with each other it consists in the development of that charity which crowns justice with benevolence. Now progress is nothing else than an advance toward Good. In proclaiming as progress the things we have just noticed, we proclaim that it is good that nature should be subservient to minds, and that minds should be subject to charity. Thus our proposition is established ; Good is known to us. Nature subject to mind, mind in subjection to the law of charity ; this is that legitimate order of the universe which is conceived by the reason, and declared obligatory by the conscience.

We may now trace, omitting individual and national tastes, which are almost infinitely various, the bolder outlines of the edifice of Good as man understands it. Picture to yourselves a good state of society. Take away from society war, tyranny, rebellion, theft, prosti-

tution, murder, all the shameful and bloody scourges of humanity. Let men be brave and temperate, gradually reducing nature to subjection by the light of science, and by industrious toil. Let women be chaste and devoted to their duties, transmitting to the rising race the inheritance of their virtues. Let both the family and the state enjoy the peace which is the result of mutual love. Society thus circumstanced will be very happy, for the heart of man has capacities for immense treasures of joy. Have you ever written out in thought the long chapter of lost blessings, lost through our own fault? I entered our city this autumn, on a glorious evening. The air was still, the sun had just disappeared behind the chain of the Jura, all the mountain peaks shone with a calm and gentle light. It was a happiness only to breathe and gaze; and I thought of the numbers to whom this happiness was lost through their own fault. I thought especially of myself, and of the many times that, employed by contemptible cares, I had neglected joys always within my reach. What joys are offered us in the contemplation of nature, in the ties of the family and of friendship, in the success which rewards persevering labour! How happy the world would be could we only take away Evil from it! Would it, however, even then be all we could desire, would our longing after Good meet with complete satisfaction? No, Gentlemen; and why? Because of death. So long as the thought of death were present, of true death, of that death which is not simply a transformation of life, a passage from one stage of existence to another, but the end of all, annihilation;—so long as this death were present, we might have

found some parts of Good, but not the complete and supreme Good to which our nature aspires.

In youth we readily believe in life, and death ever appearing only in the distant horizon, veiled in the mists of the future, possesses a certain indescribable sweetness and melancholy. But old age approaches, the end begins to be felt, the sombre figure of death becomes more clearly defined, and we are sensible that every hour which elapses brings us nearer to the grave, and prepares the tomb for those we love; we feel that the river is flowing on continually, and that the river leads to the abyss. Then great sadness takes possession of the soul, for it is terrible to feel that all we possess is passing away. This is one reason why so many men are afraid to be left alone with themselves. Some, as we have said, dread solitude, because solitude allows the cry of remorse to be heard. Others dread solitude, because in the silence of all sounds from the outer world, they fear they will hear, uttered out of the depths of the soul, this mournful word:—Brother, thou must die! Death contradicts our nature. In vain do they talk of the leaves which fade and fall, of seasons which come to an end; in vain do they try to make us accept death as a natural function of life, and to reconcile us to it by analogies drawn from nature; the soul protests against it.

I am well aware that materialists, who think themselves very wise, smile at the pretensions of this insignificant man, who would fain live for ever; but let them talk as they please, they think and feel in this respect precisely as we do. Their smile is a false smile which conceals their tears; and if it break into loud and noisy

laughter, it is probably, though they do not know it, because they want to make sufficient noise to drown the voice of their own heart. Death, true death, not the transformation of life, but its destruction, would be a disorder contrary to our entire spiritual organization: to our conscience, because conscience demands an unlimited perfection, which we know very well is not to be attained here below; to our heart, because the heart is made for the perpetuity of its affections, and breaks when separated from the objects of its love; to our reason, because our nature is so plainly constituted for life, that if it is destined to death, there is no correspondence between our nature and its destiny. We see the Good, the sovereign Good, the order of things that would fully satisfy our aspirations. What our souls desire is not simply the prolongation of life, such as it now is, for, owing to the disproportion that exists between the soul and the realities of actual life, it may even happen that a man, weary of life, may become ripe for death. We desire a life *different* from this, a realm of Good, of whose brightness we catch a glimpse, though somewhat indistinctly, from the midst of our darkness. If that were only a will-o'-the-wisp, if we only opened our eyes to this marvellous light to close them again for ever, our life, were it prolonged to fourscore years and under conditions in all other respects absolutely good, would not only be saddened by the prospect of its end, it would be absurd in itself. Either the vision of Good is chimerical, or we are made for life, for a life of immortality.

We are asked for our proofs of immortality. Let us not evade the question. It is impossible to study the

tendencies, aspirations and cravings of the soul, without discovering that life is the conclusion, or to use the language of the schools, the thesis laid down by our spiritual nature. To any one then who asks me for proofs of immortality, I reply that it is for him to speak first, and I challenge him to furnish the proof of death. What can be said to prove that our destiny is death? Let us hear.

A man is taken ill. One day his heart, which was beating too quickly, ceases to beat; his limbs become stiff, decomposition sets in, and he is carried to the churchyard. The grass grows green over his grave, the willow beside it renews its foliage, but the dead do not return. Put this thought into the language of science. Within the limits of our actual experience, souls only manifest themselves by means of our actual body. Is this all the proof of death? This is all. I do not believe that the keenest materialistic philosopher, were he at the same time the greatest master of modern physiological science, could produce a single argument in favour of his cause that would not just amount to this:—Within the limits of our actual experience, souls no longer manifest themselves to us after the dissolution of their actual bodies. And what have they to assure them that there is no other experience beside our actual experience, no other body but that which we know, no other life than the present? This is the beginning and end of their argument. What have they to assure them of it? Nothing, absolutely nothing. In whatever scientific finery they may dress their thought, it always amounts to just this commonplace argument;—when people are

dead we no longer see them, and no one has returned to bring us tidings of the other world.

No one has returned to bring us tidings of the other world! And who then has returned to bring us these frightful tidings, that death annihilates life? Who has traversed the universe from end to end, and with senses capable of discerning everything, such as certainly we are not gifted with, has come back and said:—I have seen everything even to the farthest limits of space, and nowhere have I found your dead living? Who has ascended from the dark abyss of nothingness to inform us that annihilation has engulfed all that ever lived? Our dead are no longer with us in our present life; we know this, and our hearts suffer so much in consequence that we know it only too well. Say, if you will, that there are no proofs of another life for science as you understand it, for a science which admits nothing as real but that which falls under the cognizance of the senses; but when you assert the annihilation of creatures, because they are no longer perceived by our senses, your argument is worthless. What do you oppose to the heart, the conscience, and the reason? Yes, I insist on this last word, to the *reason*, to reason duly appreciating the spiritual facts of our nature, and seeking to explain them. To the cry of all human nature yearning after life, you oppose the thought that your knowledge is the measure of all things, and that, beyond the range of your actual and sensible experience, there exists nothing whatever. A very narrow, petty notion certainly. And I can understand the somewhat haughty disdain with which Cicero, the great Roman orator, treats these *minute* philosophers,

as he calls them,¹ who, respecting a creature so evidently constituted, as man is, for life, dare to affirm that the soul perishes with the dissolution of the body.

No one seriously denies the reality of those aspirations of the human soul to which we have just referred. Everywhere and always, man desires (I do not say believes in) an immortal future. And why does he desire it? Because he has a view of Good, yearns after it with all the powers of his soul, and feels that its complete realization is impossible in the present state of things. Good implies immortality; and the desire of the heart is for eternal life; this is not disputed, but we are asked:—What does this prove? Whenever this question is asked, we always ask in reply:—Whether the universe is in such disorder that creatures evidently constituted for life are nevertheless destined to death? Such a belief is the real source of all the doubts about a future life which prevail in the ancient philosophies of Greece and India. Doubt is only one form of the discouragement; the shadow which broods over the future is only the precursor of clouds that will veil that sun of the soul, Good. Given a firm faith in Good and order, and the reason will immediately, and without the shadow of a doubt, come to a conclusion about man's destiny in accordance with his spiritual constitution. If Good is to be realized, all is not at an end at the moment we call death. Good is the guarantee of life, but what is the guarantee of Good? This is the last question raised by our subject.

¹ *Minuti philosophi*.—*De Senectute*, xxiii.

III. GUARANTEE OF GOOD.

What is the guarantee of Good? God. I shall not now enter upon the question of the existence of God in a general way. I refer you to my former lectures on this subject.¹ I have attempted to demonstrate it: nature and humanity, the heart, the reason, and the conscience all imply the existence of God. This reverend and holy name is found at the foundation and summit of everything, at the end and the beginning of all the manifestations of thought. The existence of God is a truth which does not admit of the same kind of demonstration as other truths, because it is the first truth on which all others depend, so that we have only a choice between faith in God and absolute and irremediable doubt extending over the whole range of thought. I limit myself here to a single consideration taken directly from my subject. Good presupposes God, and God is the guarantee of Good. It is arguing in a circle, but in a circle which will not appear faulty to those who have sufficiently mastered the laws of thought to know, that all truth terminates in a circle of light, whilst it is the specific character of error to end disastrously in contradiction.

Good presupposes God. In order to see this, let us bear in mind that the idea of Good, as it is conceived by the reason, has its origin in the conscience. Conscience gives orders. Have you ever given your attention to the two senses of this word, *order*. An order is both a plan and a commandment. Conscience in its

¹ The Heavenly Father, Seventh Lecture.

intimate connexion with reason is a light which indicates to the will what it ought to do, it reveals an order; conscience is also a power which commands the doing of what ought to be done; it gives the order to realize the order which it reveals. It is a real power which makes itself painfully felt in those who defy it. Now Good being a universal idea, applicable to everything, where does this plan of the universe exist, of which certainly we know but a very small part; whence proceeds this universal light of which we only receive a single ray? Good being obligatory for all, whence comes this power which we feel in that part of the commandment which concerns us, and which we conceive of as a general power extending to all wills alike? Good assuredly is not our personal conception; and it is not from ourselves that the commandment recognised by conscience proceeds, since we are continually engaged in a struggle against its power. Nevertheless, the plan and the power which we find in Good must exist somewhere, and in some way, for they are facts as real of their kind as the phenomena of matter. A plan can only exist in some intelligent mind; a power exists only in a will; Good, then, the existence of which is universal, can only exist in a universal spirit.

God, considered in Himself, is not Good, for Good is not a being. God, in His essence, is the absolute Good; in His relation to the universe, He is the absolute cause; but Good being the order established by God for all existences, God is the personal principle of Good, which is the direct manifestation of His eternal will. If you abandon this position, you will plunge into the darkness

of metaphysics, which may seem profound because they are dark, but are only dark because they are false. You may doubtless apply yourself to the practice of Good without making it the object of any philosophical speculation, but whenever you seek an answer to the question:—Where and how does Good in itself exist? you must conclude either that Good is God's plan, and conscience the manifestation of His will, and you will then have a firm ground of support for your thought, or you will be obliged to acknowledge that Good and conscience are insoluble enigmas. Take away God, and conscience and Good fall deprived of their support; and as the doubt that will then invade your mind will strike at reason no less than conscience, if you are wise, you will take refuge in silence. You must make your choice between faith in God and a radical and hopeless scepticism. I have chosen the first of these alternatives, and, I repeat, I have given, elsewhere and at length, my reasons for this choice.

Good is then God's plan which reveals to our conscience what we ought to do, and to our reason, deriving from conscience its idea of obligation, what ought to be generally. Our will is good when it faithfully accomplishes the particular task ascribed to it, and thus realizes, as far as it is concerned, the plan of the universe. Plato, therefore, has not improperly summed up all morality in this single formula:—resemblance to God—a formula which we should translate thus:—the union of the created with the creative will. In God Himself, Good cannot be conformity to a rule which

is extraneous to Him, since nothing exists in independence of Him, neither matter nor mind, nor, consequently, Good. Indeed, since Good is not a being, but merely the expression of the relations which ought to unite beings, the existence of Good, independently of matter and mind, whose relations it governs, is an abstraction destitute of all reality. Good manifests the creative will in the relations of beings, as the beings themselves manifest that will in their existence. Good is then identical with the supreme will. To speak of *Good* and to speak of the *will of God* is just to reiterate the same thing.

The identity of Good with the will of God is a truth of the greatest practical importance. To distinguish between the will of God and Good, and to think that these two ideas may be separated, is a dangerous error. It produces, on the one hand, in men who are religiously disposed, an indifference towards works which are good, but not what they call the work of God; as if there could be anything good that God did not will! and, on the other hand, the same error produces the extravagancies of fanaticism. I am well aware how these words are abused; I know that in certain circles all sincere and unreserved devotion to a cause is called fanaticism, and that they would crush the purest and noblest enthusiasm by applying to it this term of disparagement; but the word, confined to its proper signification, designates a real disorder of the human mind. Real fanaticism, that which deserves reprobation, consists in thinking that the will of God may be something distinct from Good, and that we may do Evil

to render God service. This notion has inflicted severe wounds on humanity and religion. Happily the error is essentially opposed to the general conscience of mankind as well as to true philosophy. The most ancient hymns are in praise of the pure, the holy, the incorruptible, and never separate the thought of the Creator of the world from the idea of moral perfection. This religious sentiment has been grievously perverted through the worship of the immortal deities of paganism; but the perversion was perceived, and drew forth the protests of conscience. The poets, giving expression to a general feeling, protested, with Euripides, against the worship of vice.

If the gods do ill, they are no longer gods.¹

Without forgetting the numerous and mournful errors of the religious sentiment, it may be said that its proper bent is toward an acknowledgment of the indissoluble union between Good and the will of God. Only Lord Byron's Lucifer can reason otherwise, and mankind thinks with the poet's Adah that "the Almighty must be supremely good." Mankind thinks so. But atheists? Atheists think just the same, as you shall see. What is their principal argument, the argument which, outside the narrow limits of metaphysical discussion, has made some noise in the world? "If there was a God, there would not be so much evil." What is the basis of this argument? The idea that

¹ Justin Martyr has collected together, at the end of his book "*On Monarchy*," along with this passage from Euripides, several analogous quotations from the poets of paganism.—(See translation in Ante-Nicene Christian Library.)

God is the very essence of goodness, so that to prove that the world is not good is to demonstrate that it is not the work of God. You see that the principal argument raised against the existence of God is founded on the idea of His goodness. Thus, in the wildest errors of thought a glimmer of truth may still be discovered, and, with a parting homage to supreme holiness, man prefers the folly of atheism to the crime of blasphemy.

Conscience is the voice of God. The children in our schools and families are taught this; I proclaim it here before this audience, an audience so large that it is almost the meeting of a nation. I do not think that one could speak differently, and be faithful to truth, within the closed doors of a learned society. There are not two truths. Truth is understood in different degrees; there is a mode of expressing philosophical or religious truth which, to be understood, requires a special culture; but I could not employ it here, because some would not understand it (this would be the least evil), while others, thinking they understood it, would carry away a perversion of truth which is one of the most dangerous forms of error. Truth is only truth inasmuch as it is understood; but there are not two truths. There is but one sun to give light to all bodies, and there is only one truth by which all minds must be enlightened. In all ages some men have thought otherwise. Even in our days some well-known writers say that there is one truth for the people, a sham truth, and another for great thinkers, the real truth. It is somewhat odd, certainly, that this doctrine which, by

GOOD.

its very nature, ought to remain the secret of a small number of the initiated, was blazed abroad lately in the full sunshine of French publicity. The writers whom I have in view say, that the great mass of the people, being incapable of receiving the real truth, can only be addressed in deceptive language. If I thought so, Gentlemen, you would not have the opportunity of hearing or reading what I have to say. If I thought that, in addressing the general public, it was necessary to use deception, I would break my pen and close my lips once and for ever. We say then, and we say it for all, Conscience is the voice of God, or, laying aside figurative language, the moral law is the expression of the Divine plan, and the obligation of conscience is the immediate feeling of a Supreme Power.

We asked, What is the guarantee of the idea of Good? We know now. Good is the thought of the Eternal and the will of the Almighty. He said to inert matter:—Let there be light! and the heavenly bodies began their harmonious motions in the depths of space. He said to His free creature:—Let Good be done! Be just, and thou shalt be happy—a word in which the promise is inseparable from the commandment. Whatever conscience prescribes, or a pure heart desires, or a sound reason conceives, is good; and whatever is good is the will of God. Good is not of immediate realization, because in the spiritual sphere Good must be accomplished by liberty; the creature made in the image of God must become a co-worker with Him. Good is the end to be attained, the ideal to be realized; in the first instance, it may only be completely realized

in the plan revealed to the conscience, and the free creature bidden to accomplish the law may fail in its mission. But not to believe in the final triumph of Good is a kind of practical atheism. Let us then, Gentlemen, take courage and hope; Good is under the guarantee of the Almighty; and what ought to be, will be.

SECOND LECTURE.

Evil.

GENTLEMEN,—In defining Good we have at the same time defined Evil, which is its opposite. Evil is not the absence of Good; the absence of a thing is nothing, and Evil is not this; it is a reality, unhappily too real, the opposite of Good. Just as Good is not a being, or a thing, but an order in the relations of beings; so Evil is not a being, or a thing; it is a disorder in the relations of beings, a trouble imported into the universal harmony. No creatures exist nor elements of creatures that are in themselves Evil. Nothing exists, indeed, but by the act of the Creator, and this act, which is pre-eminently a manifestation of Good, has formed every creature in a manner suitable to its destination. In a world destitute of moral freedom, where all things were the direct manifestation of the Supreme Will, everything would be good. Wherever moral freedom exists, everything may go wrong. The reason, heart, and will of spiritual creatures may be perverted from their legitimate functions, and entirely change their relations with nature; but directly we consider the creature in itself, apart from the disorder of functions, all is Good. *Evil is that which ought not to be.* God does not desire

it; and this sovereign will imposes an obligation on every created will to destroy it. We proceed to study it first in nature, and then in humanity.

I. EVIL IN NATURE.

Let us, first of all, fix our attention on the domain of pure inert matter. Since there is here neither heart nor will, there can be neither suffering nor sin; Evil, therefore, can only present itself under the form of disorder, that is to say, as a false relation between creatures and their destination. Do we find such disorder existing in matter as it comes under the observation of natural philosophy, astronomy, and geology? To ask the question is to start a difficulty. In order to pronounce a judgment as to Good or Evil, it is necessary, as we have explained, to know the plan which determines what ought to be, and ascertain whether or not things are conformed to this plan. Now, since we do not know the general plan of nature, it would seem that judgments respecting Good and Evil can have no application in this sphere. Notwithstanding, however, that our science is incomplete, it has succeeded, after centuries of labour, in establishing ideas which go some way towards opening the path apparently closed against us.

The phenomena of nature are regulated in conformity with a fixed order. The result of the development of our globe has been to produce conditions which have permitted the appearance and maintenance of life. These are, it seems to me, two ideas respecting the

plan of the universe which have thoroughly taken possession of our minds. And we have a growing conviction, increasing with the progress of science, that the course of facts is conformed to these two ideas. The exceptions prove the rule. Whatever may appear, at first sight, accidental, fortuitous, or exceptional, admits eventually of being referred to constant laws. This is the general result of material science. Respecting our own globe, we are making the discovery of marvellous processes by means of which the conditions have been realised which have allowed of the appearance and preservation of life. When we assert that there is Evil in this order of facts, our judgment is rash. In proportion as science extends, it demonstrates to us (what, for the matter of that, science took for granted from the outset), that in the physical universe all is order, proportion, and harmony. For example, the glaciers of our mountains occupy large tracts of land which are entirely barren. We might think the loss of these lands an Evil. Science comes and shews us that these accumulations of ice, the principal source of the rivers which water the continents, are necessary to the fertility of the earth, and that to do away with the unproductive rocks and barren glaciers of our Alps would be to defertilize our valleys and plains. The avalanche which occasions such widespread destruction seems to us an Evil; science comes and shews us that the avalanche, by denuding the peaks of the mountains, causes spring to appear much sooner than it otherwise would.¹ Earthquakes are

¹ See M. Rambert's article entitled *Une Course manquée*, in the *Bibliothèque universelle* for Aug. 1867.

frightful phenomena. Whenever we get to know exactly their cause and results, we shall doubtless be able to prove that, could we put a stop to these great disturbances, we should only bring about more fearful catastrophes, because the earthquake is one of the necessary functions of the life of the globe. Our knowledge is still very limited, but what we have succeeded in ascertaining permits us to affirm that the final result of the physical sciences will be the conclusion of the fable of Fontaine:—

Garo returned home,
Praising God for all.¹

Gentlemen, does this reply to the idea that there is Evil in nature perfectly satisfy you? I hope not, for if you thought it sufficient you would be very easily satisfied. The order of nature is admirable; but why is this order so hard for us? The hurricane purifies the atmosphere, and that it is good for the atmosphere I fully concede; but it is none the less true that it damages my house and tears up the trees in my orchard. The earthquake is a function adapted to the life of the globe; well and good, but it destroys Lisbon. Allow that the avalanche hastens the return of spring in the higher regions of our mountains; but it sweeps away, at the same time, cabins and gardens, and buries the shepherd by the side of his flock. Our complaint is not that there are disorders in nature considered in itself, but that its relations to us are what they are. Why is this beautiful and harmonious nature so severe upon man? With the poet, who from the mountain height

¹ La Fontaine, *Le Gland et la Citrouille*.

hears on the one side the harmonious sound of the waves, and on the other the discordant cries and shrieks of humanity, we ask why the Creator

In fatal wedlock doth perpetually bind
The song of nature with the wail of human kind ?¹

From this point the question changes. It is no longer a question of disorder of nature, but of sufferings which nature inflicts on us, and we pass on to consider humanity. What we call Evil in the physical world, (if you consider it attentively you will easily see,) is never anything but a relation between nature and ourselves, a relation which injures our interests or shocks our feelings.

The problem presents itself under other aspects if we consider living nature; and in approaching the question of the animal creation which now demands our attention, let us admit at once that we are entering on the realms of mystery. Does what we call sin exist in animals? If we deny them conscience, have they not at least instincts and inclinations which in us become principles of moral evil? Are they not subject to sensuality and jealousy? They all, without exception, make war on each other. Amongst those organs which, for their structure and adaptation to their purpose, are the just admiration of naturalists, how many are weapons of attack and defence! However far we go back in the history of our globe, we find that living creatures have always hunted and devoured each other. The fossil

¹ Victor Hugo, *Ce qu'on entend sur la montagne* in the *Feuilles d'automne*.

bones of animals that appear to have preceded the appearance of man, bear the marks of the teeth of their enemies, and reveal to us, after the lapse of ages, gigantic struggles which stained our infant earth with blood. Life is only kept up by death, and most frequently by a violent and painful death. Let me avail myself here of the words of Count Joseph de Maistre :—" In the vast domain of living nature open violence reigns, a kind of fury which arms all creatures, *in mutua funera*. Even in the vegetable kingdom we have a presentiment of this law: from the immense catalpa down to the humblest grasses, how many plants *die*, and how many are *killed!* But when you enter the animal kingdom, this law assumes all at once a fearful prominence. In each great division of the tribes of animal life there exists a certain number of animals whose business it is to destroy the rest; there are insects of prey, reptiles of prey, fishes of prey, and beasts of prey. There is not a moment of time when some living creature is not being devoured by another. Over these numerous races of animals man is placed, whose destructive hand spares nothing that lives; he kills for his food, he kills for his clothing, he kills to adorn himself, he kills to attack, he kills in self-defence, he kills for instruction, he kills for amusement, he kills for the sake of killing; a haughty and terrible king, he wants everything, and nothing can resist him. But does this law stop at man? Certainly not. What creature, however, is to exterminate him who exterminates them all? Himself. It is man who is charged to slay man. But how can he, a moral and merciful being, born to love, as ready to weep for others as for himself,

how can he fulfil this law? Its decree is accomplished by war. Do you not hear the earth crying out for blood? It does not cry in vain; war breaks out. Man, seized all at once with a fury unknown to hatred or wrath, goes forth to the battlefield without knowing either what he wants or what he is doing. Nothing is more opposed to his nature, yet nothing is less repugnant to him; he does with enthusiasm what he holds in horror.

“ Thus the great law of the violent destruction of all living creatures, from the worm to man, is accomplished without ceasing. The whole earth, continually saturated with blood, is just one vast altar on which every living thing must be sacrificed without end, without measure, and without reprieve.”¹

To be born, to suffer, to die, and to bring suffering and death on each other, such is the destiny of the animal creation. The law of Evil which oppresses us is nothing but an extension of the general law of life. If we do not attribute conscience, and, consequently, sin to animals, it is difficult at any rate to deny the presence of Evil in them in the form of pain. But this subject suggests a serious difficulty; before proceeding to reason about the lot of animals, we must know what it is; now, science fails us here. The state of the question is just this:—

We have in our minds two clear conceptions:—that of the mechanism of bodies, in which there is only form and movement, and that of the functions of minds, the essential condition of which is self-consciousness. Thence

¹ See the complete text of this abridged quotation in the seventh dialogue of the *Soirées de Saint Pétersbourg*.

originate two rival theories on the nature of animals:— that of the mechanical animal (*animal machine*), and that of the humanate¹ animal (*animal homme*). Let us briefly expound them. The theory of the mechanical animal is that of the disciples of Descartes, and of a small class of scientific men, the consistent materialists, who affirm, without shrinking from any of the consequences of their theory, that there is nothing in the world but pure mechanism. According to them, animals are only wonderful automata; they neither feel nor think, they move, and nothing more. This doctrine is supported by considerations not altogether without weight. They point out that man began by supposing the existence of a soul like his own wherever there was motion. The ancients placed souls in the revolving plants, and in amber, because of its attracting light bodies. Science has gradually dispensed with these imaginary souls in favour of pure mechanism. The elimination of souls from animals is only the legitimate extension of that slow progress of the human mind which overthrows all the idols of its infancy. The doctrine which this argument seeks to establish is opposed by hunters who live on familiar terms with their dogs, and, in a general way, by all who come into frequent contact with the animals most associated with man, who cannot consent to regard as machines creatures whose look and tone they have come to understand. The notion that a brute is only an automaton clashes with our immediate sense of reality, and so disposes us to lean towards the theory of the humanate animal.

¹ Humanate = “invested with human qualities.”—*Tr.*

This second doctrine is that of Fontaine, if one may speak of doctrine in connection with Fontaine. It is also very much that of Buffon. Read those celebrated descriptions of this writer:—the tiger, the lion, the horse; and you will be surprised to see to what an extent he attributes to these animals sentiments, passions, and a soul like our own. This method of treatment, while it contributes very much to the literary beauty of his works, diminishes their scientific value. The doctrine of the humanate animal is, in fact, that of the inconsistent materialists (a numerous class), who very easily prove that man is only an animal, because they set out with the supposition, without giving much reason for it, that the animal is a man. This doctrine has in its favour numberless facts which seem to indicate sensibility and intelligence in brutes. The principal objection to it is the fact that the animal races make no approach to civilization. These races have indeed a history, but their destinies appear to be in complete subjection to nature. The want of speech, and the absence of progress induce the belief that an animal has not possession of itself, that possibly, therefore, it has no consciousness of itself, and that the signs of pain it exhibits do not answer, as in us, to felt, that is to say, to real suffering.

Between these two doctrines, is there room for a third? Will science ever succeed in thinking out a mode of existence which is neither that of an automaton nor that of a mind which knows and possesses itself? Possibly. It may be that we are beginning to catch a glimpse of methods and means of observation which

may lead to such a result. In any case, the question is far from being solved; and I do not think that a cautious science can reply at present to the question of the nature of animals in any other way than by a note of interrogation. In the absence of any certain solution, I shall discuss, with a view to the problem now before us, the theories just referred to.

If you see nothing more in animals than an exhibition of the mechanism of nature; if, in your view, they are simple agents of the universal movement, destitute of thought and feeling, all is good. They form the soil by their decayed remains, they maintain the atmosphere by their respiration, they transport seeds and sow the earth; in a word, they fulfil functions admirably adapted to promote the circulation of matter. All is order and harmony, just as in the sphere of physical science all things answer their end. You will not speak, of course, of animals which annoy or injure us any more than of poisonous plants; for all these facts, like inundations and earthquakes, only appear evil to us in their relation to mankind.

Let us examine now the other opinion, that animals have souls similar, or, at least, analogous to our own; that they feel a similar contrast between their desires and their destiny. What shall we say? Does the butterfly, which leaves its gloomy chrysalis only to die a few moments after, deplore the shortness of its days like the young captive of Chénier? Does the mare of the desert, when she sees her foal succumb to the heat of the sun, and fall lifeless upon the arid sand, mourn over her young, and like Rachael, refuse to be comforted?

When the slaughter-house opens its dens of death
 To admit the bleating sheep,
 Do the poor dogs and sheep that remain in the fold
 Bemoan its sad fate, and weep?¹

Suppose it were so; suppose that these death-rites of animals, which are to be reckoned by millions, and by millions of millions, every hour of the life of the globe, caused the same tears to flow, and awakened the same anguish as the hecatombs of young men who are immolated by the detestable ambition of politics; what should we say? We should say that Evil extends beyond humanity. Well, let us see how, on this supposition, the problem will shape itself. The problem confronts us in ourselves, where we discern its terms with the greatest clearness. Our destination, as indicated by the constitution of our soul, is contradicted by our actual destiny. Made for Good, we feel ourselves involved in Evil; constituted for life, we are the prey of death. The problem extends itself just in proportion as we think we recognise our own or a similar nature. How far animals are possessed of self-consciousness, and to what extent they may be subject to Evil so as to feel, recognise, and experience it, we do not know. But since we only extend the idea of Evil just so far as we extend the idea of our own nature, we should first of all study the problem in ourselves, because it is there that we find the light. If we meet with a satisfactory solution, we may anticipate that this solution will apply to the animal races in the measure in which serious science shall invest them with the attributes of humanity. This is the only

¹ André Chénier, *Jambe* 3.—The last line is in the text—
 “Know no more of its fate.”

good method. To study the Problem of Evil in animals without knowing their nature, and to apply the result of this study to man, would be to lay ourselves open to an entire confusion of ideas. To seek a solution of the problem in regions which are still mysteries to us, instead of in facts which we know, would be to reverse the order of rational inquiry.

You see, Gentlemen, that substantially I have nothing to offer but an avowal of ignorance on the question of Evil in animals. We have, nevertheless, in the midst even of this ignorance, to point out, by way of warning, two errors.

The first consists in thinking that the presence of Evil in humanity is explained by asserting that we have an animal origin, so that our passions and sufferings are to be ascribed to this source. Were we to admit that the direct relationship of animals with man was fully demonstrated, which it is not, this fact of natural history would be very far from solving the question which now occupies us. We should still have to ask, Why does man find himself enveloped in an animal nature, and why does Evil exist among animals?

The second error, which is only the first in another form, consists in reasoning thus:—Passion and pain are a general law. What we call Evil, therefore, belongs to the order of nature; we find it in all forms of life, from the lowest up to man. Now, everything which belongs to the order of nature must be accepted as good. I entreat you, in the name of logic, and in the name of the dignity of the human mind, never to reason thus:—Evil is a general law, therefore all is good.

The study of Evil in physical nature sends us back to humanity, because we never characterise anything as bad in this order of things except the relations of matter with ourselves,—never material phenomena considered alone. The study of Evil in living nature sends us back to humanity, because we only conceive of Evil in living nature on the supposition of its having a nature resembling our own. Let us pass on, then, to the consideration of Evil in humanity.

II. EVIL IN HUMANITY.

Evil in humanity presents itself under three forms:—error, which is the Evil of the reason; sin, which is the Evil of the conscience; and suffering, which is the Evil of the heart. To prove that error, sin, and suffering are Evils, it will be sufficient for us to establish, in accordance with our definitions, that these are facts exhibiting a disorder, that is to say, a want of harmony, between the human soul and the destination which its nature indicates as proper to it.

Error is not ignorance. Before we can prove that all ignorance is an Evil, we must show that we were intended to know everything, and to know everything immediately, so that if we cannot tell how many stars there are in the sky, or how many grains of sand there are on the seashore, we are in a state of disorder. Such an assertion is not self-evident, and it would not be easy to demonstrate it. Imagine a mind with a clear perception both of its knowledge and its ignorance, assenting where it ought to assent, denying where it ought to deny, and sus-

pending its judgment in the absence of sufficient reasons for affirmation or denial; suppose, further, that this mind grows in light and sees the region of darkness continually receding farther from it; then all will be good. Such a mind will not possess all truth, but it will be altogether possessed by truth, all its judgments will be true. Ignorance becomes an Evil only when it bears upon the immediate purpose of our being, in such a way that our will, deprived of light, feels it necessary to act, but does not know how to do so intelligently.

Error consists in forming false judgments; it is an Evil in itself and in all cases. It cannot be disputed that the proper destination of the understanding is to possess truth; consequently, error is a disorder, and often a very serious disorder. The errors which we commit as to the sources of joy send us forth in the foolish pursuit of a happiness which continually eludes our grasp; and the errors we fall into respecting duty produce the mysterious and terrible phenomenon of a perverted conscience. Those cases in which, when resolved to do our duty, we are deceived as to its nature, constitute one of the most difficult subjects in the whole study of ethics. Evil, in that case, seems to result from the very uprightness of our intention; for as Pascal has said:—"We never do Evil so completely and heartily as when we do it with a good conscience."¹

Error enters in part into our bad actions; but error, even moral error, is not sin. The wise Socrates was greatly mistaken on this point. He said that error was the sole origin of our bad actions, that men are deceived

¹ Edition Faugère, vol. i., p. 210.

as to the nature of their obligations, but "that they do whatever they regard as their duty."¹ The poet Euripides, his contemporary, could have given him a lesson of true philosophy on this subject, by reminding him of this elementary truth: "We know what is good, we perceive it, but we do not do it."² Error and sin are nearly allied, but they are perfectly distinct facts. Error has its seat in the understanding, but sin is an act of the will.

To give a definition of sin I avail myself of words which many of you will recognise — "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."³ Sin is the violation of known law, the revolt of the will against the power and authority of conscience. But, let us not forget that, when the law is unknown, it may be our own fault that it has been veiled from our eyes. If our ignorance is wilful, we are responsible for it. He who violates a law of which he is not aware at the time he violates it, sins nevertheless, if he has himself blinded the eyes of his conscience. Such is our definition of sin. As to the thing, we know it only too well. Is there any one here who cannot recall, without any very searching examination, instances in which, notwithstanding the full light of conscience, he has felt his will to blame? Our definition of sin is a demonstration that it is an evil, since it is a rebellion against law, and, consequently, that which absolutely ought not to be.

Since we perceive the essential nature of moral law, we perceive, at the same time, the essential nature of sin. The supreme law is the law of charity, the consecra-

¹ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*.

² *Hippolytus*

³ Jas. iv. 17.

tion of the individual to the general good. The essence of sin is the very opposite of this law, that is to say, a disposition to live only for oneself. Selfishness (*egoïsme*), in the complete and etymological signification of the word, is the root of all sin. An individual, instead of keeping his place, rank, and relation to the world at large, makes self his centre, refers everything to himself like a planet, or, I should rather say, a fragment or molecule of a planet that should want to become the sun. This inordinate self-seeking, which is the common source of all moral disorder, exhibits itself chiefly in two forms. When a man departs from his proper place, he either descends and becomes brutish and sensual, losing in this way all title to be considered a member of moral and intelligent society; or he tries to lift himself out of the rank to which he belongs, and, thinking to rise, falls into the abyss of pride. Sensuality and pride are the two principal forms of selfishness. As there are two forms, so also there are two degrees of selfishness; the first is that of the unconcerned man who turns away his head, ever ready to say, Am I my brother's keeper? The second is the disposition of the wicked man, who tramples on others for his own enjoyment.

To define sin, is, I repeat, to prove it an Evil, since it is the violation of law, the contrary of that which ought to be. It will not be so easy to prove that suffering is an Evil.

It seems a somewhat arduous task, not indeed to arouse the heart of man against suffering (nothing is easier, and it is done quite enough without the help of

our words), but to satisfy the reason that suffering ought not to be. It has, in fact, numerous and powerful apologists. Let us hear them.

What is it that makes the man? Energy. What produces energy? Conflict. What produces conflict? Pain. If you do away with all pain in a human existence, you do away with all conflict, every development of energy, and have only a morally incapacitated creature. What a salutary effect is often produced by the most terrible scourges! I received, a few months ago, a letter written from Zurich, at the time when the cholera was ravaging that city. My correspondent, whom I have the honour of calling my friend, told me that he had seen sad things—the results of selfishness and fear; but he also told me that so much courage, devotedness, and regard for the good of others had been brought out under the pressure of the malady, that different ranks of society had been so drawn together by the inspiration of generous sentiments, that he would not for the world have been absent from his native place, and so have missed witnessing such a spectacle. Yet he is the father of a family; and he wrote to me at the very height of the plague, when its terrible menace was hanging over his own head and the heads of his family! A moral eulogium may then be pronounced on epidemics. And as to war! What has not been said to render it acceptable to us? Does not war invigorate character? Do not the gentle blessings of peace enervate the soul? In a general way, are not public calamities often attended with evident salutary results? If some minds are alienated from good thoughts, and from

God, by the experience and sight of suffering, is it not more frequently pain that leads men to God and holy thoughts? Is it not in the fury of the tempest that the sailor, who appeared so profane, is brought to his knees? and do we not see the most terrible social disturbances producing abundant fruits of moral improvement? A modern poet presents us with a summary of these thoughts:—

An apprentice is man in the service of pain,
 Who, except as he suffers, no knowledge can gain.
 Very hard is this law, and supreme its dictate,
 'Tis as old as the world, and as ancient as fate;
 It ordains that in sorrow we shall be baptized,
 And in tears pay the cost of whatever is prized.
 As the corn only ripens when watered with dew,
 So through weeping alone life and feeling keep true.”¹

Suffering has, then, its apologists; more than this, it has its lovers. I will not transport you to India to gaze on the incredible tortures which the inhabitants of those distant regions used formerly to inflict on themselves, and perhaps, to a certain degree, inflict still. In our own quarter of the globe, in our age, so eager to secure its material welfare, and given up to the pursuit of all kinds of enjoyment, there are men who voluntarily, and in some cases at the sacrifice of wealth and power, submit to the law of labour under conditions of the most extreme poverty. You have heard of the Trappist monks? Last year I visited a conventual establishment of this order near Mulhouse, in Alsace, and never, perhaps, had I such a vivid experience of the feeling of contrast. Mulhouse is a city celebrated for its manu-

¹ Alfred de Musset, *La Nuit d'octobre*.

factures and operatives, for the prosperity of its industry and its intelligent philanthropy, where, in the midst of wealth or easy circumstances, the upper classes of society possess all the conveniences and advantages of modern civilization, and enjoy them honourably, because they make it their business, to an unusual degree, to spread comfort through all ranks of society. By the side of all this stands a vast dwelling, cold and silent, where, even during the severity of winter, no fire is lighted but the altar lamp, or the quickly-extinguished flame which is needed for their scanty cooking—a dwelling in which silence is only broken by the sounds of toil and the hymns of the church. Here is the way in which, if my memory does not fail me, these strange men live who inhabit this undesirable residence. At the hour at which we are now assembled they are stretched on boards, seeking sleep after the hard labour of the day. About two in the morning they will be awaked by the bell for prayers. They will labour, fasting, until ten in the fields and in the workshop. Then, to repair their exhausted strength, a glass of beer, with rations of bread, and of pease grown in their fields, will be given them. Their evening meal will be like that of the morning. On feast-days they have some cheese in addition. Compared with these men, the worst-conditioned of our working people really lives like a man of capital. You will understand, Gentlemen, that it does not enter into my plan to discuss here the value of institutions of this kind; I wanted an example, and I chose the most striking. Here are men who seek privations as we seek pleasures, and who seem to ask nothing from the things

of this world but the austere pleasure of suffering. Of their own accord they deny their bodies nourishment as far as they safely can, and I observed that, notwithstanding this, (I mention the fact as a physiological problem), their faces were neither pale nor emaciated. They deprive their minds of their proper aliment by silence; and, what appears almost frightful, they deprive their hearts of their true nurture, by the absolute rupture of every tie of family and social affection. It seems, then, that suffering, which has its apologists, has also its lovers; that is all I wanted to prove; and in the face of such arguments and facts my thesis must seem to you desperate, for I am about to affirm that suffering is an Evil, and that it ought not to be. To convince you, it will only be necessary to explain in what sense I affirm this.

It is easy to prove that in the conditions of our actual experience—please mark these words, *of our actual experience*—suffering is inevitable, and that it is good. How is this proved? All the arguments employed in this discussion may be reduced to three.¹

In the *first* place, pain is the warning of disease. Were you ill without feeling so, having no idea of the mischief, you would not seek the remedy for it. Similarly, when the social body experiences severer sufferings than usual, it is warned to ascertain the seat of the disorder, and apply one of those remedies which in politics we call reforms. No one can deny that it is useful and

¹ It will be advantageous to consult, on the subject of this discussion, a recent volume of M. Francisque Bouillier, *Du plaisir et de la douleur*. (Collection Germer Baillière.) 1 vol. 18mo.

good to be warned of a disorder, so as to be able to remedy it.

Secondly, pain is a remedy. From the amputation of a limb, which will be the saving, perhaps, of your life, to the attack which may seize you in a fit of passion, and bring you to your right mind, pain has a precious use ; and no one could refuse to say with Fénélon : “ Should we call those pains Evils which God sends us to purify us and render us worthy of Himself ? What does us so much good cannot be an Evil.”¹ Suffering purifies us, it is very necessary for us ; therefore it is good.

Thirdly, pain is a punishment. Punishment is the manifestation of justice, and justice is good. Have you never felt, in the contemplation of some hateful crime, a voice in your heart demanding justice ? There have been criminals who have heard this voice ; persons condemned to death have been known to refuse pardon, because, pricked to the heart, they have felt that they must expiate in public their public crime. Justice is good ; and, notwithstanding the mysteries of this subject, we can perceive that justice is good in the fullest sense of the term goodness, that fundamentally it is only one of the forms of love. The moral law, in fact, is the expression of that order which is the universal need of all moral and intelligent society. To allow this law to be violated without invoking chastisement to assert and maintain its rights, is to sacrifice the interest of all to gentleness towards a few, which is simply but weakness. To maintain the law by means of chastisement is to maintain the common interest of all against the

¹ Conformity to the will of God, in the *Œuvres Spirituelles*.

disorder of a few ; this is a work of kindness strengthened by wisdom. Pain is, then, necessary as chastisement ; in this respect also it is good.

I think that all apologies for suffering amount to one or other of the three arguments which we have just considered. They are associated with some confusions of thought which it is well to notice in passing. A free being, having an end to attain by his acts, must needs desire to attain his end, and make an effort to succeed. It is said that every desire is the result of a feeling of privation, and, consequently, supposes suffering ; and that all effort is painful. Suffering would thus appear the necessary condition of liberty, since suffering being absent, there would no longer be either desire or effort, nor, therefore, any manifestation of free activity. The basis of this reasoning is not sound. A desire accompanied by the hope of its realization may be an enjoyment ; all who have a good appetite, and the means of satisfying it, very well know this. Effort, under conditions of physical and moral health, is so far from painful, that it is one of the keenest pleasures of existence. No one suffers less than a light and active young man when ascending a mountain, and rejoicing in the exercise of his strength. Desire becomes suffering when deprived of satisfaction and hope ; effort becomes pain when the means of action no longer answer to the will ; but all desire is not suffering, and all effort is not painful. The action of a free being does not inevitably suppose pain. It is important to warn you against a confusion of ideas, which leads to suffering being regarded in the light of a necessity.

As to the arguments for the utility of suffering, they are sound enough; I accept them all without making any deduction. In affirming that suffering is an Evil, and ought not to be, I am not advising parents to take away all thorns out of the road in which their children walk, and to deprive them altogether of the benefit of the rod. I am not advising kind and generous hearts to soothe all suffering without distinction, and never to let the consequences of idleness and sensuality have free course. I am not advising judges to acquit the thief and the assassin. It seems to me that the judge who pardons the malefactor that ought to have been imprisoned, renders himself, to some extent, an accomplice of any new crimes he may commit. Such a judge forgets that, on the part of the social power which is established to secure the welfare of the many, by repressing the disorders of the few, justice is a mercy, and weakness a cruelty. Above all, I am not advising (heaven preserve me from it!) any one to extinguish the pain of repentance and the salutary bitterness of remorse, in souls sorry for their faults. In the world as it now exists, pain has a great mission, as well as a large place. We must often let it have its course, and sometimes true charity requires that we should become the rigorous ministers of justice.

These apologies for pain, therefore, rest on solid grounds. Suffering may be good; and if it ought not to be, this will not hold in the same absolute sense as in regard to sin. It may be a means to an excellent end; and the maxim that the end justifies the means, which must be rigorously excluded when duty is concerned,

may here find a legitimate application. Having said this, let us examine the ground of the arguments presented by the apologists of suffering. Warning, remedy, punishment, all these suppose a state of disorder, and assign the origin of suffering to an evil condition. This is why at the outset it was necessary to fix your attention on the fact, that all these arguments are based on our actual condition. Wherever you have a disordered state of things, you may prove without any trouble that warning is good, that punishment is good, and that a remedy is excellent. But suppose all things are in order, you can find then no place for suffering. Pain is not nourishment, it is a remedy; and for a healthy condition remedies are not good. Since pain disappears as soon as that which ought to be comes to pass, it is clear that in an absolute sense it ought not to be; it is an Evil. If we are born to pain as the spark flies upward, the world into which we are born must necessarily be out of order, for God who created our heart did not create it to suffer.

Were we to admit that pain is good in itself, and in an absolute sense, the functions of the heart, in the highest and most disinterested meaning of that word, would be paralysed; we should extinguish pity. A philosopher of antiquity, tortured with the agonies of gout, cried: "Pain, it is useless to try, thou wilt never make me agree that thou art an Evil!" This is a proud saying; considered in reference to a man's own self, it is a grand saying. But in view of the pain of others, the heart will always cry: "Philosophy, it is useless to try, thou wilt never constrain me to agree that pain is not an Evil!"

Is any further argument necessary to demonstrate that suffering ought not to be? Here is one which seems to me unanswerable. What is for us the supreme law of action? The law of charity. Charity must be strong in order not to induce sufferings worse than those it would take away, if it suppressed useful warning, necessary correction, and just punishment. But charity is essentially gentle; its mission is to procure our ultimate happiness, and to lessen, as far as may be, all suffering meanwhile. Its end is to establish a well-ordered society, where there shall be no more tears, nor mourning, nor lamentation. That, indeed, is the end of charity. If suffering were Good in itself, the highest law of duty would then be the destruction of Good. If charity is the law of Good, suffering ought to be destroyed, it ought not to be; it is, therefore, an Evil.

I conclude: error, sin, suffering, are deviations from the true order of things; they are Evils; our mission is to apply a remedy to them. This seems to me as clear as a demonstration of geometry.

III. THE DENIAL OF EVIL.

We must now behold a strange spectacle. In the actual experience of life we are most familiar with sad and dejected countenances. After the first aspirations of youth, when age has come and destroyed, as they say, its illusions, nothing is more difficult to keep alive in men's minds than a living faith in Good. It is often hard to impart even a little courage, a little hope, a

little confidence in the future; it is often difficult to persuade men that the clouds as they pass do not kill the sun, and that the long fogs of autumn have not destroyed the bright blue sky. Of all the needs experienced by mankind, there is none more deeply felt than the need of consolation. Such is the general condition of life. But if, leaving the thronged street and the frequented path, we find our way into the halls of learning, into the midst of philosophers and *savans*, all is changed; the difficult task then is to demonstrate the existence of Evil against the assertion that all is good. This surprises you, Gentlemen, and I can well believe it. Do not take it on my word merely; ask any one at all familiar with the philosophical sciences, and you will learn that one of the greatest, perhaps the greatest of the current doctrines of metaphysics, implies a denial of Evil. This has been the case hitherto. At several points of the intellectual world, the precursory signs of a different future are beginning to appear; but thus far philosophy has often called down upon its labours the curse of the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to those who call Evil good, and Good evil."¹ I am not here to cry woe to anybody. Of all doctrines, that which denies the reality of Evil is certainly, when its consequences are developed, the most dangerous; but my special task is to address myself to your reason, and prove that it is false.

The denial of Evil, the assertion that all is good, gives a rude shock to our natural feelings. In its proper form, and direct and full expression, this doc-

¹ Isaiah v. 20.

trine, as I have just said, belongs only to the learned world. At the present day, however, it seems to be coming abroad, and to be taking possession of common thought by means of newspapers and reviews; I have even met with it in novels. It insinuates itself slightly everywhere, though, in many cases, the writers who reproduce the doctrine have no idea of its nature and origin. Amongst all who drink of the waters of a river, there are never more than a few who have any knowledge of its source.

We are told that, in the view of the true philosopher, all is good. And what does the true philosopher make of Evil? This: in his eyes, Evil is necessary. Mind, there is no question here of a necessity having reference to the actual state of the world, that is to say, of a temporary advantage, the result of disorder having arisen in the condition of mankind; it is a question of a primitive absolute necessity, belonging to the very nature of things, to the plan of the universe. Evil is necessary. Since it is necessary, it ought to be; since it ought to be, it is good. There is no Evil, then; what we call such is one of the forms of Good. The existence of Evil is a delusion of the vulgar which philosophy cures. Such is the change of view (*conversion*) which is commended to us by a certain kind of science. The vulgar mind is wrong; man must be converted, not by the destruction of Evil which does not exist, but by the destruction of the idea of Evil. This reasoning is just. If Evil is necessary, it ought to be; if it ought to be, it is good; it is our very definition of Good. The logic of the demonstration is faultless, if we grant the original

premiss; admit that Evil is necessary, and you must conclude that it is good; but we must examine this premiss.

Observe, first of all, that we have to deal here with the denial, and the positive denial, of the reality of Evil. In certain philosophical writings you will find the arguments which I have just referred to presented under this heading:—*Explanation of Evil*. The word explanation is out of place; to deny a fact is not to explain it. About the end of the seventeenth century, if I am not mistaken, a discussion arose on the subject of a child who was born with a gold tooth. Thereupon, there was a great stir amongst the physiologists: How was the production of a gold tooth to be explained in accordance with the known constitution of the body and its elements? Somebody solved the difficulty by making inquiries about this extraordinary child, and establishing the fact that the gold tooth had no existence. Was the phenomenon explained? No, it was annihilated. The question is, whether we can succeed as well with Evil as with this fabulous tooth, and whether the right solution of the problem is to deny the reality of its subject.

How is it proved that Evil is necessary? for this position is the foundation of the argument. It is proved, first, by means of an erroneous method. The processes of mathematics and natural science are employed as processes of universal science. Thus they apply within the sphere of liberty methods, the special character of which is, that they are only legitimately applied where liberty does not exist. It is an axiom in

the study of natural science that matter possesses no principle of spontaneity, so that its facts are always in conformity with laws, and there is never any difference between what is and what ought to be. If the moral world admits of being studied in the same way, everything which exists ought to be, Evil included. Thus the conclusion that Evil is a necessity is reached by the use of a method which takes this necessity for granted. But our argument rejoins:—If Evil exists, as conscience affirms, there is a difference in the moral order between what ought to be and what is; the method of the natural sciences is not then the universal method.

Again, the necessity of Evil is proved by taking the world as it is for the measure of what it might be. In the world as it is, Good and Evil are so intermingled that to do away with one would be, it seems, to do away with the other. A world free from Evil thus appears an absolutely chimerical conception. This reasoning is based on experience, but on experience which is incomplete. When we conceive of a world of order, in which Good is fully realized, we are not going off into a realm of chimeras. To the experience of what is, we oppose another experience, not less real and certain, the experience of reason and conscience, which declare what ought to be, and assure us that Evil ought not to be. To establish the necessity of Evil in the name of experience, is to forget the best and noblest part of experience itself.

The necessity of Evil is proved, last of all, by means of a confusion of ideas; and on this last point I would fix your particular attention. We must here penetrate

the profoundest depths of philosophy; but a man may see clearly anywhere, if provided with a good lamp, and the lamp which I ask you to keep lighted is a serious attention.

The human reason contains two perfectly distinct ideas: the idea of More and Less, and the idea of Good and Evil. By confounding the More with Good, and the Less with Evil, they establish the necessity of Evil. By distinguishing these ideas we shall assign to Evil its true character.

Picture to yourselves the whole series of beings, from the least to the greatest, and, to use a mathematical expression, conceive the multitude of existences arranging themselves in order between these two limits—zero on the one hand, and infinity on the other. As for matter, you will see it grow in size, weight, and rich variety of forms. As for minds, you will see their measure of power increase in feeling, thought, and will. In this way you will form a conception of the hierarchy of the universe. If you say the sun is more than the earth—life is more than matter—the being which thinks is more than that which does not think, you express judgments which we may call *hierarchical judgments* (*jugements de hiérarchie*). Pascal has availed himself of them with striking effect in that passage in which he contrasts the being who thinks with the universe which crushes him; and in another, in which he exalts above all bodies and minds together the pre-eminent worth of charity.

Every being, in its hierarchical place, has a destination or purpose, and is good or bad according as it answers or not to this purpose. The judgment which

we pronounce in this respect is the *moral judgment*. I call it moral even when it refers directly to inanimate objects, taking for granted what I endeavoured to establish in our first lecture, namely, that every idea of Good implies, directly or indirectly, the conception of a will. If you say that a clock is out of order, or goes badly, because the parts of which it is composed do not perform their functions (which always implies some blame on the watchmaker's skill); if you say that envy is a bad feeling, and theft a culpable action, you pronounce moral judgments. Now, the hierarchical judgment, and the moral judgment, are altogether distinct. This truth is so important that I shall bring forward three considerations in support of it.

In the first place, Good may exist, and exist equally at every step in the hierarchical scale, for the degree of Good is in no way determined by the place a thing or creature fills, but by its relation to its purpose. A village clock, of which the single hand only marks the hours, may be as perfect of its kind as the most complicated watch. The humblest duty completely fulfilled is equal, in the order of conscience, to the most brilliant virtue. The little child who, while in the hands of the dentist, represses a natural cry, in order not to grieve its mother, may have a heroism equal to that of Winkelried presenting his breast to the lances of Austria. If this truth is ignored, and the degree of Good is confounded with the fame of Good, which is only found in prominent positions, we open the door to vanity, which seeks for fame, and close it to conscience, which follows after Good.

Secondly, Evil may exist at every step in the hierarchy. An archangel may be bad, and a worm may be diseased. If flatterers are detestable and dangerous attendants for monarchs, it is because they encourage them in the idea that their greatness puts them in some way above law, and try to persuade them that—

“Save his own will, no rein restrains a king.”¹

Louis XIV. perhaps thought, without giving it very serious consideration, that what was blamable in simple citizens was quite lawful when it was the great king who did it; and the lesson which Racine gave him, in some of the most splendid lines of *Athalie*, was probably not out of place.

Thirdly, There may be more Good in the lower degrees of the hierarchy than in the higher. The widow's mite was less in the hierarchy of quantity than the alms of the wealthy; nevertheless, it was declared more in the scale of morality. If Epictetus was as good as his books, he was one of the best men that have appeared under the sun; yet he was a slave, and quite at the bottom of the social hierarchy; Nero, who was an emperor, has left a bad reputation.

The hierarchical judgment and the moral judgment are, then, totally distinct. Nevertheless they unite; in a general way it may be shewn that we acquire part of a truth by distinguishing ideas, but that we never attain the whole of it until we bring together again what we at first distinguished. The hierarchical judgment and the moral judgment are brought together in the idea of progress. Progress is a Good; this is one of the most

¹ *Athalie*, Act iv., Scene 3.

universally and easily accepted ideas of our time ; it is only too readily accepted, since it leads some thoughtless minds to admit that every novelty is an improvement, and every change a step forward. Progress, that is to say, development, is the law—the rightful condition of everything which exists. Development is the increasing realization of a destination or purpose, an advance from Less to More, a departure from being nothing by an approach towards fulness of being. In the matter of progress, then, the law of hierarchy, which expresses the advance from Less to More, is in intimate connection with the moral law which prescribes that the advance from Less to More should be effected. But the two ideas in their union remain none the less distinct, because the progress of anything does not consist in a departure from its own order or nature, to become something different, but in the full realization of its own proper nature. The gardener who wants to improve a rose does not try to make a camelia of it ; the grazier who wants to improve his sheep does not labour to turn them into goats ; and we may conceive of a young girl becoming thoroughly accomplished without making a man of her, or even a political elector. Good, then, may exist in every degree of the hierarchy, if each being fulfils its function. A limited power may be as good as the greatest, for Good consists not in the quantity of power, but in its direction. Everything may be good, and perfectly good in its place, without ever leaving its own order. There is only one thing which can never be good, and that is Evil, because Evil is disorder, and disorder has no legitimate place. As to the law of pro-

gress, everything may be good and perfectly good, if, at each moment of its duration, every being develops as it ought to do in order to realize its nature. True progress consists in removing away from nonentity, and reaching forward to fulness of existence; and Evil never consists in the distance which may separate a being from its end, but in the fact that it has not advanced as it ought, or that it has taken a false direction.

Let us return now to the course of argument which constitutes the subject of our study. In order to prove the necessity of Evil, the More is confounded with the Good, the Less with the Evil, the hierarchical judgment with the moral judgment; and it is said: Without degrees of Less and More there would be no hierarchy; without hierarchy no diversity; and without diversity the world is impossible. The Less, which is Evil, is then the condition of the existence of the world; it is necessary. This metaphysical reasoning is more generally presented in this form: There is only one infinite being, God; everything which is not God is limited; limitation is Evil; what we call Evil is the distance which separates us from the infinite, the finite element within us.¹ If there was nothing but God, there would be no world. Since the world is to be, it cannot be infinite, therefore it must contain Evil. To ask that there shall be no Evil, is to ask that God exist alone. Evil is nothing but the imperfection inherent in every finite being, and everything which is not God is finite and imperfect; therefore Evil is necessary. Thereupon the theory-

¹ Literally, "the part of nothing (*néant*) which remains in us."—*Tr.*

builders triumph. They triumph still more as they ask, How could there be progress if there was no Evil? Progress consists in self-development, in passing from a greater imperfection to a less, that is to say, from Evil to Good. To do away with Evil would, then, be to do away with progress, which everybody acknowledges is a Good. Evil is, therefore, a condition of the Good, and constitutes a part of it.

I hope that you now see the confusion of ideas upon which all this crazy structure rests. In order to be good, we have no need to become God; it is quite sufficient that we occupy the place for which God made us, and fulfil the duties He has prescribed to us. That progress which consists in a departure from Evil is not properly progress, but restoration, and restoration implies disorder. Where no disorder prevails, progress consists not in departing from Evil, but in departing from being nothing to advance towards the realization of a fully-developed existence.

This confusion between the idea of hierarchy and that of morality, between Evil and imperfection, between progress and departure from Evil, leads to serious consequences. If every finite being is bad, and bad in the proportion in which it is removed from the infinite, all created beings are predestinated to Evil, and to a greater or less degree of Evil according to the place which has been assigned them in the hierarchy of nature; this is a horrible doctrine. If you think that the development of a being, its progress, is always a transition from Evil to Good, see to what conclusions you will be brought? Did you ever gather, on some fine day in June, a sprig

of sweet-briar from the hedge or mountain side? Perhaps the unopened flower had more charm for you than the full-blown blossom. A bud is a flower in process of development, a flower as yet imperfect. Did you ever think that a bud was a bad flower? Look at that engaging child, whose simple presence gives joy to a whole family, who cannot stammer out a word of his broken prattle without provoking a smile of pleasure, and whose toddling steps are his mother's delight. That child is a man in process of development; he is an imperfect, in the sense of an unfinished man; has it ever occurred to you that a child was a bad man? This is absurd. But, as we shall see presently, there is a question here of something else besides absurdity. Let us examine closely, and on all sides, the doctrine we are now discussing.

Some of our cotemporaries have claimed for what they call modern science the theory that all is good. By way of correcting this anachronism, I will take the expression of this theory which I find in a Greek philosopher of the Alexandrian school. "Without the existence of Evil," says Plotinus, "the world would be less perfect;"¹ and that no shadow of doubt may rest on the meaning of this declaration, he expressly includes

¹ "Must we then regard the evils existing in the universe as necessary, seeing that they are the result of higher principles? Yes; for *without them the universe would be imperfect*. The majority of evils, or rather all evils, are useful to the universe. Venomous animals are so; but often we are ignorant of what use they serve. Wickedness is useful in many respects, and may produce many fine things; for example, it leads to fine inventions; it obliges men to be prudent."—*Deuxième Eunéade*, Book Third, xviii.

wickedness among the elements which contribute to the perfection of the universe. The meaning of the doctrine is, that what we call Evil is only a part of Good, an element of eternal and primary necessity to the world. All the errors which have ever obscured, or still obscure, the understanding; all the grief which has ever rent the human heart, and still plunges it into mourning; all the crimes which horrify and all the baseness which disgusts us; all this is good—the condition of the general harmony. It is only our ignorance that finds anything to complain of in the course of the universe. Without the existence of Evil, the world would be less perfect. Let us follow out this thought in a few examples.

If the Mexicans had not sacrificed every year thousands of human victims on the altars of their gods; if the Spaniards had not gained possession of Mexico by means of abominable frauds and unheard-of cruelties, the world would be less perfect. If a large number of our fellow-creatures did not stupefy themselves by habitual intoxication, the world would be less perfect. If the disinterment of the buried city of Pompeii had not brought to light those shameful places of debauch in which the gladiators used to seek their filthy pleasures before cutting each other's throats for the amusement of the people; if other establishments of the same nature, for the use of rich and more fastidious libertines, had not been found there, the world would be less perfect. If prostitutes did not walk the streets, adding to the heat of passions already too strong the artificial excitements of vice; if detestable speculators did not

set themselves industriously to ruin poor creatures, who in their turn will proceed to ruin others, the world would be less perfect. Let us continue these examples.

It was necessary, eternally necessary, that the negroes of America should not be enfranchised without the soil of the United States being made to stream with the blood of her citizens and the tears of her families. It was necessary, eternally necessary, it formed part of the Divine plan of the world, that, on the fields of Sadowa, Germans should strew the soil of their common country with the mutilated and bleeding bodies of their German brethren. It was necessary that we should admire, at the Paris Exhibition, the cannons, modern guns, and terrible engines of destruction there exposed to view, and that we should marvel at the progress of society in finding so complete a solution of the problem how to slay the greatest number of men in the smallest space of time. All this is necessary and good. Drunkenness and debauchery are the embellishments of society, the slaughter of war one of the finest employments of the intelligence and power of man. Could the convict-prison and guillotine be suppressed, with the crime which demands and justifies them, something would be wanting to the harmony of the world. Let us continue these examples.

It is necessary that there should be falsehoods, and falsehoods of the vilest kind; cruelties, and cruelties the most dastardly. It is necessary that there should exist rich men who are sensual and avaricious, and poor men who are idle and full of envy. But let us think of ourselves, Gentlemen, and let no one here, I entreat

you, study the Problem of Evil by regarding it merely as it is presented around him, and as a question foreign to himself. Without that failing which weighs upon our conscience, without that sin which makes us blush when we are alone, without that defilement I will stop; to prolong my demonstration would be to insult you. Against the conclusions of an erroneous philosophy I appeal with firm confidence to your heart, your conscience, and your reason.

But how is it possible, you doubtless ask, that men of sense and feeling, intelligent and virtuous men, can maintain doctrines involving such monstrous consequences? In this way: these philosophers confine themselves to the highest regions of thought; they see things on a grand scale, and do not deign to descend to the common ground of facts. After all, they feel, and sometimes they seem to acknowledge, that the realities of ordinary life are beyond their explanations. These theories, which leave the ordinary facts of life unexplained, are not one whit more applicable to the personal conduct of those even who profess them. Brought into contact with other men, these philosophers, who maintain theoretically that all is good, act and feel just as we do. They find fault with anything that hurts their conscience; they are vexed when they are thwarted; and when they have published their demonstration that all is good, they complain of the reviewers who speak unfavourably of their works, and still more of those who do not speak of them at all. They form, then, in defiance of their own doctrines, the judgments;—bad, worse, and worst. With them life and science are two

distinct things. But this distinction is inadmissible. No algebraical formula would be held correct which would not admit of arithmetical application, and which an engineer could not apply without taking a wrong road; never accept a philosophical theory as true which neither explains life nor can be applied to life.

A question of very serious interest arises here, for it concerns the human conscience. A celebrated writer¹ said in our city, a little while ago, that conscience was dead. It is not dead, Gentlemen, nor will it die, because its guardian's name is the Eternal. But without dying, conscience may become diseased, and the doctrines I am opposing are of a nature to produce this sad result. When a man holds the theory that Evil is necessary, he will inevitably slide into a practical toleration of it, both in himself and others. The leaders of a particular school do not ordinarily suffer the consequences of their errors, because, as Leibnitz² has observed, they are preserved, by their very habits of life and thought, from many of the temptations of life. Epicurus, the patron of voluptuaries, was a man of almost austere abstemiousness. The emperor Marcus Aurelius, who theoretically admits the necessity of Evil, does not seem to have experienced much inconvenience from a doctrine which his life and frequently his writings contradict. But the mischief is

¹ M. Edgar Quinet, at the Peace Congress, assembled at Geneva, in September 1867.

² *Nouveaux Essais sur l'entendement humain*, Book IV., ch. xvi., § 4.

done amongst the disciples. The thought of the necessity of Evil acts on the will and conscience like some dangerous chloroform, and this injurious action may penetrate to the lowest depths of practical philosophy. A minister of religion was one day exhorting a criminal whom he desired to bring to repentance, and the man said to him, "What would you have, reverend sir? Every one knows that we are not perfect." This man confounded the hierarchical judgment with the moral judgment, and laid the blame of his actions on the imperfection inherent in every creature. He was a double parricide, who had killed both his father and mother. I am not inventing, but narrating facts. It is an extreme case; but you may judge by the extreme what takes place in average cases.

I believe in the complete harmony of conscience and reason; but if, after all, it should be necessary to sacrifice conscience, at least let it not be on the altars of sophistry. You say that everything is good; that is your doctrine. You cannot dispute that mankind have the idea of Evil, and are of opinion that Evil exists in the world. This opinion produces much sorrow, many murmurs and complaints; and you say that this opinion is an error, that our complaints are ill-founded, and that you will restore us to contentment by putting us in possession of the truth, and proving to us that everything is good. We are then in error, we, that is, the human race, since you undertake to correct our thoughts. Now is not this error an Evil? It is an Evil in your eyes, because you want to cure us of it. By proposing a remedy, you acknowledge that we are ill. If every-

thing was good, as you say, we should not be ill; this error of a belief in Evil would not exist, you would not have to destroy it. If your doctrine was true there would be no need to prove it. The mere fact that you are obliged to argue in its favour contradicts it.

Truly it is a strange conflict, a contrast as startling as that presented to us by groaning humanity, this philosophy which declares that everything is good. We have an important lesson to learn here. It is necessary to prove the reality of Good in presence of experience; it is necessary to demonstrate the existence of Evil to rational men. This is because reason, which, as we have said, becomes the expression of the universal conscience, of the supreme law of duty, is directed towards what ought to be, whilst experience shows us what actually is. How is it that what actually exists is not conformed to what ought to be? This is precisely our problem; but it is not to be solved by denying one of its terms. The world is what it is; a false label will not suffice to change the nature of things. Place a wreath of orange-blossom on the brow of a bad girl, write on the back of a justly-condemned convict, "honour and virtue," you will neither restore to the former her virgin purity, nor to the latter his innocence. There is the Evil; it is useless for you to say it is good, you cannot believe it, and often your very tone betrays you.

You cry in doleful accents—"All is well!"
With all her tongues the world denies your thought;
A hundred times your wiser heart has taught

Your mind its error, making it confess
Evil is on the earth.¹

Evil is on the earth. Let us not simply confess it, let us proclaim it; let this be our strength, our joy, our hope. Do you comprehend all the horror implied in the denial of Evil, all the frightful consequences contained in the assertion that everything is good? After all, there is the world, and, whatever certain philosophers may say about it, there it is, with its errors, its faults, and its miseries. What is in question? To say that Good is attained is to forbid our conceiving any other state of things than what exists, it is to deprive us of the ideal in every sense of the word. To say there is nothing to hope for beyond an order of things like that with which we are acquainted, is to deprive us of all hope and break our hearts. To declare that all is well ordered is to torture the reason, for reason conceives of an order better than the world we know. To maintain that sin is good (they avoid as far as possible saying this explicitly, but the assertion is clearly contained in their doctrine) is to outrage conscience and, were it possible, to extinguish it. What have we found thus far? Systems and theories; and against what do they exalt themselves? Against that voice of God which speaks to us from the depths of our nature; for it is the Author of our nature Himself who makes us call Evil by this name, who commands us to oppose it, and lights up the horizon of the soul with the hallowed hope of Good. It is, then, a struggle of false wisdom against God and against

¹ Voltaire, *Le Désastre de Lisbonne*.

humanity. Voltaire's sayings are often bad, and sometimes very bad, but this was certainly well said—

*All will one day be well, we fondly hope ;
That all is well to-day, is but the dream
Of erring men, however wise they seem,
And God alone is right.*¹

¹ These lines are taken from the poem cited above.

THIRD LECTURE.

The Problem.

GENTLEMEN,—Good being the fundamental plan, or order of the universe, Evil is a disturbance of this plan, a disorder. Whence comes this disorder? How is it that what ought not to be exists? How is it that an order which expresses the will of the Almighty is not realized? Such is the question we have to solve. It is important to fix precisely the meaning, scope, and limits of this discussion.

It is not my intention to investigate the history of Evil, the manner of its transmission, reproduction, and perpetuation; I seek its origin and cause. When one of your fellow-creatures gives you bad advice, and you follow it, that is an opportunity for Evil to manifest itself and increase, but that is not its cause, its first beginning. The fact of bad advice being taken supposes a principle of Evil in him who gives it, and the same in him who takes it. A temptation from without is only a temptation because it awakens an echo in the soul. For this reason the question of a rebellious spirit having acted the part of a tempter towards mankind (a grave question assuredly, and one which only superficial minds could treat with levity) does not

come within the scope of our inquiry; it belongs to the history of Evil, and does not concern an inquiry into its origin. Suppose that a naturalist should succeed in proving that the germs of life were introduced into our planet through its having come in contact with another heavenly body on which life already existed; this would be a discovery of considerable importance for the history of life, but it would throw no light on its origin. It is just the same with the question which now occupies us. We ask, Whence does Evil come? The tempter gave man the opportunity for committing Evil, but before he did this the tempter must have been wicked. Man responded to the appeal of the tempter; and for him to do this the germ of a temptation must have existed in him. Why was the tempter wicked? Whence came the germ of temptation in man? The question returns; it is not solved. In order to find its solution in what we are told of the tempter, we should have to admit that he was bad by nature, or, in other words, we should have to admit the existence of an eternal principle of Evil. This is the *dualist* doctrine which admits two principles of the universe. This doctrine is found among the Persians in its religious form; it is found among the Greeks, and in several modern writers, in its metaphysical form. But the history of religion and philosophy shews that reason makes a perpetual effort to free itself from all dualism as well as from all polytheism, and to adhere to the conception of a single principle of the world. Religious dualism no longer shews itself, except in some comparatively obscure

sects. It is the influence, still far too exclusive, of Greek philosophy, which preserves traces of philosophical dualism in modern metaphysics. Ever since the establishment of the Christian dogma, the idea of the existence of two eternal principles has disappeared from the main stream of human thought. The study of logic perfectly accounts for this fact. An attentive observation of the various processes of the reason clearly proves indeed that it is a general law of thought to seek the one in the many. We cannot precisely demonstrate the unity of the principle of things, because this unity is the very foundation of reason, and the common basis of all demonstration. The supposition of an eternal principle of Evil will then be set aside in our inquiry, as condemned, historically and logically, by the very development of the human mind as it becomes cognizant of its own nature.

We shall examine to-day some delusive solutions, which appear to answer the question we have raised, but which do not in fact answer it at all; we shall next notice an incomplete solution, which contains part of the truth, but which is insufficient to account for the whole of the facts; last of all, we shall take note of the general characteristics of Evil, in order to set forth in conclusion the true state of the question. Delusive solution,—an incomplete solution,—characteristics of Evil;—such will be our course of thought.

I. DELUSIVE SOLUTIONS.

The solutions which I call delusive are all of the same character. They go no further than the occasions which permit of the manifestation of Evil, or the agents who transmit it, and so lead the mind into error which thinks it has found in them its real cause and true origin.

It has been thought, for example, that the problem was solved by saying that the body is the source of Evil, and that the mind, though good in itself, is corrupted by its union with matter. The body is, certainly, the occasion of many Evils; it is the seat of sensual inclinations, as everybody knows, and a careful study of the connexion between the physical and moral elements of our nature may even lead to the admission that all our passions have their seat in bodily organs, not excepting those which do not find their gratification in material enjoyments. These considerations are important in reference to the history of the manifestations of Evil; they are useful also for practical life, inasmuch as they indicate a means of improving our moral condition by sound bodily discipline. But they furnish no answer to the question of the origin of Evil. The body in itself is not bad; nothing is easier to conceive of than a well-regulated, spiritual body, that is to say, a body serving as an organ for the spirit, instead of enslaving it to depraved inclinations. When the physical seat of our inclinations has been proved, there still remains the question, Why is the connexion between mind and body of such a nature

that the mind is overpowered by the body. The problem is not touched.

It is desirable that we should examine, more in detail, another delusive solution, the doctrine which seeks for the origin of Evil in social institutions. This doctrine exists, more or less, in germ and indistinctly, in a great number of minds; we find it fully set forth in the system of a celebrated man, Charles Fourier. Establish phalansteries, leave room for the realization of social harmony, and you will see a paradise on earth. The source of Evil is to be found in institutions; good institutions will cause all the miseries of which we complain to disappear.

Earth, after many woes and wars,
Becomes the bride of heaven,
And by the law which rules the stars
Peace to mankind is given.¹

Without wishing to disparage, by means of ridicule, the serious side of the ideas of Fourier, still let me shew you to what the extreme application of his principle leads. Great complaints are made of the disobedience of children. A phalansterian, M. Victor Considérant, if I am not mistaken, has given an infallible recipe for removing the cause of these complaints. Never bid children do anything but what they like, and they will always obey; that is to say, do away with the commandment and you will do away with disobedience; destroy the institution of power, and there will no longer be any room for the Evil of

¹ Beranger, *Les Fous*.

rebellion. The solution is simple, but is it good? Let us examine it in its general sense. What part do institutions sustain in the existence of Evil? The question is important, and truth here must keep a middle path between two errors which it will be useful to notice.

The thinkers whom I will call the *moralists* say :— “Men are everything ; institutions nothing. With good men all institutions are good ; but the best institutions are spoiled by bad men.” Such is the opinion of the moralists. This opinion is not in conformity with truth. Institutions are productive of Good, and institutions are productive of Evil. In the family, for example, polygamy, or the Roman custom of divorce, which reduced marriage to a temporary concubinage, are not indifferent things. In society, the institution of slavery is not an indifferent thing. Certainly, if all slaves were perfect, and all masters faultless, a social system based on slavery might be happy ; but slaves not being perfect, nor masters either, slavery is far from being without influence on humanity such as it is. A man lately took a pen and was about to affix his signature to a public decree. That single signature was to transform twenty millions of serfs, attached to the soil, into free men. Would you have liked to have approached the Emperor of Russia at that solemn moment, and said to him :— “Sire, you are going to create a great deal of trouble for yourself ; you are about to bring formidable difficulties into the administration of your empire ; you will have a fearful crisis to pass through ; and, after all, for what ? What matters

about institutions? Let the nobles be good, and the serfs will be happy." I have no doubt that, in some less explicit form, this reasoning was addressed to the Emperor Alexander. He did not listen to it, and you will all agree with me in saying that it was well he did not. Free institutions develop in a people the feeling of self-respect, and tyrannical institutions tend to degrade them. Just institutions develop the sentiment of justice, and unjust institutions the feeling of oppression. There are peaceful institutions which excite mutual good-will, and there are warlike institutions which excite enmity, hatred, and every evil passion. We must never oppose salutary reforms under the pretext that men are everything and institutions nothing. This error of the moralists leads to mischievous practical consequences. In social struggles obstructive conservatives lay hold of it, and use it as a weapon against desirable improvements in public affairs.

Institutions operate so as to favour Good or Evil ; but it is evident that they are not the root either of Evil or Good. To assign to them an absolute moral power is the error of men whom I will here call the *politicians*.

This error of the politicians is taken advantage of by revolutionary passions, and produces with the revolutions the bitter disappointment which almost always follows them. The hope was that the fountain-head of the Evil had been reached through a change of institutions, and with pain it is seen that the Evil reappears in the new institutions, whatever they may be. Flatterers surround the throne of a monarch ; the throne

is abolished, but flattery reappears; she addresses herself to the victorious people, with as much baseness, perfidy, and fatal success as when she addressed herself to a crowned head. Revolutionists whose object is to obtain advantageous employment may attain, by political commotions, the end they had in view; but generous minds, expecting, as the result of political change, the total destruction of abuses, have always to weep over their disappointed hopes. Without going farther back in history than 1830, get to know what some of the French thought who laboured in the revolution of that time, and hear what they say now. A change of institutions may be advantageous, as it may be hurtful; but the prime source of the Evil is not there. In fact, behind institutions you have men, human nature, and it is here that the moralists triumph. Let us illustrate our meaning by an example. Much is said, in our time, about co-operative societies, and workmen's associations. I have hardly a right to an opinion on these matters; nevertheless, I will permit myself to say that, in my opinion, there may be found in them the germ and dawn of a better future for our disturbed state of society. But it is perfectly certain that if you establish the co-operation of the idle and the association of the extravagant, you will obtain no brilliant results either in the way of labour or of economy. It is necessary, then, to labour at reforming men, and above all it is necessary that every one set to work to reform himself. The demand for public reforms never comes so well from any as from those who have conscientiously applied themselves to the work of individual reform.

There exists a prejudice in this respect (I say a prejudice, because the best advice sometimes comes from those who have acted the worst, and have learnt, by the effect of contrast, all the advantages of Good), there exists a very natural prejudice against taking the opinion of bankrupts on financial reform; and the opinion of the lazy on the organization of labour is certainly not the most welcome. Human nature is found beneath all institutions, and the best social organization will fail in its results if applied by bad men. Then, as to these institutions behind which we find men and human nature, whence do they come? They have not fallen from heaven, like a leaf of the Koran; they have not come out of the bowels of the earth, like the lava streams of Etna; they proceed from the life of humanity, and at their origin may always be found, allowing something for the influence of nature, the views and desires which produced them. This origin is usually concealed from us by the clouds which cover the past; but, in some cases, it is clearly discernible; here is one:—America has just been drowned in her blood for the destruction of slavery. Whence came American slavery? We know its origin; we can name the avaricious feelings and wicked desires which produced it. Its origin, its disastrous consequences, its bloody end,—all is there before us in the full light of history. If we cannot trace in this way every bad institution to wrong feelings and wicked desires, it is simply because our historical knowledge is defective.

Institutions do not create Evil; here is the mistake of the politicians; but institutions transmit and aug-

ment both Evil and Good; they are not then a matter of indifference, which is the mistake of the moralists. The error of the moralists and the error of the politicians may be illustrated thus. A man is at work lifting a stone with an improved kind of lever. The proper function of a lever is to transmit force, and in transmitting to increase it. Two persons walking by stop and watch the man at work. One says, "If you only have a strong arm you do not want a lever; after all, the arm is everything and the lever nothing." That is the moralist. The other says, "To what perfection modern machinery is brought! we shall come to have such good machines that there will be no more need of arms." Thus speaks the politician. The truth escapes both. Let us improve our machines and strengthen our arms, then all will go well; or, to interpret the figure, let us endeavour to sow and cherish the germs of Good in our own soul and in the souls of our fellow-creatures, so that we may obtain intelligent and right-feeling men. Such men will improve institutions, and improved institutions, into which the principles of true liberty, justice, and benevolence have been infused, will still further promote intelligence and right feeling, which again will produce still better institutions. Such is the practical consequence resulting from the foregoing considerations. We come now direct to our point.

Bad institutions are instrumental in transmitting and augmenting Evil; but to find in them also the origin of Evil is manifestly a delusive solution. It will be easy for you to recognise similar characteristics in

various other solutions which may be offered to you in conversation or reading. The occasion which transmits and aggravates the Evil is pointed out, and it is thought that its origin is found. Let us pass on to the incomplete solution.

II. AN INCOMPLETE SOLUTION.

Seeing that order is the basis of the universe, how could disorder begin? To create a true beginning there must be a cause, a productive power, in a word, liberty; for, where no free cause interrupts, there can only be the continuation of what already existed; to speak accurately, nothing begins. Liberty! this is the chosen word of modern society, but it is not the word of modern science, nor of science generally. Science has always had infinite difficulty in accepting the existence of liberty, and for this reason: Science seeks to ascend from one idea to another, by a series of reasonings which settle the cause of the existence of everything. The scientific spirit, in fact, has been chiefly formed, from ancient times to our own, in the study of mathematics and natural science. Now, in the things comprehended under mathematics and natural science there exists no element of liberty. From this source has originated the wide-spread notion of a universal science, as we remarked in the preceding lecture. If science thus conceived of is the universal science, fatality rules throughout the universe, since wherever logical necessity shows itself there is no room for liberty. An atheistical *savant* said one day, "If there were a God,

the thread of science would be cut for ever." That is to say, when we come in view of the Supreme Will, and to the question, Why is such a thing? receive answer: Because God willed it, there is an end to reasoning in view of this free cause. This is why science has so much difficulty in accepting divine liberty. To science God seems a barrier, restraining it within the logical chain of its own thoughts. But if God impedes it, man impedes it no less. If there is any element of liberty in man, it will be necessary, whenever we want to explain his acts, to find the reason of his conduct, to some extent, in the determination of his free will. If all the actions of men could be explained by a chain of necessary reasoning, there would be no principle of liberty in man. If there is any principle whatever of liberty in man, suppose it as feeble, reduced, and poor as you please, there is an element in human actions which escapes the grasp of all such formula as are employed in mathematics. Moreover, philosophers who deny Divine liberty for the benefit of science, according to their notion of it, are obliged likewise to deny human liberty, and to maintain that all the facts of society are nothing but pure mechanism. They say this; but here is the absurdity of their position. Many of the men who uphold this doctrine take part in political affairs, and range themselves in the ranks of the liberal party. In their books of science they affirm that human liberty is a chimera; in the newspapers and deliberative assemblies they are the champions of liberty! Like the Master Jacques of Molière, they are obliged to change the clothing of their thoughts according to

the various pursuits in which they are engaged. They cannot always fail to perceive this contradiction, and its perception will doubtless contribute to the advancement of truth. It is assuredly as false a conception as that which denies, by the very idea which it forms of science, any element of liberty whatever in the universe, whether in God or man. In the contemplation of the mechanism of matter which he extends to the spiritual world, man forgets himself; and it may be said that, while an exclusive regard for self is the essence of moral Evil, forgetfulness of self is the essence of great philosophical errors. We have only to take into consideration the order of moral and social phenomena, and admit the facts of conscience within the range of science, so as to understand that the act of a voluntary agent is an explanation or reason of a thing's existence, to give up finding, in the processes of mathematicians and natural philosophers, the method of universal science, and become advocates of the doctrine of liberty. The denial of liberty does not allow the question which now engages us to be even raised, because where everything is fixed there cannot be any difference between what is and what ought to be. As soon as the idea of liberty is admitted, the problem of Evil presents itself, and a way is opened to seek its solution. I am now going to set forth the solution which I have called incomplete; having done so, I will distinguish between that part of the doctrine which I hold to be true, and the other which I cannot accept.

Liberty includes the possibility of Evil. In fact, a creature placed under law, but unable either to fulfil

or violate it, obey or disobey, would not be free. A free creature is necessarily capable of Evil. To ask that a creature should be incapable of doing Evil is to ask that he should not be free. To be capable is the greatness of a free creature; power is the seal and image in him of the all-powerful God. To be capable of Evil is the seal of the creature, since there is but one will which is so identical with Good that to suppose it bad is a contradiction to the philosopher and a blasphemy to the believer.

If a free creature rebels against law, this rebellion has no other cause than the will which produces it. The possibility of rebellion, which is included in the idea of liberty, is not in the slightest degree a realization of Evil. The cause of this is the decision of a free will which violates its law. To seek another cause for it is to deny liberty, and misconceive the very essence of moral phenomena.

The rebellion of the will against its law is sin—the primitive form of Evil. Sin produces error. If you are deceived, it is always your fault. Never make an assertion until you see the proof; suspend your judgment so long as the proof is not forthcoming, and you will never be deceived. Intellectual error always proceeds from a fault of the will which allows the understanding to form rash and hasty judgments. Moral error in the same way implies blame to him who commits it. If you do not take the trouble to read the law written in your conscience, you are guilty of neglect. If, in order to justify evil inclinations, you throw a veil of sophistry over your natural light, you may succeed in hiding the law from your

mind ; but your ignorance of the law, since it originated with your own will, will be no justification.

Sin having produced error, suffering follows both. Here come in those apologies for pain on which we have already enlarged, and to which it is sufficient to refer. No sooner is the world invaded by sin and error, than suffering appears as a warning, a remedy, and a punishment ; it shows itself in a just and beneficent character.

To sum up this reasoning. At the basis of the universe we find order, the expression of the Divine will. Evil originates in the wrong use of liberty. The possibility of Evil is contained in the idea of liberty, so that it is impossible to conceive of any being as free and not capable of Evil, except God. And what shall we say of liberty itself? Is it an Evil? Nay, it is more than a Good ; it is the very condition of all Good, since it is the condition of the existence of a spirit. Shall we reproach God for having created spirits, that is to say, free agents? "What! in order to prevent man from being wicked, must he needs be reduced to instinct, and made a brute? No, God of my soul, never will I reproach Thee for having made it in Thine image, in order that I might be free, good, and happy like Thyself."¹ Such, Gentlemen, is the solution which I call incomplete. Now for the distinction.

The origin of Evil must be sought in the act of a created will ; this is the common affirmation of every form of spiritual philosophy which understands its own principles. I accept and defend this part of the solu-

¹ Rousseau, *Profession du foi du Vicairé savoyard*.

tion. But the solution offered supposes that the whole origin of Evil is to be found in the individual acts of voluntary agents; that the explanation of all sin, suffering, and disorder is to be sought in an abuse of free power on the part of ourselves or others. I do not accept this part of the solution. It forms the distinctive character of the doctrine which I shall distinguish by the name of *individualism*, and which I maintain is incomplete. We shall understand wherein it is defective when we have considered the characteristics of Evil.

III. CHARACTERISTICS OF EVIL.

Evil, as it comes under our observation, possesses two chief characteristics:—first, its generality; secondly (excuse the somewhat crude term, but I have been unable to find a better), its essentiality. Generality of Evil, essentiality of Evil—these two ideas will now occupy our attention.

Generality of Evil.

The general prevalence of error scarcely admits of dispute. None of the sciences, with the exception perhaps of pure mathematics, grow simply by the accretion of known truth, by a luminous progress as their normal condition; they grow by overturning the errors, prejudices, false theories, and fallacious maxims which form, as it were, the common basis and general current of human thought. This fact is so evident, that many philosophers, taking the general expression of what

actually is for the formula of what ought to be, have maintained that it is characteristic of the understanding to arrive at truth through the medium of error.

The general prevalence of suffering will not be disputed. Complaints of it abound on all hands in our every-day life. If we consult the great voice of humanity in which it bears testimony to its own condition, I mean literature, we shall readily acknowledge the prevailing sadness of its tone. I am not forgetting the poems of Anacreon and all the family of light-hearted minstrels, but these are only rare and fugitive notes intermingled with a mighty and sombre harmony. The judgment of men upon life is sorrowful, and on the part of those who have not a steadfast faith in Good,—a faith which implies a belief in God, and the certainty of an immortal future,—this judgment is all but despairing. Listen to this single quotation, to which it would be easy to add quotations from writers of all times and countries. The words are Cicero's :—"Next to the supreme happiness of never being born, and so avoiding the dangers of life, the happiest lot that could befall any one coming into the world would be to die at the very same instant, and escape from fortune as one is saved from a fire."¹ Why should I insist upon this point? It is only too well established. It is of far less importance to recount the sorrows of life than to remember the blessings with which it abounds, and which we lose though our own fault. Instead of complaining, we

¹ *Fragments de Ciceron*, in the Sanckoucke edition, vol. xxxvi., p. 467.

should diligently seek happiness from those sources which are so freely opened to us. This is clearly pointed out to us; but when, instructed by age and experience, we give heed to the lesson, too often it only serves to awaken a tardy regret for joys which are no longer within our reach, and thus adds a fresh drop to the ocean of human grief. Let us pass on to the general prevalence of sin.

It is necessary, first of all, to come to an understanding as to the meaning of the word *law*, of which we shall have to make use. What we call law in natural phenomena is the general expression of facts. The law of gravitation, for example, expresses the general fact that bodies are drawn towards the centre of the earth. In this order of things, the facts are always in conformity with the law (if the true law is known), because there is no principle of action, no caprice, and no rebellion in matter. In the spiritual world law is a commandment, the expression of what ought to be; and since the commandment is addressed to free beings, the facts may or may not be in accordance with it. There are, then, some laws which are the general expression of what is, and others which are the expression of what ought to be. The first are realized in nature; the second are proposed to the will in the moral world. In the moral world, however, there may be laws expressing general facts; but these laws will not be absolute, like those of nature; there will be, or there always may be, exceptions to them. For example, there are men who fast; but, notwithstanding this, the law of facts is, that man eats when

he is hungry, because this is generally the case. There are mothers who kill their children, but this does not prevent our saying, that the law of facts is, that mothers take care of their children, because this is generally the case. This is just saying, that in order to estimate the extent of sin, we must first determine the law of duty, or the commandment; then state the law of facts or common custom, and compare the two kinds of laws. If the law of facts, saving some exceptions, is in agreement with the law of duty, we shall say that the state of things is good. If, in the great generality of cases, the law of facts contradicts the law of duty, we shall say that the state of things is bad. What, now, is the position of the human race in this respect?

Let us begin at the beginning. A man is born Let us stop there, at the phenomenon of birth. The reproduction of the human species has been confided to an instinct common to man and the animal races. This instinct is accompanied by another, in which the spiritual nature maintains its rights and preserves its dignity—modesty; and it has been guarded by a law—the law of chastity. I take this term in the general sense which our language assigns to it, in the sense in which the idea of chastity applies as well to the wife as to the maiden, as much to the father of a family as to the young man. The instinct of reproduction leads legitimately to the union of the sexes, and the moral law relative to this union is known to us in its condition, end, and consequences. Its condition is, that the union of persons be brought about and justified by the union of souls, by a free and real consent; this is the

part of the heart in the law of chastity. The end is the transmission of life, and the relation of means to the end is obvious; this is the part of the reason in the law of chastity. The consequence is the co-operation of the father and mother, which supposes a lasting union, in order that maternal tenderness and the grave duties of fatherhood may be united in the moral, intellectual, and physical education of the child; this is the part of the conscience in the law of chastity.

Gentlemen, are these things so? Do not ask yourselves whether this law, with the whole extent of consequences which any one may easily deduce from it, is a hard or mild law, whether it is easy or severe in the actual conditions of our nature; this is not the question. The question is, whether it is the law, or whether we could possibly think otherwise? Would you be convinced that the law is good? Do not make a moral question of it, because to mention morality is to mention social usage, and to mention social usage is to suggest the idea of the rule which governs it, and at the idea of rule the passions are always disposed to rebel, and set themselves to beat the bush of ideas in order to start some sophisms. See, then, how mankind invariably reason on this head, whenever they approach the subject without moralizing.

No one doubts that free consent is the legitimate condition of the union of the sexes. The idea of violence inspires horror; the penal code deals with it; and all constraint of whatever nature (for there are other constraints besides those of physical force) excites reprobation and disgust. Free consent in this matter

is an axiom in all our sermons, and is taken for granted in all novels and poetry. As to the end, open the first physiological treatise that comes to hand, and you will find the distinction between the functions which relate to the preservation and support of the individual, and those which seek the reproduction of the species, established without any appearance of doubt. Lastly, as to the consequences, economists set out with the idea that we must not bring children into the world without accepting the duty of maintaining them; and the civil law, as far as its jurisdiction goes, becomes in part the organ of conscience, in imposing on parents the obligation of supporting and bringing up their children. Christian morality has not so much introduced new ideas on this subject, as gathered into one focus, and stamped with the seal of divine authority, what is really, in the view of reason, the law of nature. This law, though violated by customs and institutions, and by maxims framed to justify these customs and institutions, has always been discerned, more clearly than is generally believed, by all men who have tried to decipher the characters inscribed in the conscience and reason of mankind. In the worst days, for instance, of the decline of the Roman empire, at a time when society had become frightfully corrupt, some pagan authors set forth, in almost all their extent and rigour, the duties of chastity.¹

The law of duty then we know. What is the law of facts? In the sphere of liberty, let me repeat, there

¹ See Denis, *Histoire des Théories et des Idées Morales dans l'Antiquité*, particularly p. 123, *et seq.*, of vol. ii.

are no fixed laws. There are persons who resist the enticements of the flesh, and maintain their purity. Doubt of this fact is itself a punishment. In one of the most striking passages of modern literature, one of the notorious victims of sensual passions, Alfred de Musset,¹ has depicted the tortures of the libertine, who, beset by frightful suspicions,—suspicions which make him a horror to himself,—confesses with anguish that he has rendered himself, by his own fault, incapable of believing in purity. The law is not a fatality. Here is a common case. A man, under the influence of his passions, is exposed to the temptations of life. He is warned by his conscience, but he has not the courage to obey it. An unhealthy curiosity prompts his presence at spectacles which excite his passions, lead him to listen to seductive offers, or incline him to read pages which leave indelible stains on his mind. A polluted imagination corrupts his feelings; he falls into vice, and the guilty man lays the blame on nature; he calls science to his aid, perhaps, to prove the necessity of irregularities of which he has made himself the victim. Let us hear on this subject a writer who had the right to speak, because he had struggled and conquered:—
“When men do not take the pains to master their passions, they console themselves for their vices by declaring them necessary, and clothe the testimony of a depraved heart in the garment of science.”²

There is no necessary law condemning us to impurity; but what is the general law in this respect, as

¹ *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, Fifth Part, Chapter ii.

² Lacordaire, *Lettre à des jeunes gens*, p. 164, first edition.

exhibited in the common practice of mankind? Is it that infancy is perfectly pure, youth truly chaste, and that from unions of lasting purity there spring children brought up around a blameless domestic hearth? Let us consult our own life, and what we know of the life of others; let us listen to history. This is a very common sin; nations violate the law freely, and their leaders seem sometimes as if they used the exceptional lustre which surrounds high social position merely to exhibit to the most distant posterity illustrious adulteries and noted debaucheries. The law is violated, but how it avenges itself! How many graves are prematurely opened by this vice! How often is health broken down or destroyed! the body decayed! the intellect obscured! As you stoop down to the sources of life, you see ascending from them the vapours of death. Reliable statistics on this subject are not to be had; but I do not believe that they are mistaken who think that debauchery alone carries off more of the living strength of mankind than war, pestilence, and famine all put together.

We have brought to a close the first chapter of our inquiry, that which refers to the origin of the life of individuals. But when man is born he must needs be fed. How do we stand in regard to this? The law of nourishment is known to us. Food and drink are designed to maintain the powers of body and mind. We will not adopt the arguments of the Trappists; there is an element of sociality to be taken account of here. The family table is the meeting-place for father, mother, and children. Does a friend drop in and sit down? A little more

care in the preparation of the meal is a mark of cordiality and sign of welcome not to be found fault with. If, on some day of public rejoicing, a moderate use is made of some generous liquid which invigorates the mind, and infuses a glow of innocent joy into the spirits of the guests, there is still nothing to blame. But when excess in eating fatigues and destroys the powers instead of renewing them, when drink paralyzes the intellect instead of stimulating its legitimate exercise, there is disorder and Evil. Now, what is the law of facts? We do not speak of cases of avowed intemperance, of the habits of drunkenness which produce such havoc in our country. What is the common practice in reference to taking food? The common practice is excess; thoroughly temperate men are the exception. In the majority of cases little daily excesses fatigue the organs of the body, weaken the powers, and gradually undermine the springs of life. Too often we see the animal kill the man, and at last kill itself.

Shall we continue our inquiry? Shall we pass on to the laws of truth, justice, and benevolence? Gentlemen, you are quite able to pursue this examination without my aid. In view of the law, the whole law, where are the righteous? There are none, no, not one; and it is not only the general prevalence of sin which we are able to establish as the result of our inquiry, but its universality. All do not sin equally.

As virtue has degrees, so also crime.¹

All do not sin against every moral law; but is there any one who does not transgress many of the precepts

¹ The *Phèdre* of Racine, Act iv., Scene 2.

which together constitute the whole law? There is not; sin is universal. This is one of those truths about which there is little dispute, especially when other persons are in question; but here we must make an important distinction. We are speaking of the morality of the conscience, which places itself in the presence of God, the Author of the law. There is another morality, that of society; and I am not speaking now of the bad morality of the world, I am speaking of a social morality which is good and legitimate, and which ought to be carefully defended. Society judges every one of its members according to his acts, because it knows nothing of his motives; and it judges of every one's acts in their relation to the rights of others. From this point of view, some men are virtuous, others less so; while there are others who are not virtuous at all, and these are valid distinctions. There are men who do well to lower their eyes in public, and who do still better not to show themselves at all, because they have openly committed deeds which have wounded the public conscience. There are others who may walk with head erect in the presence of their fellow-men, who have the right, and for whom it is sometimes a duty, to take their stand against outrage, and to repel, with a just warmth and a legitimate indignation, the attacks of calumny. If this distinction between the morality of the conscience and that of society is ignored, we get that mawkish kind of humility which, even when sincere, ends by wearing a disagreeable resemblance to that which Molière's immortal verse has stigmatised in the character of Tartuffe. There are men who have

the right to claim from their fellows the title of virtuous people ; but he who searches his own heart, and places himself in the presence of that absolute law, which governs the intention as well as the act, and which does not confine itself to social relations, will perceive in his heart all the germs of Evil, and acknowledge that it is perhaps only the absence of opportunity which hinders his becoming an actual transgressor. When you have been with a criminal, and have come to know his history, have you never asked yourselves whether, if you had been placed in the same circumstances, you would not have become what he is, and perhaps worse ? Have you never placed yourselves in thought in such and such a temptation, and said to yourselves, if and felt a shiver run through your frame ? In the school of conscience the virtuous man, so regarded by his fellow-men, learns three things : gratitude to God, who has preserved him from the greater temptations of life, indulgence for others, and severity to himself.

We are all involved in sin ; what, then, shall we say of those who think themselves faultless ? Shall we admit them as exceptions to the common rule ? Should a man call himself faultless, not merely from the social point of view, inasmuch as he had never committed theft or murder, nor told a barefaced lie, but in the moral and deepest sense of the word ; if a man called himself faultless in this sense, I would go and ask the opinion of his wife, his children, his neighbours, and I should find that they blamed him for a number of things, but above all for his insufferable pride. When

Jesus of Nazareth spoke the parable in which he approves the humble publican who smites upon his breast, and condemns the pharisee who returns thanks for all his virtues, it was not the Son of God who spoke to teach us unknown truth, it was the Son of man, who, as the spokesman of humanity, expressed the judgment of conscience upon those proud, faultless people who, from the heights of their virtue, cast disdainful glances upon the guilty around them.

Pain is generally prevalent, sin is so too; we may smile or weep at it, but it is certain that the world is gone wrong. How has it come to pass, Gentlemen? The *individualist* solution of the problem of Evil must already appear very doubtful to you. That a free creature should not always choose Good may seem natural enough; but that of the thousands and millions of human beings who have appeared on our globe all should have chosen Evil, and incurred suffering, that there has not been one, not a single one, who has always chosen Good, is not indeed impossible, in the strictly logical sense of the word, but it is assuredly very strange. Will you now acknowledge your own thought? Not only do you think that there has never been a man who has always chosen Good; but, in the actual condition of humanity, you do not believe it possible for a perfectly good man to exist. No one believes it; and I could desire no better proof than the controversies which are ever waging around the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Those who pronounce Him perfectly good infer without hesitation from His perfect goodness His Divine nature; and those who deny His

divinity do not hesitate to deny the historical reality of this perfectly good man. You think also, that not only is every human creature liable to suffering, but that, in the actual condition of humanity, the existence of a man exempt from pain is impossible. Lastly, you treat the idea of a man entirely exempt from error as absurd. You believe, then, that evil is inherent in human nature, under the threefold form of sin, error, and suffering. This is what I call *the essentiality of Evil*. It is here that the individualist solution will shew itself evidently false, I mean incomplete.

Essentiality of Evil.

Evil is essential to humanity, that is to say, independent of our personal faults, and of the sufferings resulting either from our own fault or from the fault of those with whom we live, there is in all men, just because they are men, a share of suffering and an element of sin. I shall not resume the consideration of the subject of error. You will observe that I say an *element* of sin, not a share of sin.

It is easy to convince ourselves that suffering does not arise solely from an individual abuse of moral freedom, although this abuse produces a large amount of it. Let us return to the facts which accompany the transmission of life. Before a woman can rejoice that she has brought a man into the world, she must suffer the pains of childbirth. Some of her relatives and friends are waiting in an adjoining room. What is it which announces to them the deliverance of the mother? The wail of the child. The groans of the mother are

stayed to give place to the cry of the child, and, as old Malherbe says, we are

No sooner born than we begin to weep,
As if the light God sends our eyes to greet
Shewed to our fears what ills we have to meet.¹

And how many children are cut down almost at their birth, on whose tomb one could write no other epitaph than this: "It cried, and it died!" Poor child! is it its fault? And are the mother's pains of childbirth the result of her faults? Is the pure woman spared these pains, and are they reserved for the guilty? Not so, and within the limits of our feeble vision pain seems to strike at random, and, with a supreme indifference for individuals, to levy a tax upon humanity to which it has a right. There is a portion of our sufferings which belongs neither to one individual nor to another, neither to John, nor Paul, nor Andrew, nor Philip, but to the man in each of us. Is it not a common proverb that "to live is to suffer?"

Let us come now to the essential character of sin. What we maintain is, that there is an element of sin existing in human nature independent of the fault of the individual will. It is very important you should understand what we mean; for sin being a quality of our actions, and every act being as it seems absolutely personal, it does not appear easy, at first sight, to see how sin can belong not to our will, but to our nature. This, as we have already said, contains not a share but an element of sin, and you shall see our meaning. Will, reason, and conscience do not constitute our

¹ Ode v., Chamgoubert.

entire soul. The will is not the sole origin of our actions. We are urged or persuaded by tendencies of the heart. By the heart we mean, in a general sense, the spiritual organ of all our desires and inclinations, of whatever leads us to act, from the most disinterested love down to the liking we may have for some particular dish. When a man suspends the action of his will, he acts under the impulse of his inclinations alone, and according to a familiar and profound saying, he goes just as his heart leads him. In a moral point of view, the heart constitutes what we call a nature, a nature which is always present in the depths of the soul, and at the back of our liberty. With this nature ever present and active, the free will either consents or resists; it may consent to the Evil, it may resist the Good. A great part of our responsibility consists in our consenting to or resisting the impulses of the heart. Now as to this moral nature which presses on our will, and would have it abdicate, and allow the heart to act, are we personally responsible for it? Not altogether, as we shall presently see; but partially, and it is of importance not to forget it.

One consequence of a bad act is, that we are disposed to commit it afresh, unless bitter experience, or the force of repentance, struggle against the law of nature. This law is, that the repetition of an act increases the inclination to it. Such is the mysterious effect of habit: the use we make of our liberty is determined, so to speak, by inclinations which, in the first instance, proceed from ourselves. This is very plain, for example, in the case of drunkenness. The man who commenced the practice of drinking, against the remonstrance of his

conscience, and with the feeling that he could and ought to resist the temptation, gradually becomes the slave of his abuse of his will; and when he has been addicted to the vice for ten, twenty, or thirty years, and his will has become tied and bound in the strength of his propensities, he will say that nature is too strong for him. This is true enough, perhaps; but who has created this nature? Himself. Thus the history of our past use of liberty is shown in our present nature, and it is in this way that by yielding to Evil, voluntarily at first, we at last become its slaves; we have ourselves forged and rivetted the chain of our bondage. This power of habit holds also in regard to Good. You do a good action to-day with effort, with an effort which is perhaps heroic; you will do it to-morrow with less effort; in a little time you will do it without any; the practice of Good will have become easy; the use you have made of your liberty will have inclined your heart to the side of Good; and the history of your past use of liberty will be found in your present nature.

Our present dispositions, then, are derived in part from the use we have previously made of our liberty. Is this all, and is there nothing in our nature but what we have put there ourselves, or which others have put there through the influence they have exerted over us? Undoubtedly there is something else; there is a primitive nature in us, dispositions which are born with us, as the word itself witnesses, for the word *nature* comes from the same root as the verb to be born (Fr. *naître*). The personal nature of every individual is determined, prior to the action of his will and the influence of his

fellow-creatures, by tendencies bound up with his organization, and which have been transmitted to him by his family, his people, his race. Nor is this all; underlying these special inherited tendencies are found principles common to universal human nature. Along with the harmonious growth of body and mind, the germ of this nature is developed, it unfolds itself gradually under the eye of conscience, and constitutes that assemblage of inclinations which we call the heart. Now, the heart awakens before the conscience. At the time when man, taking possession of himself, becomes a moral being, a time which varies greatly in different individuals, and which in the case of some seems never to come at all, the will finds itself beset by inclinations of the heart. It is in this sense that the nature of our soul may be pronounced good or bad; it is in this sense that there may be an element of Good essential to human nature, or an element of sin. Sin, in the proper sense of the term, implies an act of will which is necessarily individual, but predispositions to Evil constitute an element of sin. What is the position of humanity in this respect? When man takes possession of himself, does he find that, like Hercules in the fable, he has a choice to make between Good and Evil present, on equal conditions, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left? Are the two scales of the balance equally weighted? There is the whole question. We reply, the two scales of the balance are not equally weighted: the heart is disposed to Evil. We are not naturally disposed to crime; a predisposition to assassination and acts of a similar nature is only a frightful exception. Crime is

the accident of Evil, the paroxysm of the malady, just as heroism is the exceptional case of Good. The true question is: Which is easier, in view of the entire law, vice or virtue? If our language is based on truth, to put the question is to solve it, for the word *virtue* signifies strength, and you know we are accustomed to speak of our vices as weaknesses. We can prove that this mode of speaking is right.

Sensuality has plainly an abnormal influence in the development of human nature. Under one form or other, every one, when he desires to fulfil the law of his mind, finds himself subject to the law of his members, without his being able to attribute to his own will, which remains responsible for consenting to the Evil, either the origination of his bad passions or of the temptation. In our relations with our fellow-creatures, we may have generous feelings, and be moved with grief for them, without having, for all that, a good heart. Have we, originally, a good heart, in the deeper sense of the term? To which are we more naturally inclined, to the fulfilment of the law of charity? to the indifference which cares nothing about others? or to that spirit of pride which interests itself in others in order to rule them? In order to know your exact position in this respect, suspend the action of your will, and watch the passing current of your thoughts and feelings,

As a shepherd, half-sleeping, views the river flow by.¹

I refer to the state of reverie. We can determine, in a general way, what is the tendency of humanity, when,

¹ A. de Musset, *Rolla*.

relaxing the control of the will, it gives itself up to reverie, and the man allows the human nature in him to have its course. God forbid that I should ignore the pure dreams of many young maidens, or the noble aims which fire the imagination of many young men! Brilliant flashes and bright gleams dart into our souls, but alas! these gleams and flashes too often serve only to discover our darkness. Will you let the wisdom of mankind determine this question? Since we are in search of testimony bearing on the condition of mankind, we should hear what mankind has to say. And does not the wisdom of mankind affirm that idleness is the mother of every vice? But if idleness, which is only the suspension of effort, leaves the imagination to wander in evil paths where it meets with vice and crime, it is evident that our nature is not good, and that, in virtue of the humanity of which we all partake, there is in each of us, not, indeed, sin properly so called, the finished act which is the result of our own will, but a state of heart which inclines us to evil acts, that is to say, an element of sin. "I am convinced," writes J. J. Rousseau, "that there is no man, however virtuous he may be, who would not, if he always followed the dictates of his own heart, become in a short time the greatest of criminals."¹

There only remains one more question. Is this evil nature in us, which each of us may individually help to augment by the acts of his own free will, but which exists before the individual,—is this simply the result of the accumulated faults of past generations? The

¹ *Mémoires et Correspondance de Mme. d'Epinau*, Charpentier's edition, vol. ii., p. 406.

hereditary transmission of evil tendencies is an indisputable fact, and one which of itself alone demonstrates the insufficiency of the individual solution; but the simple fact of hereditary transmission, as we may observe it in history, does not solve the problem. In fact, if our nature, as it now is, was simply the result of the accumulated acts of generations past, history should offer us this spectacle:—Humanity in a good state at the beginning of its history, but undergoing a gradual alteration for the worse through the faults of its members; it would be like a spring of pure water rising at the foot of a rock in our Alps, the limpid clearness of which diminishes in proportion as it descends towards the valleys. Is this the case? Do we find in the beginning of the world's history Good in a pure state, or at least only marred by trifling faults, and do we see a gradual growth of Evil? I do not refer here to religious traditions relative to a prehistoric state, but to history. None of the early annals of nations exhibit a good state of civilization, and the belief has even been entertained, though certainly a mistaken belief, that the savage state is the primitive condition of mankind. Shall we ascend from history, properly so called, to legend, to the heroic ages of Greece for example? What do we find? What does Clytemnestra say to Agamemnon when Agamemnon desires to immolate Iphigenia?

You do not belie your dangerous race!
Atreus and Thyestes live in your face!
Slay your child; true to yourself to the last,
Make her mother partake of the horrid repast!¹

¹ *Iphigenie* of Racine, Act iv., Scene 4.

This family meal of cannibals does not suggest the idea of a good state of civilization. Shall we open the sacred book of the Hebrews? The earth crieth out because it has drunk the blood of Abel. Turn to another page; Lot only escapes from the frightful corruption of Sodom to become the victim of the vices of his own family, and the incestuous father of the accursed races of Moab and Ammon. We do not see in the field of history humanity setting out from a pure origin, and gradually changing for the worse, simply through the action of individual wills.

The individualist doctrine is then insufficient. It cannot account for the transmission of hereditary tendencies from one generation to another, and it is completely refuted by the existence of Evil from the beginning of history. So, those who uphold this doctrine always end by proclaiming its insufficiency, as it were, in spite of themselves. When they have pointed out, and very correctly, that portion of Evil which results from the action of individual wills, they are obliged to carry the remainder to the account either of society, which is Rousseau's theory, or of necessity, which is the theory of a great number of philosophers. To throw the responsibility of the existence of Evil on society is a solution which is evidently false, for whence comes the Evil into society? To refer part of Evil to the primitive and absolute necessity of things is not to solve the problem, but to get rid of it, since whatever Evil is admitted to be necessary is thereby proclaimed to be Good.

Where are we then, Gentlemen? Darkness surrounds

us on every side, and we seem lost in paths to which there is no outlet. This, in brief, is the state of the question. Evil cannot come from God, since Good and the will of God are the same thing. To make God the author of Evil is a contradiction. Evil cannot originate in an eternal principle other than God, because God is the universal principle, besides which, in the beginning there was no other; He, and He alone, is the Eternal. To find the origin of Evil we are then reduced to created wills. We have studied the individual action of created wills; we find there, it is true, the explanation of a considerable part of the Evil that exists, but a very considerable part also is not covered by this explanation. An evil power seems to hover over humanity in every page of its history, and from the very beginning of its life, or, to use a figure which more completely answers to my thought, seems to have tainted humanity, and to exist in each of us along with that which constitutes us men. What is this evil principle, and whence can it be derived? We have had to propose the problem to-day; at our next meeting we shall try to solve it.

FOURTH LECTURE.

The Solution.

GENTLEMEN,—We are seeking the origin of Evil, that is to say, of a disorder which manifests itself in mankind under the forms of error, suffering, and sin. We have met with a solution of the problem which proceeds on this ground, that, granted the fact of sin, the other elements of Evil may be set down as its natural consequences. We have no objection to this as far as it goes. Wherever a rebellion of will against law occurs, disorder and pain are accounted for in a manner satisfactory to conscience and reason. But the solution indicated only takes into consideration the action of individual wills. In this respect it appears insufficient, because it neither accounts for the general prevalence of suffering, nor for an essential element of sin, the origin of which cannot be traced to individual action. It exists, we have said, as an infectious principle which corrupts the heart. Whence does it come?

It is of the utmost importance for practical life that we should recognise the essential character of Evil. Wherever the fact that humanity is substantially in a state of disorder is ignored, there is always a disposition to take the general state of things, the common custom,

as the rule of what ought to be; the result of which is that conscience is seriously weakened. As to the origin of this evil state, it appears, at first sight, a purely speculative question. It is not, indeed, directly practical. As soon as it is admitted that Evil ought not to be, it follows that, if our heart is bad, it is our duty to battle with our heart. We said at the outset that the result of our inquiries, as far as the conduct of life is concerned, is all contained in these simple maxims:—"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."¹ Looking simply at the practical, we might then, it seems, pass on at once to the subject of our sixth lecture, in which we shall treat of the battle of life. But I could not admit, in an absolute sense, the moral indifference of the question on which we enter, to-day. If we have no opinion as to the origin of Evil, there is always a risk either of believing it necessary, which strikes at conscience, or of referring it to God, which does serious injury to our religious feeling. Without being, then, directly practical, our present inquiry has an indirect, but nevertheless real, influence on moral order. Besides, the instruction for which we have met has been offered you under the title of philosophical instruction, and it is an essential character of philosophy to look for a solution wherever it meets with a problem. Still it is important to add, that if you admit, without restriction or reserve, the obligation you are under to battle with Evil, any doubts you may entertain respecting the solution I have to point out ought not to destroy the value of the considerations which

¹ Rom. xii. 9.

will terminate this discussion. After being separated on a question of theory, we may find ourselves together again on the ground of practical application.

I am about to set before you my solution of the Problem of Evil; to indicate its historical sources; and to expound it by pointing out its bearing on the idea we should form of the primitive condition of humanity and of the origin of its actual state. The order of our inquiry will be as follows:—The proposed solution—its historical sources—the primitive condition of humanity—and the origin of its present state.

I. THE PROPOSED SOLUTION.

We have studied the Problem of Evil in a general way in its application to all created minds; but humanity alone, among the orders of intelligences we may suppose to exist, being within the range of our observation, we shall confine to humanity the application of a universal theory as to the nature of Evil. Here is the solution which I put before you to-day, and which I shall try to defend at our next meeting. Humanity is corrupt because it has corrupted itself. A primitive act of humanity, by an abuse of free-will, and a rebellion against law, created the evil heart of humanity. Whence it follows, that in every individual two things must be distinguished:—1st, His personal will, responsible for its acts and for its consent to natural inclinations; 2ndly, The human nature which is in him, for his share of which he is responsible not as an individual, but in his character as man (*en sa qualité d'homme*).

We have here two assertions which should be maintained with equal firmness—the collective responsibility of humanity, and the individual responsibility of each of its members. These assertions do not contradict, but limit and complete each other. I shall be called, by the nature of my task, to insist on the first—the collective responsibility of mankind; but it is important we should take care not to suffer the second to be shaken—the assertion of our individual responsibility. Let us not imitate the drunken peasant, of whom Luther speaks, who, mounted on horseback, leans over on one side, and when he wants to right himself falls on the other, unable to keep his balance.

In order to accept, or even comprehend, the solution which I propose, you must conceive of humanity as not being simply an aggregate of individuals, a pile or a heap, but a real existence, distinct from the individuals composing it, without ever being separate from them, and which may be the subject of a moral imputation. If our ordinary language were regarded as exact, there would be nothing to stop us here. We speak of the human conscience; we continually attribute sentiments and acts to humanity. But when we come to reflect, our language seems to us as misleading; it seems to us that individuals alone have any existence, and that the word *humanity* is an abstract term which designates no other reality than the aggregate of individuals. Appearances are in favour of this view, and so is a certain philosophy which is all the more readily believed because it aims to justify appearances. The theory which I defend shocks the first judgment of our com-

mon sense. But let us come to this understanding on the ground of the difficulty of the subject. I pledge myself not to finish these lectures with a triumphant conclusion declaring that I have annihilated every objection, and made all obscurities clear. I ask you, on your part, not to reject at first sight the idea which I present to you because it seems new. If you reject every new idea, you will not make great progress in the acquisition of truth. If my solution appears strange, be so good as not to reject it immediately as absurd. Take time to reflect on it, days, weeks, months, or even years. An idea is a seed. If you deem the idea which I wish to put into your mind of any value, let it grow, make it grow by reflection; and wait, before pronouncing a final judgment, until you see the nature and quality of the plant which the seed may produce. Although I try to present my thoughts in the closest logical connection, they do not, nevertheless, form such an indivisible whole that you must necessarily adopt all or reject all. Those of you who cannot accept the proposed solution may still perhaps derive some profit from the details of this discussion.

I might say, without exaggerating what I think, that all the sciences of our age, for the last half-century especially, concur in leading the human mind towards the solution to which I direct you. I might address myself to the legitimate desire which makes us like novelty, and to the mischievous perversion of this desire, which, in view of whatever belongs to the past, inclines us to employ this familiar expression of disdain — *Known already*. I might say that I bring you, not modern

science, but a science more modern than this, because it is the science of the future. In fact, as a doctrine of science and philosophy, the solution which I offer you is new, so new that it has not even reached the stage of birth. But, under another form, this solution is old, and very old; it exists in the world as an old truth which science is beginning to spell out, and will end by reading distinctly; such is my conviction. To abstain from stating this fact from a desire to flatter your taste for novelty would expose me to the danger of being justly censured by all those amongst you who are acquainted with the history of human thought; and more than this, to my mind, it would be to employ a vulgar falsehood and disreputable artifice. It is, then, desirable to refer briefly to the historical origin of the proposed solution; but let us quite understand why it is so.

A scientific doctrine is a supposition, or to use the philosophical term, an hypothesis designed to explain facts, the truth of which is demonstrated in proportion as it is successful. Its origin is of no importance as far as the question of its truth is concerned. For example, universal gravitation was originally a simple supposition. This supposition has become a demonstrated law, because it has accounted for the motions of the heavenly bodies. It is demonstrated, because it explains facts, and for no other reason. The discovery of this great law is attributed to Newton. It has been pretended lately, on the authority of documents the authenticity of which is doubtful, that the discovery was virtually Pascal's. This dispute has an historical interest, but it has nothing to do with the law of gravitation which rests for proof on

astronomical observation and calculation, and in a way altogether independent of the name of its discoverer. The question of its origin has then no influence on the proof of a doctrine. We are accustomed, nevertheless, to speak of Galileo when mention is made of the laws of gravity, which he discovered, and to name Kepler when explaining the laws of planetary movement established by this astronomer. This is historical information possessing some interest, and it is a just recognition of merit. In the case in which we are concerned, it is still more desirable to mention the origin of our solution, for the opportunity it will afford to enter into explanations, the importance of which you cannot fail to appreciate.

II. HISTORICAL SOURCES OF THE SOLUTION.

Our solution has various antecedents in the history of religious doctrines. It has always been implied in any real and serious faith in God: it has been disengaged and proposed to the world in a positive way, but not in a scientific form, in the Christian Scriptures. All I have to teach concerning the solution of this problem is summed up in the following statement.

The Christian dogma of the fall of humanity contains the philosophical doctrine which most reasonably accounts for those facts of experience which give rise to the Problem of Evil.

The importance of this statement demands a careful explanation of it. We proceed to determine the meaning of each of these terms:—*fall of humanity, dogma, philosophical doctrine.*

And first, What is the Christian idea of the fall of humanity? I expound it here, it is almost needless to say, on my own responsibility, and in the sense in which this idea seems to me common to all the great confessions of Christian thought. The assertion that there is an essential disorder in human nature is of the first importance in the scheme of evangelical dogma; it is indeed the corner-stone of the building. The evangelical dogma, in fact, contains these three principal thoughts:—the creation of the human race, its redemption, and its moral restoration or sanctification. Redemption and sanctification are designed to reinstate the primitive plan of the Creative Will in the midst of a state of disorder. If the affirmation of an essential disorder is suppressed, there is no longer any room for redemption, and the idea of a restoration becomes unintelligible; all that is left is the doctrine of creation, that is to say, deism. In this position an unanswerable deistical objection confronts the Christian, “What idea have you formed of God? You think that He ought to interfere in the world by a supernatural act; then He must be an unskilful workman, since, not having done His work well at the first attempt, He is obliged to return to it.” The argument is unanswerable. The Christian, who is so ill-advised as to disregard the place which the essential character of the world’s disorder holds in his doctrine, finds himself reduced to silence, or entangled in a series of contradictions. He will continue, indeed, unless he changes his entire vocabulary, to call Jesus Christ by the name of Saviour, and to speak of salvation and restoration. But it is clear that there can be no salvation

where there is no danger of perishing, and that a work of restoration takes place only when a primitive order has been destroyed. On the other hand, the moment we admit that human nature has been corrupted, the interposition of God for the purpose of re-establishing order becomes intelligible,—a supernatural interposition in respect to fallen nature, but having for its object the re-establishment of the original nature.

A fundamental disturbance brought into the plan of creation; such is then the corner-stone of the edifice of the Christian dogma. Whence comes this disturbance? Were it necessary to admit that a creature like one of us had sinned, and that this sin had been imputed to other creatures, others in the absolute sense of the word; were it necessary to admit that reinforcements introduced into a garrison would be treated as guilty of an act of sedition which took place before their arrival, this idea would so shock the feeling of justice that the human conscience would not even entertain it. But this is not Christian teaching. Christian teaching contains an affirmation which may be put thus: The act which has disturbed the order of creation is not the act of an individual, in the sense which we now give to this word, but of a primitive individual who did not simply participate in human nature as one of us, but concentrated this entire nature in himself, because he was primitive, so that one might designate him *the humanity-man* (*l'homme-humanite*). His acts combined in them two characteristics which ever afterwards were distinct; they were at once individual and human, in the widest acceptation of this last term. The whole of humanity was really

present in him who fell, who was its head, its germ, and its source.

Is this the actual import of Christian teaching? This is a question of fact. You can have recourse to what documents you please: open the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, the *Catechism of the Orthodox Eastern Church*, the *Institutes of Calvin*¹ . . . ; you will see everywhere the same care taken to exclude the idea that sin had passed from one individual to others that had no essential connexion with the first. You will see everywhere that they employ the idea of a principle, and such figures as a germ, a source. "God," says Bossuet, "views all men as a single man in him from whom He wills they shall all come forth."² I one day heard M. Charles Secrétan, in an eloquent and admirable comment on these words of the bishop of Meaux, observe that God's view is never mistaken, and that to say what God sees, is to say what really is, in the most profound and serious sense. Let us hear again a contemporary, one of those men who are defending at the present day the Christian cause in Germany with the greatest authority and success. "The

¹ Adam was, as it were, a source and an original.—*Catechism of the Council of Trent*, chap. iii. § 1.

The torrent which breaks from an impure source very naturally partakes of its impurity.—*The larger Catechism of the Orthodox Eastern Catholic Church*. From the third article of faith.

No commencement of this pollution will be found unless you ascend to the first father of all as to the fountain-head. Undoubtedly we should regard it as settled that Adam was not only the father of human nature, but its source or root; and that in his corruption, the human race itself was by reason thereof corrupted.—*Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, Book II. chap. i.

² *Histoire Universelle*. The History of Religion, page 170 of the original edition.

lot of each of us," says Professor Luthardt, "was decided by the act of the first of our race; for this was not only the act of an individual, but the act of the representative of all men. . . . We all form one great unity. Each is mysteriously involved in all; none can isolate himself and say: Wherein does that concern me?"¹ Such is the import which we assign to these words, *the fall of humanity*, words which express one of the elements of the Christian dogma.

Now what is a dogma? A dogma is an assertion which does not rest directly on reasoning or experience, but on faith, on the authority of certain testimony. If we take the term altogether in a general sense, we must admit that our ordinary thought is full of dogmas. How do I know, for example, who have never been in England, that there is a city called London, which is the capital of that country? I do not know it by reasoning; my reason might be at work to all eternity without discovering the existence of London. As little do I know it by experience; I know it by faith reposed in the testimony which the experience of others conveys to me. How do you know that there is such a country as China, and that there is a city called Peking, which is its capital? Unless you have been in China, this is not a truth either of reasoning or experience for you; it is a dogma which rests on the authority of testimony. Nevertheless, you are perfectly certain about the matter; you no more doubt the existence of China than the existence of the hall in which we are now assembled; the proof

¹ Luthardt, *Apologetic Lectures on the Saving Truths of Christianity*; Lecture II. : *Sin.*) Edinburgh : T. & T. Clark.

of it is that many of you manufacture watches to send off to that country; so that the existence of China is in your case the object of a faith sufficiently active to determine your conduct. This element of natural dogma in human thought has not, I believe, attracted the attention of logicians so much as it ought. They all speak of testimony and of faith in testimony, but they often speak of it without observing the whole extent and bearing of the fact they indicate.

The use of the word dogma is ordinarily limited to the sphere of religion. What is a religious dogma? It is an assertion which is accepted on the authority of supernatural testimony, that is to say, of testimony respecting facts which are outside the circle of human experience. The witness may be a mere agent of transmission, as Mahomet, for example, is for Mussulmen; he may also know the Divine world in a direct way and by virtue of his very nature, as is the case with Christ according to the belief of Christians. A Christian dogma is a statement founded on the authority of Christ's testimony, which is the dogma of dogmas. By its very nature dogma constitutes authority. As it is a testimony rendered in history, it remains unshaken on the title of being a historical fact. For every one who accepts this testimony as a manifestation of perfect truth, the dogma becomes an undisputed truth, a truth which may be understood in a greater or less degree, or of which there may be a growing understanding, but which remains fixed in itself. This is what alienates many minds from dogma, because the authority which is inseparable from it presents itself to them as a

chain. Believers, finding their strength just where others think they see only fetters, and their support in what seems to others a hindrance, say that it is by no means certain whether it is advisable to untie every knot and break every chain. They observe, for example, that the dismasted and rudderless vessel would do wrong to break the rope that attaches her to the ship which has her in tow, and that in the ship itself the crew do not curse the chain which enables them to cast anchor in case of need, and so preserve themselves from the violence of the winds and the fury of the waves.

The authority of dogma being only the result of faith, it is clear that this authority has no existence except for the believer. The authority of dogma imposed on those who do not believe is an idea altogether contrary to reason. Men may be compelled by force to perform certain acts; they may be compelled, if they are cowards, to utter lies; but to pretend to obtain an act of faith by the use of force is a palpable absurdity. This absurdity, which has been perpetrated by the employment of the civil power in matters of religion, has been fraught with infinite mischief. The smoke of the funeral piles of the inquisition still hides heaven from many souls; and, to pass from a greater example to a less, the flames which devoured Servetus are not a light which attracts friendly glances toward the Gospel. The confounding the authority of dogma for the believer with the authority of dogma imposed on those who do not believe, was the scourge of the middle ages.

What now do we understand by a philosophical doc-

trine? What is philosophy? Philosophy is the search after a general explanation of the universe apart from all dogmatic presupposition. When any dogmatic presupposition whatever is found as the basis of a science, whether the authority of Jesus Christ, or of Mahomet, or of Buddha, or, in short, of any prophet whatever, regarded as the organ of Divinity, this science is no longer philosophy. Shall we say, therefore, that philosophy is a research of the reason apart from all authority? Certainly not. A research free from all authority would be nothing but an aimless wandering. Philosophical speculations are subject to the authority of facts, to the authority of logic, and to the authority of natural testimony, but philosophy never appeals to the authority of a supernatural and divine testimony to establish its statements.

We have explained the terms of our fundamental statement; I reproduce it?

The Christian dogma of the fall of humanity contains the philosophical dogma which most reasonably accounts for those facts of experience which give rise to the Problem of Evil.

Now, Gentlemen, shall I not faithfully interpret the thought of some amongst you, if I address to myself, on your behalf, this objection?—"Faith being the sphere of authority, and philosophy being the sphere of liberty, there is an incompatibility between philosophy and dogma. The object of our meetings is a philosophical study; you are departing therefore from the programme by introducing dogma."

Is not this what many of you immediately thought

as you listened to me? The subject is serious; it is important there should be no misunderstanding. There is no room for dogma and dogmatic authority in a philosophical discussion; dogma can only be proposed as dogma, and with the authority which belongs to it, in an assembly which takes for granted the previous consent of its members to a common faith, that is to say, in a church. Here, between us, there can be no question of anything of the kind. Consequently, if I ever employ the argument of authority; if I ever happen to reason after this fashion:—this statement is true, for it is contained in such a text, it has been declared by such and such an ecclesiastical body to which we ought to submit, I declare beforehand all argument of this nature out of place, and irrelevant to the discussion for which we have met; I withdraw and retract it beforehand. But, if in this dogma we think we find a solution to problems which the human mind raises, can we not separate this solution from the rest of the dogma, and regard it merely as a doctrine which is offered us for the solution of a problem, and study this doctrine under scientific conditions, that is to say, with no other rule of procedure than that of confronting it with facts, in order to see whether it explains and accounts for them. What I propose to you is not the discussion of a dogma, for this would necessarily throw us back upon the question of authority, the foundation of all dogma; but I invite you to examine freely a philosophical doctrine, at the same time apprising you that, as a matter of fact, this doctrine is contained in the Christian dogma. Who can refuse to accede to such a course of procedure? Can Christians?

But if we can prove, by means of a perfectly free discussion, that the dogma contains a doctrine of scientific value; if we can demonstrate, in this way, that, on points of the deepest interest to humanity, the simple word of Jesus of Nazareth contains the solution of problems which the wisdom of Greece and of the Orientals never succeeded in resolving satisfactorily, Christians surely can understand that there would be a very powerful argument in favour of their cause? Do they not perceive also that this argument will have no value except it be discussed with that perfect independence apart from which true science is impossible? I refer not to the dogma, but to the doctrine which has been drawn from it. Can it be that *freethinkers* will refuse to enter the path which I point out? How so? Because, Gentlemen, a doctrine happens to be a dogma believed by many of your fellow-creatures, would you be unwilling to examine, discuss, and weigh it attentively? Where then would be your liberty? Would you not in this way make your professed independence a real bondage? It would be a most illogical proceeding on your part, unless you take it for granted, as an axiom beyond discussion, that there can be nothing true in the Christian faith, that everything, absolutely everything, which is stamped with the seal of the Gospel is thereby convicted of falsehood. In that case, you would profess the maxim that it is allowable to believe everything, except what our fathers believed. Is this a good maxim? I think it would only be good for your children, who would certainly act wisely in applying it to you, and in refusing, on this point at least, to think as you do.

I hope you now clearly see the precise ground on which we proceed. The historical origin of the solution which I propose to you, the fact that this solution is contained in the Christian dogma, is a circumstance foreign to our discussion. I was obliged in good faith, and in deference to historical truth, to point it out, just the same as, had I come here to defend one of the celebrated theories of a Greek philosopher, I should not have liked to explain it without pointing out its origin. But the solution which I am about to expound and defend, and which I say is derived from the Christian dogma, rests here on my sole responsibility. Be so good as to place yourselves at this point of view, and do not complicate our discussion with any extraneous question. Let us proceed to the exposition of our solution, and begin by shewing what must have been the primitive condition of humanity.

III. PRIMITIVE CONDITION OF HUMANITY.

“All is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things.” This celebrated saying of Jean-Jacques Rousseau¹ will be our starting-point. Every creature is good as it leaves the hands of God, that is to say, according to the definition of Good which we have given, it answers to its destination. But from the fact that the creature is good, does it follow that it is perfect in the sense of being complete and having attained its full end? No; such a view is false even with respect to the material creation. In reference to matter,

¹ Commencement of *L'Emile*.

we may indeed, in theory, represent nature as coming forth completely finished from the Creator's hands in a definite and fixed order. But what we may thus conceive of in pure theory is not in conformity with facts. Material nature has not come forth from the hands of God in a finished state, and the proof of it is that it is being developed by means of a movement still going on. The movement of nature is not fixed. The earth, for instance, moves round the sun. But does our earth, in revolving round the sun, always describe the same circle? No; astronomers teach us that the sun moves in space with its train of planets. The sun moves and draws us with it; and from the beginning of the world down to the end of time, the earth travelling in its orbit will never pass twice along the same line. This moving earth is the theatre of a perpetual movement on its own surface. It was not at its origin what it is now; in a certain number of ages it will not be what it is to-day. In view of this general movement of entire nature, our younger poetry, born of modern science, asks through V. Hugo:—

O Lord! whither-bound rolls the earth through the heavens?
 Are we never to know? And shall none break your bars,
 Ye dark firmaments sown with cloud-patches of stars?¹

Poetry sings again in Lamartine:—

Night marches on, and o'er the abyss profound
 These balanced worlds all sail without a sound;
 Borne on their bosom, we ourselves pursue
 A distant haven ever hid from view.

¹ To my friends L. B. and S. B., in the *Feuilles d'automne*.

And oft, by night, when blows the southern breeze,
The earth seems wafted like some ship through seas.

Suns! sailing worlds, if He hath told you, say
To what fair shore we make our common way?
To what celestial port His breath doth guide?¹

And what poetry thus asks, reason asks also. Think you that we could contemplate the spectacle of the general movement of the worlds, and to the question, Whither do they go? reply, Nowhere. No astronomer so thinks. Astronomers would be delighted to discover what is the law which regulates the movement of the entire celestial system, and to be able, consequently, to explain the direction of this movement. There is, then, a plan for nature; this plan has not been realized at once, but nature tends towards its accomplishment. Will the plan of nature be one day fully accomplished? Will the celestial orbs some day become fixed in a uniform movement, or will they come to a stand in motionless perfection? The question transcends, I believe, the reach of the human mind. But what is certain is that nature was made and well made at its beginning, but that it was not perfect.

The same idea becomes more evident when we pass to the world of mind, because it is impossible to conceive, even in theory, of an original perfection of the spiritual world. The destination of spirits is Good, the order in which Happiness is found. Their very constitution indicates their end; and we have in this respect the guarantee of reason applied to the idea of creation;

¹ The Stars, in the *Méditations Poétiques*.

for, as I have endeavoured to prove in another series of lectures,¹ love is the only motive we can conceive to have moved the Supreme Power to produce the universe, and the Good of the creature is the sole object which we can assign to creative love. In order that a spirit may answer to its destination, it must possess a free will, which is its very substance and essence, a clear conscience which marks out for it the law of its will, and a pure heart concealing no bad disposition. The spirit thus constituted is placed under the law in the accomplishment of which it is to find its Good; but this state is not perfection. To conceive of a spirit as originally perfect is a contradiction. A spirit is a power, and its law is to realize itself through its own acts, to grow, and become perfect. Perfection realized at once, which we do not find even in nature as a matter of fact, is inconceivable in theory in the spiritual world; for a spirit perfect from its origin would not be self-realizing,² and thenceforth would no more be spirit, that is to say, power. The primitive state is, then, a free will not in a state of perfection, but in a state of innocence. The paradise of innocence must be not only guarded, but also cultivated by the created will to become the celestial Eden, the plan of which is revealed to the conscience of the free creature as the true law of its destiny. The golden age is the golden dream of innocence contemplating in a vision of marvellous beauty the end proposed to its efforts by Eternal Love.

¹ *The Heavenly Father.*

² "Ne se serait pas fait lui-même."

The perfection of a spirit can only be the work of its liberty; and to require it of the Creator is to require Him not to create free creatures. But liberty itself, which is to lead the spirit on to its perfection, can this be perfect at its origin? No. Liberty at its commencement can only be conceived of as imperfect. It must pass by its own act from a lower to a higher form. Let us give our particular attention to this thought.

The word liberty has two meanings. It is, first, the power of choice, which includes necessarily the possibility of Evil. In quite another sense, we declare that a being is free who does whatever he desires. Consider carefully these two ideas; they both exist in your mind. You conceive of liberty as the possibility of choosing; and you have a higher idea of liberty, that of a will which does whatever it desires, without so much as having to make a choice. In the former sense liberty supposes a law. A finite power (we must reserve the mystery of the liberty of the absolute Being) not placed under a law which it can either follow or violate, is not intelligible to us as a moral power; the idea of it resolves itself into an unaccountable caprice, or blind force, which yields to impulses from without, and does not possess in itself the cause of its own determinations. There must be a law, a commandment to awaken the will and reveal to it its liberty of choice. In the latter sense, liberty supposes the absence of all law, for law limits the employment of the will by shutting it up to the alternative of obedience or rebellion. These two ideas of liberty seem contradictory. They are not so, however; we find their reconciliation in the mystery of

the heart, and the mystery of the heart has been laid open already in some considerations to which we must now return.

In the phenomena of habit, the nature of the will, as we have said, becomes transformed. When we have done an act voluntarily a certain number of times, that act becomes a habit, and the habit creates a power, a tendency; it incrusts itself, so to speak, in our heart, where it becomes a love in the most general sense of this term. Now what is the effect of this? Whatever the soul loves it desires; and when the soul acts from love, it does all it desires, since it does not desire anything for which it has no love. For him who loves Good, the law then disappears, because it is absorbed in love, and the commandment of the conscience is lost in the impulse of the heart. The liberty of choosing between Good and Evil remains in this case as what is called in philosophy a metaphysical possibility, but Evil becomes morally impossible. To the "Thou shalt not" of the conscience there responds the *non possumus* of the heart. Setting out with liberty of choice, the will, by what it chooses, may thus make a choice which becomes decisive, and the struggle ends in triumph. The will, by its very act, may pass from the lower form of liberty,—the power of choosing,—to the higher form of liberty,—the state of a soul which does all it desires.

We can now conceive of the plan which humanity, manifesting itself in individual existences, but maintaining itself in harmonious unity, by a common determination to execute the Divine plan, had to realize.

Setting out from a state in which Evil was simply possible, that is to say, a state of innocence, it had, by the effort of a free creature resisting this possible Evil, to put an end to the possibility itself, in order to arrive at the state of perfection, or of holiness, a state which derives its character from the fact that liberty has devoted itself to Good: such was to be the development of virtue. If the will does every moment what it ought, it obtains at last a decisive victory over the possibility of Evil. Evil has not appeared; without ever having been destroyed, it has become impossible, because it has never actually existed.

All this is difficult for us to understand, because, engaged as we are in a world where the reality of Evil weighs upon us, a continual effort is necessary to free ourselves from the oppression of experience, and enable us to comprehend this transition from primitive to perfect liberty which passes through no state of disorder. Still, even in our experience, there are some facts which allow of our rising to this conception. The twofold meaning of the word liberty is seen in some familiar examples. Which, for instance, think you, is the more free, the young tradesman who on opening his shop for the first time, asks himself whether he shall try to deceive his customers, or determine to do an honest business, and who has, in this very hesitation, the witness and consciousness of his liberty, or this same tradesman, grown grey in honourable toil, bound by the repeated act of his will to the law of honour, and who, feeling himself henceforth, as it were, incapable of deceit, has become, by the very

exercise of his own free choice, the servant of integrity? Which, think you, is more free, the young man who asks himself, shall he tell a lie, and who feels his liberty in his very hesitation, in this possible choice between his duty and some base temptation, or this same young man when, by the assiduous practice of the laws of truth, he has become the willing slave of his own word? We deem him free, in the highest sense of the word, who is freed from Evil. Obedience struggling successfully with temptation is the act of growing liberty choosing Good; and when all temptation has vanished before the love of Good, this full, entire, joyous, and unhesitating obedience is the perfection and fulness of liberty. Thus, even in our darkness, we meet with some gleams of light which enable us to understand how primitive liberty passes into full liberty without Evil ever appearing, because it disappears, as Evil that was simply possible, without ever having been realized.

Has this programme of spiritual development been followed anywhere? Lift your eyes to heaven; I speak of the heaven of astronomers. The world is great: you do not think, I imagine, that God's whole family is confined to one earth, that the Eternal Shepherd of souls has only our little sheep-fold under His crook. Our ancestors have been laughed at for making mankind the centre of the world. It was simple ignorance rather than any sin of pride, at a time when it was believed that the sun was only a light, and the stars so many little lamps fixed in the solid vault of heaven. But what shall we say of the thought of the scientific

men of our day who, now that science has laid open the immeasurable space of heaven and peopled it with worlds, venture to think and say that there is no intelligence in the universe superior to that of man? Raise then your eyes to heaven and observe a star, any you please, the one perhaps which, on some stormy night, appearing suddenly amidst the clouds, poured with its light a ray of hope into your heart, and ask: Is there a happy star? Does there exist on one of those orbs which stud the sky a family of free, intelligent creatures, who have never used their liberty except to confirm themselves in Good; who, growing continually in truth, have grown at the same time in joy, and daily wonder at all the fresh sources of happiness which their hearts contain? Does there exist a family of free creatures who can present themselves before God without beginning their worship with the confession of their common sin, and send forth a pure hymn of gratitude and love to Him from whom all things proceed, by whom all things exist, and who has given them the inestimable boon of life, and the glorious privilege of this liberty whereby they have attained the happiness to which they were destined by eternal love? Were I to affirm that such a world exists, I should excite a smile. If you were to affirm that it does not exist, I should smile in my turn. In any case this happy star is not our planet; this family of creatures without sin is not the human race; let us return to humanity.

IV. ORIGIN OF THE ACTUAL STATE OF HUMANITY.

What was the origin of Evil, according to the solution which I am setting before you? The end proposed to humanity was to attain to the harmony and happiness of spiritual society. Humanity at its very origin rebels against law; this is our supposition. The created will desires to establish itself in a state of complete independence of law, that is to say, it desires to become its own law. What use does it make of this independence? Its acts, whatever they may be, are acts of disorder, since they are acts done in contravention of that law which is the essential order. Now, this order being the subjection of matter to mind, and the submission of minds to the law of charity, disorder shows itself in the domination of matter over mind, and in a principle of self-seeking and of domination over others, which as society grows produce conflict in place of harmony. Sensuality and pride are the two forms of rebellion.

The human heart being corrupted, liberty becomes injured. A nature, created in the first instance by the will, paralyses the exercise of that will. Mastered by his inclinations, man feels himself the slave of his vices, preserving in his remorse a witness to his liberty.¹

From the perversion of the heart and the weakening of the will comes error; and error, veiling the light of nature, deforms the conscience.

Suffering next appears, as a chastisement viewed in the light of justice, and as a remedy viewed in the light of goodness; and the whole race of man having shared,

¹ See Rousseau, *Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard*.

at its source, in the primitive rebellion, every man, by the simple fact that he constitutes a part of the human race, becomes liable to the consequences of this rebellion.

As soon as these thoughts are admitted, the individualist solution which we were obliged to reject as incomplete becomes altogether altered because completed. In what, in fact, did this solution fail? It gave no explanation of a large amount of Evil, the origin of which cannot be assigned to the individual action of historical wills. Now this part of Evil is explained. At the very origin of our race, before the commencement of history, an act of humanity corrupted the heart of humanity, and humanity itself, by its own rebellion, fell into error and suffering. The general prevalence of sin is explained by the existence of temptations inherent in the human heart, and by that weakening of the will which the evil inclination of the heart induces. We understand the general prevalence of suffering. Stupendous mysteries remain in the individual allotment of pain and temptation;¹ but we have made a considerable advance towards the light, in that we have assigned an

¹ An explanation of our individual destinies has been sought in the idea that we are bearing here below the consequences of our individual acts in a former state of existence. This doctrine is characterized by Cicero as ancient (Fragments of Hortensius in the Panckouke Edition, vol. xxxvi., p. 461). It is reproduced in our days by some writers, see, especially, *La Pluralité des existences de l'âme*, by André Pezzani, Advocate to the Imperial Court at Lyons; Third Edition, 12mo, Paris, Didier, 1865. I could not discuss, in a passing reference, a doctrine of this importance. It admits the universality of suffering and the universality of sin, and maintains intact the idea of God and the authority of conscience. But, in seeking in a primordial individualism the explanation of our present state, does it account for the actual solidarity of mankind?

origin to the share of suffering and the element of sin which observation has shown us exist in every man, inasmuch as he is a man, and quite apart from his personal acts.

Evil is essential to our world such as it is, such as it has become through the rebellion of the creature; but Evil in itself is accidental. It exists, but it ought not to exist. Its possibility is the condition of liberty, but its realization is directly contrary to the plan of the universe and the Divine will. Thus the cloud which Evil raises between us and God is dispersed, and the glory of the Creator shines forth in its unchangeable purity. Henceforth, whenever the poet asks—

Wherefore, then, O Master supreme!
Hast Thou created Evil so great?

we shall stop him; and, while permitting ourselves to enjoy, from a literary point of view, the fine lines which follow, we shall reply to the poet, God did not create Evil.

The idea of a primitive fall permits us to conceive it possible that the consequences of the rebellion of the spiritual creature may have altered its relations with nature; and that nature for us is not actually what, according to the plan of the Creator, it was intended to be. This is only, certainly, a door opening out of the darkness; but still it is an open door, whilst the individualist solution offers, in this respect, nothing but a dead wall. In fact, it is certain that the individual action of voluntary agents, in the course of history, could not offer, in any degree, either a solution, or the possibility of a solution, for this part of our problem.

To impute the origin of Evil entirely to the creature is the only way of clearing God, for what is called the nature of things is nothing. Is it an humiliation for the creature to bear the whole burden of Evil? or is it an exaltation? It is a glory which manifests itself in humiliation; it is a humiliation which reveals a primitive glory. Thus our solution is in conflict with two opposite feelings—now with pride which rejects such a great responsibility, and again with a cunning humility which refuses the idea of possessing such a power. The solution is at once humiliating and glorious; it thus brings to view that double character of human nature which Pascal has graven in ineffaceable characters, its greatness and misery.

God did not create Evil. Between the Creator and the world as it now exists there comes in the sad creation of the creature. This doctrine carries with it important consequences for the government of thought. The immediate transition from the world as it now exists to God, is the source of most serious mistakes in philosophy, and of many other errors which are not confined to learned men. It is by passing from the world as it now exists immediately to God that philosophy loses itself in the denial of Evil, because it sets out from the indisputable axiom that everything which proceeds from God is good. Some rash and often dangerous apologies for Divine Providence draw their support from the same source. For instance, if you refer to God's will, not merely the essential and formative laws of human society, which constitute part of the plan of the creation, but society as it actually exists; if you seek to suppress

the complaints of those who suffer from real social abuses, by humbling them under the hand of Providence; your endeavour to invest the Evil with a sacred authority will be vain; you will not obtain submission; you will only make them add to their rebellion against society rebellion against God. It is by alleging that general and permanent facts, which do not depend on the will of individuals, form part of the divine plan, that an apology for war has been made out, exhibiting it not as a sanguinary mark of sin, but as one of the original and good elements of the universe. In another sphere of thought, unless you admit the possibility, notwithstanding all the mysteries which surround the subject, that a disturbance has been introduced into nature, your apologies for Providence will often come into conflict with the science of the naturalist, and will sometimes be foiled by the artless questions of children. The world in all its constitutive elements is the work of God; and in man, whatever enters into the constitution of our person is good in itself. The heart, as a power of loving, is good; the reason, as a power of knowing, is good; the will, as a power of acting, is more than a Good, it is the root and condition of all Good. But the world as it is is a troubled world, and, between the world as it is and God, there is the fall of the human race, which has created an evil power which hovers over our destiny. A general fact, a universal fact, may be bad, since it may be a consequence of the primitive rebellion of humanity against its proper law.

I wish you to understand clearly the practical importance of this thought. If you are not alive to the fact

that the world is out of order, you will aspire after Good, according to the natural instinct of the heart; and, in the conflict of life, your heart will be broken. Enter into the arena of society with the thought that human nature is good, and you will soon feel the attacks of discouragement, and a bitter sadness will at last take possession of your soul. On the contrary, if you know that human nature is fallen, you will meet with sin, disorder, and pain without surprise; and you will fight, as a soldier in the ranks of Good, with a firm confidence in the final triumph of your cause.

I shall sum up these considerations by replying to a thought which often finds expression at the present day. You will hear it said that the doctrine of the fall is the old religious doctrine, that the doctrine of progress is the new philosophical doctrine, and that we must choose between these two irreconcilable conceptions. Progress, it is said, is the law of the spiritual world, as gravitation is the law of matter. Now, the law of progress excludes the idea of a fall; for a fall of humanity would be precisely the opposite of progress. This mode of reasoning rests upon a great confusion of ideas arising out of the use of the word law. A physical law being, as we have said, the expression of constant facts, in a domain in which liberty does not exist, every law excludes its contrary; and our knowledge of the true law enables us to deny every fact which would contradict it, just as the certain knowledge of a fact enables us to deny the law which would deny it. But the moral law set before a free creature may be followed or violated, according to the decisions of liberty. Some oppose the idea of pro-

gress to the doctrine of the fall. It would be just as sensible to oppose the idea of progress to the idea that Nero became bad as he advanced in age; for if progress in the case of humanity is a law that is always realized in the sense of the laws of natural philosophy, what is true of humanity must be true of every one of its members; if humanity could not fall, Nero could not grow worse. Let us look at the matter in a more general way. Does the idea of progress render our solution superfluous?

Progress, as one thinks about it, gives no reason for the existence of Evil; for progress, as a primitive law of creation, may find its accomplishment in Good. True progress tends from imperfection to perfection, but imperfection is not Evil. Wherever there is disorder and Evil there must be a fault of the will. If progress appears in our world under the form of a restoration from Evil, this itself is a striking proof of the doctrine of the fall. To admit that progress consists in departure from Evil, and that it is the fundamental law of the universe, is to admit that Evil, as the condition of progress, is a primitive and necessary element of things; and to make Evil a primitive and necessary element of things, we repeat once more, is to proclaim it good, or, in other terms, to deny its existence. It is no question of choice between these two ideas:—progress and the fall; they are both necessary to account for the present condition of humanity. Man set out from a state of innocence, in which the heaven of spirits was present to his thought, as the end which he was to attain, as the gift of the Creator which he was to appropriate by the

act of his liberty. Heaven is veiled from the view of his conscience by the consequences of the fall, and remains, nevertheless, the object of his aspirations.

As some ideal Good that doth each soul inflame,
But which in earth's abodes remains without a name.¹

M. de Lamartine, from whom I borrow these lines, has made himself elsewhere the harmonious interpreter of the idea which I am combating, of a choice to be made between the doctrine of the fall and the doctrine of progress:—

A fallen god, man still remembers heaven.
Whether, from ancient glory now cast down,
He guards the memory of his lost renown ;
Or his desires, capacious, deep, and high,
From far, his future greatness prophesy :
Imperfect or fallen, still a mystery.

I reply to the poet, making use of his expressions, the beauty of which I take away to render them subservient to my thought:—

Imperfect *and* fallen man lives on earth ;
But as a fallen god remembers heaven.²

¹ "Loneliness," in Lamartine's *Méditations Poétiques*.

² Man—to Lord Byron, in the *Méditations Poétiques*.

FIFTH LECTURE.

The Proof.

GENTLEMEN, the title of to-day's lecture is The Proof. It will be divided into three sections. I shall explain, first of all, the nature of the proof which I intend to offer; next, I shall set forth the arguments which I have to submit to you; lastly, I shall endeavour to solve the principal difficulties which the subject presents. Nature of the proof,—its exposition,—examination of difficulties:—such will be the order of our thoughts.

I. NATURE OF THE PROOF.

It is necessary, first of all, to understand the nature of a scientific demonstration; and with this object I will take an example. How was the science of the motions of the heavenly bodies, which constitutes the chief part of astronomy, formed? These motions have at all times attracted the attention of men, and the science which seeks to explain them is one of the most ancient. There was a system which prevailed for a long time, known by the name of the Ptolemaic system. It explained the appearances of the heavens on the supposition that the earth is fixed, and that the stars turn round it in circles,

to which various motions were assigned, either as regards the distance of the lines along which these motions were thought to take place, or as regards their velocity. Copernicus, a Polish priest, thought that this solution of the problem was too complicated to be true; he set himself to find something more simple. He made numerous investigations, and found in some old books the idea, formerly held by philosophers of the school of Pythagoras, that the sun remains fixed, and that the earth revolves round it in space. He found in these old books which he consulted, not indeed his theory as he afterwards propounded it to the scientific world, but the germ of it. Copernicus did not, as is often believed, discover the true system of the world, under the sole inspiration of his own genius; he found it hinted in Cicero and Plutarch; and as he himself points out this fact with the most perfect frankness, it is not his fault if it is not known.¹ The truth which he set forth was new to science, but it was an ancient tradition, a tradi-

¹ Here is how Copernicus explains himself in the letter to Pope Paul III., which serves as a preface to his work, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Caelestium*:—"While I was meditating a long time ago, on the uncertainty of the received mathematical doctrines relative to the motions of the spheres of the world, I began to be troubled by the fact that philosophers, who examine sometimes so perfectly the smallest things of the universe, had not been able to establish a more certain explanation of the motions of the machinery of a world which has been created for us by the most perfect and regular of Artificers (*ab optimo et regularissimo omnium opifice*). Wherefore I resolved to read through all the philosophical books within my reach, in order to see if any of them had thought that the motions of the spheres differ from what they are taught to be by our professors of mathematics. I discovered, first of all, in Cicero, that Nicetas believed that it is the earth which moves. I found afterwards in Plutarch that some others were of the same opinion. . . . Whereupon I also began to reflect upon the mobility of the earth."

tion, however, generally neglected, and which had in some way disappeared.

When the discovery of Copernicus was published it excited the greatest opposition. Its adversaries were numerous. First of all, there were the scientific men, attached to the old idea, who could not easily give up the results of all the trouble they had taken to understand and perfect, in some matters of detail, the generally received system. Then there were the people of common sense, of that superficial common sense which judges of things according to first appearances. If we had not learnt in our primary schools that it is the earth which revolves and circles through space, we should not easily admit that the sun which we see every morning rise upon the side of mount Salève, traverse the sky, and terminate its course behind the Jura,¹ is, relatively to us, motionless, and that the earth which bears us moves, and carries us along with it in a continual motion. The common sense which clings to appearances was then altogether opposed to Copernicus; and you can imagine what an echo the jeers of an old doctor called forth, who made himself exceedingly merry over this dream of Copernicus, who believed not that the candles are moved about to light the houses, but that it is the houses which are moved to be lighted by the candles.²

In addition to all these obstacles, the propagation of

¹ The Salève and the Jura bound the valley of Geneva on the east and west.

² "There is an opinion of a philosopher named Copernicus, who will have it that the motion is not in the heavens, but that it is the earth

the new idea had to encounter one of the most memorable blunders contained in the history of theology. The theologians of the Roman Index condemned the new system. This fact was not without its importance; but this importance was immeasurably exaggerated by the religious passions that were brought into play. The common opinion is that when Copernicus published his discovery, the new truth was supported by science on the one side and opposed by theology on the other. This is the romance of this memorable incident, not its history. Listen to these lines, which date from the second half of the seventeenth century: "It is not the decree of Rome on the motion of the earth that will prove that it remains at rest, and *if there were undoubted observations which proved that it is the earth which turns*, all mankind together would neither pre-

which moves in twenty-four hours. For my part, when I reflect upon this odd notion, I can only wonder how this philosopher has been able to conceive it, so far removed as it is from likelihood. I laugh at this dream of Copernicus, for if there was a world in the body of the moon, and those who inhabit it could see here below the lamps lighted to give light to our rooms, would they imagine that we carry our rooms and other parts of our houses lighted by lamps to receive their light, and that while the lamps remain motionless, it is our lighted rooms and houses which move, and not the illuminating lamps, as Copernicus will have it, since in his dream he says that the earth moves in order to be illuminated by the sun, the sun itself remaining fixed and motionless while giving its light: for it is much more reasonable (to those who have reason) that the lights should be carried where they may give light as it is wanted, being light and portable, than to move about a heavy body, which is naturally fixed on its own centre, and carry it to the lights to be illuminated."—*Le Prince instruit en la philosophie en françois, contenant ses quatres parties: avec une metaphysique*, by Messire Bessian Arroy, doctor of the Sorbonne. 1 vol. small folio, Lyon. Pierre Guillemin, 1671, p. 155.

vent it from turning nor themselves from turning with it.”¹ You see the lofty independence of this mind, which the decree of the Roman Index assuredly does not trouble; and the author of these lines was, in everybody’s opinion, a transcendant genius in physical and mathematical science, for these lines are Pascal’s. When Pascal wrote, science was still undecided on the subject of this very system of Copernicus,² and the freest and most enlightened minds were asking whether any one could, from unquestionable observations, prove the theory of the motion of the earth. It is only since Newton’s time that Copernicus has completely triumphed. Now the discovery of Copernicus was published in 1543, and Newton’s work dates from 1687. There were needed then 144 years of toil, calculations, and observations, besides the discoveries of two geniuses of the first order, Kepler and Newton, to place the doctrine of Copernicus amongst the undisputed theories of science. Why all this time? To ascertain by calculation the consequences of the new doctrine, to compare these consequences with a mass of facts that were continually accumulating, and thus, by scientific demonstration, to contend against the prejudices which cling to ancient ideas, and the imprudent decisions of

¹ *Les Fondateurs de l'astronomie moderne*, by Joseph Bertrand, page 57 of the third edition.

² “Pascal always avoided giving his opinion on the system of Copernicus, not because he feared the Inquisition, as Condorcet thoughtlessly said, but because his mind was not made up.”—M. Faugère’s Note, vol. ii., page 64, of his edition of Pascal.

“Pascal seems to admit positively (in the passage to which M. Faugère’s note refers) that the heavens turn round the earth.”—M. Havet’s Note, p. 306 (first edition), of his edition of Pascal.

the theologians of the Index, and still further against the weight of appearances which the new doctrine happened harshly to oppose. What sustained the confidence of the partisans of Copernicus in this memorable conflict? Study its history in the original documents, and you will see that their confidence was sustained by a serious faith in the wisdom of the Author of the universe, by a profound persuasion that God, being, according to the expression of Copernicus, the best of workmen, chooses the simplest ways. The three great founders of modern astronomy, Copernicus, Kepler, and Newton, were all of them, in the fullest acceptation of the term, worshippers of God. It is a glorious page in the history of the human mind. Men seek sometimes to forget it, but it is not in any one's power to erase it.

We have just established, by a celebrated example, the nature of a scientific proof; we enter now upon the special subject of our study.

We have to deal with a great question. We want to explain, not the movement of the heavenly bodies, but that fatal movement of the human soul which inclines it to Evil. A solution has been offered us; a solution very generally admitted in current philosophy, the individualist solution. On comparing it with facts, it appeared to us insufficient, and we sought another. Where have we found it? Like Copernicus, in an old book; but in a book which has this peculiarity, that it has never ceased to be read, that it is read more every day in all parts of our globe, and has passed into a living tradition, of the contents of which we are unceasingly reminded. This solution is, in my opinion,

the solution of the future. Old as a tradition, and to the science by which that tradition is uttered and vindicated, it is new to philosophy properly so called. Now, Gentlemen, should 144 years be needed to establish the proof of it, would there be ground for astonishment? Would it be surprising should as many years be required to attain to a scientific explanation of the state of the human soul as to explain the course of the stars? To study the proposed solution, follow out its consequences, compare it with carefully-observed facts, and so, if true, obtain a confirmation of it, may be a long task, and one in which you may all take part. In fact, and, believe me, I am not addressing you in terms of foolish flattery, it is the common sense of mankind which in the last resort must judge of scientific theories respecting human nature; not that superficial common sense which judges according to first appearances, and mistakes current prejudices for truths; but that serious, profound common sense, the result of reflection, which, in course of time, discerns and brings to light the fundamental laws of the human mind, or reason as God made it. If a superficial and thoughtless common sense is the bane of science, true common sense, in which human nature discovers itself, is the legitimate judge of all the attempts of philosophers to account for the state of mankind.

In order to accomplish the task to which I invite you, the first thing you have to do is to observe and reflect. The observation of moral phenomena requires neither a laboratory nor costly instruments; every one always carries with him the soul which is its object, and reason

which is its instrument. To aid your study, you can avail yourselves of the labours of writers who have attempted to solve the problem now before us. I shall only name a few. The *Pensées de Pascal* should be of good service. If you strip Pascal's work of some hard sayings of Jansenism which will offend you; if you remove from it a few extravagant fancies written over the immortal characters which have preserved his writing, and which he would have revised and perhaps modified, had he published his writings himself, you will there find the proofs of this assertion:—When the state of the human heart is made the subject of attentive study, no satisfactory explanation of it can be found except in the doctrine of the fall. Among our contemporaries, I will mention two whose writings may be useful to you (I have the right to suppose so, since I have profited, and profited largely, by them myself):—Professor Julius Müller,¹ and my honourable friend, Professor Charles Secrétan.² Having made these explanations as to the nature of the proof, I come to the proof itself.

¹ *Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde*, 2 volumes in 8vo, Breslau, 5th edition, translated in Clark's Foreign Theological Library, by Rev. W. Urwick, 2 vols., 1868.

² *La Philosophie de la liberté*. Paris, Auguste Durand, 2nd edition, 1866. *La raison et le Christianisme*; Lausanne, Meyer, 1863. *Recherches de la Méthode qui conduit à la vérité sur nos plus grands intérêts*; Neuchâtel, Leidecker, 1857. This last volume contains, in an appendix, a dissertation on *humanity and the individual*, which is of the first importance in reference to the subject treated of in this fifth lecture. There are also some fragments of a recent discussion on the question of sin, and the whole forms an instructive collection.

II. EXPOSITION OF THE PROOF.

A scientific proof, as we have just said, may demand considerable time. But the partizans of any doctrine may with equal right appeal to the future; and this appeal to the future proves nothing except the confidence which every one reposes in his own opinion. Now science could not take into consideration the numberless ideas which may arise in the minds of men. In order to render a supposition worthy of serious consideration and investigation, it is indispensable to show at once that it accounts for some great facts, as Copernicus, for example, showed directly that his theory accounted for the succession of day and night, and the variation of the seasons. We will, first, reproduce our assertion; next we will endeavour to offer a weighty argument in its favour, which though not a complete demonstration, is, nevertheless, something towards it.

In presence of the perfect moral law, we discover a principle of Evil in the hearts of all, that is to say, in the human heart. This principle of Evil is essential to humanity. We are not all thieves and criminals; there are men whom the instinct of modesty and the law of chastity preserve from the evil suggestions of sensual passion; there are men who practise temperance; some are generous and compassionate; but a principle of Evil exists in all, because we are all naturally inclined in a direction contrary to the law. The moral law requires that each individual shall have for its object, for its fundamental aim, the Good of all, in which every one will find his own legitimate share. From the

point of view of social morality, which we have recognised as legitimate, a man is called virtuous who uses his liberty as he thinks proper, without directly injuring the rights of others; but one may be virtuous, after a fashion, and in the eyes of society, without being good in the eye of the law, because the law does not simply interdict an infringement of the rights of others, such as theft, murder, slander, but requires of each individual his personal consecration to the general good of moral and intelligent society. Now, when we study the human soul, we observe a tendency, essential to it in the present state of things, to an inordinate love of self, which is the very root of Evil. Pascal expressed this thought in these terms:—"We are born unrighteous, for every one is self-seeking. This is against all order; we ought to seek the general good; and this selfish tendency is the beginning of all disorder."¹ That is my position. I do not say that we are all open wrong-doers; but I assert, that there is in every man a principle of selfishness, which is the essential nature of sin. Whence comes this evil principle? From an act of humanity, of which we are all members, an act which has corrupted the human heart, as it exists in each of us. Each of us, as an individual, is only personally responsible for his personal acts, or, to speak more exactly, for the personal part of his acts. But each of us, inasmuch as he is man, is jointly and severally (*solidairement*) responsible for the fall of the human race. This doctrine, as we have already admitted, gives great offence to a certain kind of common sense; and

¹ Edition Faugère, vol. ii., p. 171.

the question is whether the common sense it offends is that superficial kind which is taken with appearances, or that profound common sense which is the expression of human reason, and the judge of truth. The following considerations will help us to decide this point. We hasten to point out a certain great fact, which our theory explains so well, that, by this explanation alone, it shows itself worthy of serious examination. I select, as my proof, the fact of a double nature in man, a fact which is the principal datum of the problem we are studying.

Consider the process of development in a human being. An infant comes into the world. How does the soul manifest itself when, in the course of the development of the body, it makes its appearance? The child, before it has a thought, so far, at least, as we know, is brought into contact with the world of mind, by the direct and immediate organs of feeling, the look and tone of its mother. Before it understands, it feels; it feels love, and it is by the heart that it makes its entrance into the world of mind. By and by, putting speech into its lips, its mother connects it with the universal tradition. It accepts this tradition, which is for its understanding what its mother's milk is for its body, and thus it enters into fellowship with mankind. The child then begins to believe in Good and truth. And one of the sublimest sayings ever heard on earth has proposed as a model to grown-up men the simple faith of the child, which doubts neither the love nor the word of its mother. Next comes youth; and youth is the period of noble enthusiasm, high aspiration, and holy ardour.

To be pure, and brave, and of a lofty mind,
With faith in purity,

as Victor Hugo says.¹

Now, Gentlemen, I speak to those of you whose soul has been penetrated by sweet, but melancholy poetic feeling. If you want to weep, do not waste your tears on the rose that so quickly fades, on the passing stream, the falling leaf, the departing spring, or the soft wind, that goes and returns no more; keep them for those fair human flowers, too often, alas! withered before they open,—the purity of childhood, and the holy ardour of youth. From the beginning, the devouring worm is there. Good shows itself; but it is

Like fruit pluck'd off before it is half-grown,
Or bloom on which a with'ring wind has blown.²

See what grown-up men think. Let us listen again to Victor Hugo:—

Oh! when that sweet past, when that age without stain,
With its white robe on which love's traces remain,
Comes again in our way,
We fondly hang o'er it, and shed bitter tears
On the shreds of youth's fancies, faded with years,
Which survive to this day!³

Thus the poet mourns. Others speak with a bitter smile of the fancies of childhood and the illusions of youth. An evil nature was there from the beginning; it has developed itself, and triumphed over the good. It is often said that the purity of childhood, and the

¹ O my love-letters! in the *Feuilles d'automne*.

² *Athalie*, Act I., Scene 2.

³ O my love-letters!

elevated and generous tendencies of youth, are tarnished by contact with our evil world, as if all Evil came from without. But whence, then, does this evil world draw its recruits? How could these pure children, formed into a community, become men who are anything but good? In reality, childhood is not pure, and youth is not holy, but perhaps there is not any human being, who, at the opening of life, has not dreamt of purity, love, and holiness. Before we do Evil we see Good.

When the will developes into self-consciousness, and the man takes possession of himself, he finds a double nature present in him. This is why the smile which the sight of a little child calls up is so often tinged with melancholy. Our fears for this young actor on life's stage have respect not merely to the various accidents of life; but we have a presentiment of the conflict and trouble which await this as yet innocent will in its inevitable struggles with the development of a corrupt nature. It would be easy to multiply quotations in support of these thoughts. I might cite the Apostle Paul, and for those who would not regard him as an authority, the Latin poet Ovid. I might cite the Christian Racine, and for others the Greek Euripides; for others Voltaire. I should find everywhere in literature the admission of this twofold nature which exists in each of us. We discern an order in which our better nature delights, and we groan under the heavy load of a disorder which weighs us down. Lord Byron says:—

Our life is a false nature—'tis not in
The harmony of things,—this hard decree,
This uneradicable taint of sin,

This boundless upas, this all-blasting tree,
 Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
 The skies which rain their plagues on man like dew—
 Disease, death, bondage—all the woes we see—
 And worse, the woes we see not—which throb through
 The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.¹

A single sentence from Pascal sums up all these thoughts. "There are two natures in us, one good, the other bad."² Not to multiply quotations, I prefer to appeal directly to your experience. There are two natures within us, and the struggle between them often rends our hearts, you all know it.

Our theory explains this great fact. Every time a new individual, proceeding from, and representing the life of humanity, makes his appearance in the world, the true end of liberty is shown him in his conscience. The golden dream is repeated, a glimpse is caught of the celestial Eden. This is the man of God's creation, the good nature, the primitive constitution of the soul, which shews itself at the opening of life. The other and evil nature is the man of humanity, the sad creation of the creature, the result of the common fall. We are able then to explain the presence of the two natures.

We are also able to explain why, in the development of life, the evil nature predominates. In fact, it follows directly from the idea of the fall, that the human will is not in its normal condition. Liberty, as we have said, grows into true freedom by embracing Good; but the will becomes weak, and perishes by surrendering itself

¹ *Childe Harold*, Canto fourth, cxxvi.

² Edition Faugère, vol. ii., page 89.

to Evil ; because Good is our law, whilst Evil is foreign and opposed to the constitution of our soul. Man possesses the inestimable privilege of liberty, which renders him capable of Good and happiness ; but in himself he is empty, and has no other alternative than either to become the free servant of righteousness, by the practice of Good, or the slave of sin, by surrendering himself to Evil. The rebellion of mankind has resulted, then, not only in a corruption of the human heart, by making it the seat of evil suggestions, but, further, in a paralysis of the will.

Our solution accounts, then, for the evil principle which observation discovers in the heart. What other solution can you think of which does so ? Evil is there ; it is essential to humanity, and the consideration of wills which belong to history (*des volontés historiques*), does not account for its existence. Whence does it come ? Will you make Evil necessary ? That is to deny it ; so doing, you do not solve the problem, but destroy one of its terms. Will you refer Evil to an eternal principle ? That is dualism, and human thought has reached a point of development at which it refuses to discuss dualism. What remains then ? Will you seek the origin of Evil in God ? You cannot. It must be sought then in some act of humanity. There is the substance of my proof. I consider every solution of the problem worthy of serious consideration, which clears God of the responsibility of Evil, without having recourse to the idea of a nature of things which would be a second principle co-eternal with God ; but besides that which I propose to you I know of no other that has this charac-

ter; for this reason I embrace it and hold to it, until the discovery of some new light on the subject which I do not suspect.¹

I have said, from the outset:—Good is that which ought to be, it is identical with the Divine will; Evil is that which ought not to be, it is contrary to the Divine will. The test with me of all theories in the branch of study which we are now pursuing is: Do they maintain these two definitions? It is my rule to reject every doctrine which destroys the moral law or faith in the holiness of God. Is there any solution besides that which is offered you which upholds the moral law and God, while it explains all the facts which observation discloses? Find it, if you can.

But perhaps you will say, the moral law and God are theories; and our object is not to find a doctrine which justifies preconceived theories, but one that explains facts. Let us analyse this thought; and, underneath what you call theories, let us go directly to facts. The conception of moral law is nothing but the expression of a fact; this fact is the feeling of obligation, the consciousness of duty. Our faith in the holiness of God also is only the expression of a fact; this fact is the feeling, the necessity of adoration. Try to suppress the

¹ The doctrine of the individual pre-existence of souls (see note on page 156) seeks for the origin of Evil in the acts of humanity; for this reason it maintains intact the idea of God, and the authority of conscience. Only it admits (and this is its peculiarity) that the common rebellion of the race is a collection of anterior individual acts of rebellion. This solution does not contradict that which I defend. On the contrary, it implies it in all its essential elements.

moral obligation which is the basis of all moral and social order; try to suppress the instinct of adoration which is the basis of all religion; silence the voice which, in view of Good, expresses approbation, and in view of Evil, blame; silence the voice which, in the presence of some startling injustice, raises, often even in those who think they have denied God, its appeal to a supreme justice; silence these voices if you can, and we shall be obliged to admit that the moral law and God are simply theories. But you cannot efface from the soul the consciousness of duty and the feeling of a divine order, because these are fundamental elements of our nature. To maintain the moral law and the holiness of God, is to maintain two ideas which are the direct and immediate expression of facts.

We here come across a science which treats with disdain facts of this order, which it designates and disparages by the name of *matters of feeling* (*d'affaires de sentiment*). French positivism said the other day, by one of its principal exponents, M. Littré, that science only takes cognizance of matter and the properties of matter.¹ German materialism declares to us, through Professor Büchner, "that it is impossible long to resist the force of facts."² Now, in the opinion of these writers, conscience, the need of adoration, and, in a general way, all spiritual phenomena are not facts; there are no realities but those which are revealed to our senses. Were it said, the science of matter only

¹ *La Philosophie positive*, reviewed, vol. i. p. 21.

² *Force and Matter*: preface.

takes cognizance of matter and its properties, the announcement might be added to the catalogue of truths contained in the song of M. de la Palisse; but they mean us to admit that the science of matter and its properties is the whole of science. Does nothing exist but matter and properties of matter? Let us see. The properties of matter only exist in matter, which exists itself only under the conditions of form and weight. Will you then tell me what is the form of honour, and what is the exact weight of infamy? what microscope will enable us to estimate the geometrical dimensions of self-devotion, and to measure in fractions of tenths of an inch the length of selfishness? What a confusion of ideas men must summon to their aid, and how they must mystify themselves before they can succeed in extinguishing the natural light which lighteth every man coming into the world, to the point of admitting that vice and virtue, honour, honesty, self-devotion, esteem, contempt, blame, praise, admiration, horror, are matter or properties of matter! Let us adopt the declaration of Dr Büchner, for materialism which puts it into our hands delivers to us in this way, after signing it, the sentence of its own condemnation. "It is impossible long to resist the force of facts." This is why humanity will never consent to erase from the scheme of science those realities which are the very manifestation of its life, realities of which man has a more direct knowledge than he has of matter; for matter only reveals itself to his senses on condition of the presence and activity of his spiritual nature. Lord Byron says:—

'Tis a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought.¹

You will hear it said that the science of our age has an increasing tendency to materialism. I rather think that it is on the point of leaving it, and that the darkness complained of is only that darkness at the close of night which deepens just before the dawn.² As far as you are concerned, Gentlemen, have I not the right to instance the eager interest with which you have met for the study of the Problem of Evil, this problem of the conscience and the heart, which is at once the torment and the glory of the human mind? Have I not a right to say that, by assembling in such large numbers within this building, you have openly declared, with a distinctness that is almost solemn, that in your opinion, the conscience and heart of man are not subjects unworthy of the serious study of reason?

III. EXAMINATION OF DIFFICULTIES.

Let us now enter upon the examination of the difficulties raised by the solution now before us. We propose to find, in a train of thought which will satisfy reason, the support and safeguard of conscience. Now, at first sight, our solution seems equally repugnant to

¹ *Childe Harold*, fourth Canto, cxvii.

² M. Felix Ravaisson has lately pointed out in contemporaneous philosophy "a general movement whereby thought tends to predominate once more, and higher than ever, over the doctrines of materialism."—*La Philosophie en France, au dix-neuvième Siècle*, page 265.

reason and conscience. Let us begin with the difficulties it offers to reason.

It is impossible, it is said, to conceive of sin in a state of innocence. That *we* should do wrong is easily explained, because we are beset by evil suggestions arising out of our own hearts; we are exposed to the temptations of sensuality and vanity in all their various forms. Evil being in our hearts, we can understand how we yield to its allurements; but take away Evil from the heart, and you will never explain how the will can turn aside from Good. Good, in fact, exercises of itself an attraction. To counterbalance this attraction, there must needs be a temptation arising out of pre-existent Evil. Without a temptation, the fall cannot be explained; and to admit a primitive state of innocence is to exclude all temptation, and, consequently, the possibility of Evil. Such is the first difficulty presented for our examination.

I do not intend to reply to this objection by giving an abstract definition of liberty, by saying that the will being free may, by virtue of that very freedom, decide for Evil, without any solicitation. I admit that in the absence of all temptation sin is inexplicable. What then have I to do? I must show that, with entire purity of heart, there exists a temptation inherent in the will, and which cannot be suppressed without suppressing the will itself; so that a free will being supposed, along with a heart absolutely pure, there will exist that temptation, but that alone. Now that temptation does exist. What is it? The temptation of liberty.

A free created power is conscious of itself as a power,

as a principle of action ; but, as a creature, it is not, and cannot be, absolutely independent ; it finds itself in presence of the universal law, or of God, whose will that law expresses. Now, from this very situation there arises for the created power a temptation to disregard the consequences of its position as a creature, and become a law to itself by rejecting the law which subjects it to God. It is the temptation of simple rebellion. Is such a temptation unintelligible ? By no means. Is it impossible ? So far from this, it actually exists in us. The temptation of rebellion, pure and simple, is veiled, and, as it were, smothered under the enormous mass of temptations proceeding from the heart ; and when we do evil, it is more frequently because we allow ourselves to yield to the impulses of a depraved nature. We cannot, however, refuse to admit, though it may play no great part in our life, the seductiveness of independence in itself. Look at this case. You wish to do a certain act. Some one, who has no legitimate power over you, comes and commands you in arrogant terms to do the very thing which you are desirous of doing. What happens ? Any one of you almost would rebel against this assumption of authority ; and perhaps (I do not say that you would act wisely, but you would act naturally) you would give up doing what you desire, and do something else for which you have no wish, simply to assert your independence. In the supposed case your resistance is legitimate, because it has reference to a commandment which partakes of the nature of oppression. But this spirit of independence exists equally in regard to the legitimate authority of con-

science and of the law of God. This is so true that many young people, who would reject with disgust certain low temptations were they directly presented to them, become the victims of the diabolical machinations of those who excite their independence of spirit in order gradually to bring them to do what was in the first instance opposed to their natural inclination. The forbidden fruit has the flavour of rebellion. Take away in thought that temptation, and Evil is no longer possible. But where Evil is no longer possible, liberty ceases to exist. The elementary form of liberty, with which it must begin in order to rise to that full liberty in which the possibility of Evil is annihilated, this elementary form of liberty supposes choice. Take away choice between obedience and rebellion, and the creature of your thought is no longer a free being. It is sometimes asked, Why did not God make the creature incapable of sin, that is to say, *necessarily* good? It is forgotten that necessity excludes liberty; that where there is no liberty there is neither Good nor Evil; so that the idea of a creature necessarily good really implies a contradiction.

The primitive fall is explained, then, by a temptation which is the only one inherent in a free power, the only one, also, which can be transmitted to an innocent creature, or which can find anything to answer to it in a will allied to a pure heart; and the offer of this temptation is: "Thou shalt be thine own God." Other temptations can only come after this, and as the consequences of a primary compliance of the free power with the temptation inherent in liberty itself. Therefore

when Milton, intending to trace the transmission of Evil to its original source, explains the revolt of the rebellious archangel as the desire of a power that wanted to be a law to itself, free from the control of the Master of the universe, he shows himself at once a good philosopher and a great poet.¹

You will say, now, There is then, after all, Evil at the very origin of things, Evil inherent in the creature as a creature! No, not Evil, but the possibility of Evil, a possibility which is, once more, the condition of created liberty. Liberty supposes Evil as possible, and contains a temptation, without which liberty would not exist; but the cause of the actual realization of Evil exists nowhere else than in the will which rebels against law. If you were in danger of falling into any confusion in this respect, I should refer you to a saying of Shakespeare's:—

'Tis one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall.²

There is, then, a temptation inherent in liberty, independent of any evil inclination of the heart. Our solution is in no way absurd. On the contrary, it is perfectly reasonable; and if a sufficient amount of attention be given to it, it becomes perfectly clear. I wish I were able to say as much of the point which is now to come before us.

When the possibility of the fall of a free being in a state of innocence is admitted, a new and more for-

¹ See the *Paradise Lost*, at the beginning.

² *Measure for Measure*, Act ii., scene 1.

midable difficulty than the first presents itself as a barrier to the reason. We have already said, but it is expedient to repeat it, that the solution proposed for our examination is not that a first man, or first human pair, incurs the guilt of a purely individual fault, and that other individuals, truly and absolutely *others*, bear the consequences of a fault they did not commit. Thus understood, the solution is bad. It is said of an ancient conqueror, that for him to show himself was to conquer. We might say of this doctrine, that it has only to be understood to be rejected. The solution which we are examining is precisely this: it asserts that we all participate in the common fall, and that this participation, though not individual, is nevertheless real; it is humanity which has rebelled and bears the consequences of its rebellion. It is only thus that our doctrine is reconcilable with justice; or, to speak more properly, our doctrine alone enables us to reconcile the facts which experience reveals to us with the idea of justice. There are not two kinds of justice; and it is one of the most serious faults that can be charged upon Pascal that he declared, though it were only by the way, that there could be two kinds of justice, that of man and that of God. There is but one justice, that of God, and its ray enlightens us in proportion as we perceive its brightness. We appeal from the injustice of man to the justice of God; but to insist on a distinction between the justice of God and the justice of conscience, would be to plunge into atheism or fanaticism. Our argument, then, does not turn upon the idea of justice; there is but one kind of

justice, that of which we read a definition in Cicero: "Giving to every one what belongs to him." Our argument turns upon this point: Are human individuals distinct from each other in an absolute sense? Or is there not rather in every man both a personal existence and the existence of humanity? We do not mean that humanity is a being apart from individuals; but we maintain that every man unites in himself two distinct but inseparable realities, and presents himself in this way under a double aspect—in so far as he is himself in his personal existence, and in so far as he is man by the presence of humanity in him. With these explanations we approach the difficulty.

The question is, how we can be made responsible for the common fall of our race. You will not object that we have no recollection of the original rebellion, for the absence of memory is not a difficulty. Every day we undergo the consequences of acts, perfectly voluntary, of which we have lost all recollection. What constitutes the objection is not the absence of memory, but the absence of existence. If the human race is fallen, it certainly fell at a period when we had not appeared on the stage of life; and, with regard to the view which I am propounding, you may be tempted to say with the lamb in Fontaine's fable:—"How could I have done it, when I was not born?"¹ Did you not exist? Not in any sense? Is that perfectly certain? The question being just the same in regard to every living creature, let us examine it in the case of a plant. I take a fir-tree that is living in the forest at the present day.

¹ The Wolf and the Lamb.

Whence does it come? Its actual material came from the soil and the atmosphere, through a series of motions and transformations, the secret of which it is the aim of natural science and chemistry to explain. Not long ago, in a public assembly,¹ Professor de Candolle informed us of the recent advance of botanical science, that it is now able to explain, by the laws of natural science and chemistry, the development of a plant from the moment when germination commences. He told us how the growth of a plant is accounted for; but on what condition? On condition that the plant be already there, living in its germ. Now, the germ of the plant is not the result of the motions of matter; a living germ is not an aggregate of molecules like a stone or a crystal. Prior to its development, then, the fir-tree which I am considering was already existing in its germ. Whence came this germ? Do you think that it was an immediate creation of God? Do you think that, every year, God creates all the seeds of the fir-tree, and all the grains of corn? On the supposition that the creative power forms each germ by an act of its omnipotence, the facts that the seeds of the fir come upon firs, and not upon oaks, and that acorns are not found in sugar-cane plantations, would be purely accidental. Perhaps you have never thought of this question; but reflect and adopt your own opinion. You do not believe, you have never believed, and you could not believe, with the spectacle of nature before you, that each living germ is the immediate result of a fresh creative act. The germ

¹ At the meeting of the Swiss Society of Natural Sciences, assembled at Geneva, in August 1865.

of the fir existed, then, in the fir which produced it; and in the same way, going back from fir to fir, up to the origin of the species. But how and in what sense did it exist? Philosophers say that the germ exists *potentially* (that is their term) in the life of the individual which produces others of its kind. But what do we mean by this word *potentially*? Do we attribute a will to the plant, and think that it creates the germs? We think nothing of the kind. The germ exists before it appears; and what is called in this case the *potentiality* does not create, but merely manifests what was there. How are we to conceive of it? Shall we say that all living individuals exist in an infinitely minute form in a primary germ; and maintain that if a primary fir-seed, the origin of all firs past, present, and future, were opened, and placed under a microscope of infinite power, all the firs in the world might be seen enclosed in it as in a box? You smile, Gentlemen, and if the indefinite production of living creatures is conceded, metaphysics justifies your smile. In fact, there would have to be in the primary germ an indefinite number of such; but every number being essentially definite, an indefinite number is no number at all. The fir-tree which is the subject of our study, existed, then, a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand years ago, it matters not which, at the origin of its species. Let us observe, in passing, that the number of true species does not concern our point, and that the recent disputes relative to the classification usually adopted have no bearing on our discussion. Whatever be the number of truly distinct species, our reasoning remains the same. The fir-tree existed in its

species before its individual manifestation, and we have two reasons for the assertion. The first is that it exists, that it is not a simple aggregate resulting from the conglomeration of particles of matter, and that we do not admit that it was created individually; it must, then, have existed from the origin of its species.

The second reason is drawn from considerations which the systematic mind of an English naturalist, Mr Darwin, has set forth in the clearest light. Mr Darwin has drawn attention very forcibly to the variations brought about in natural species by the action of external circumstances prolonged through a series of ages. To account for the confirmation and actual life of our fir-tree, it would be necessary, perhaps, to go back to the influence of soil, climate, and of astronomical and geological events, which took place thousands and thousands of years ago. Our fir-tree was modified at that period; it must, then, have existed, for it could only be modified on condition of its being in existence. But how did it exist? How does a plant exist in its species? With a form and material substance? Not so, unless it exists complete in a minute form, a supposition which we have set aside. Nevertheless, it is impossible for us to comprehend the existence of a plant otherwise than under the twofold condition of form and material substance. The fir-tree, then, existed in a manner which is incomprehensible to us. Here is the mystery of life, and may we not exclaim with Voltaire?—

Strange truths!

O wondrous blending of contradictions!¹

¹ *Le Desastre de Lisbonne*, commencing, "O tristes vérités!"

Let us now return to our point. The tree, before it manifested itself in its individual existence, existed in its species; but in a way which we do not understand. In the same way, a man, before his personal appearing, existed in humanity. How? In a way that we do not understand. We only understand the existence of a plant as it has form and material substance, and reason nevertheless leads us to admit that it exists in its species, without either. We do not understand the existence of a man except in the form of an individual; still we must admit that he has another mode of existence in humanity. The question is the same as in the case of the fir-tree. John is twenty-two years old, Alfred thirty-five, and you, Sir, are sixty-four. That is your age as an individual; but as regards your age as man, it is the age of humanity, and you are all very much older than you thought.

The difficulty suggested in reference to our solution by the thought that we did not exist at the time of the supposed fall of the human race, disappears as soon as we admit the existence of each of us in humanity, not as an individual, but as man. But in order to admit the reality of species, we must resist the entire weight of appearances, and, in addition, the weight of a philosophy which the more readily commends itself to acceptance that appearances are in its favour. Besides, we need to resign ourselves (which always implies an effort) to a view of the pure reason which affirms the reality of species without being able to call in the aid of the imagination. Without going very deeply into the subject, I content myself with stating that some of the

most illustrious representatives of reason have seen the difficulty in quite a different sense from that in which it appears to us. Individuals pass away, the species remain. Where are the oaks which shaded our fathers? Where, in a few years, will be the birds that sing in our woods, the oxen that draw our ploughs? All these perish and disappear from the face of the globe; but the species remain—the oak, the ox, the horse, and man, are preserved, notwithstanding the ceaseless destruction of the individuals which represent them. Several philosophers have been so forcibly struck by this consideration that the reality of the species being, in their view, the first certainty, the existence of individuals became the problem.

Am I wrong, Gentlemen, in supposing that some of you, perhaps many, accuse me of very bad reasoning? “Comparison is not argument. What has this fir-tree to do here? That we have existed from the origin of humanity, in a metaphysical sense, just as every living thing exists in its species, may be true enough; but this metaphysical doctrine does not touch the question, for, in our case it is a question of moral responsibility, which is not the case with fir-trees.” Certainly we did not exist before our birth in a form which allowed of our being responsible agents. It still remains, then, that, in a moral point of view, we are suffering from a fault not our own; and that is unjust. Here is, in addition to the difficulties of the reason, the objection of the conscience; it eminently deserves our attention.

The substance of the objection is, that acts of will are

exclusively individual, and that the responsibility attending them is of the same character. Let us examine these two ideas, remembering that the individual character of will and responsibility must be preserved perfectly intact, even when not exclusive. While concerned to exhibit one aspect of a twofold truth, we will not, in any degree, deny the other, or cast it into shade. Is it true that the will manifests itself only in a purely individual form? There are some reasons for doubting it; I will point out three.

If we listen to lovers, the feeling which animates them has the effect of fusing two wills into one, so that the will ceases in some degree to be purely personal as long as it is one through the concurrence of two souls. Men who know nothing of the ardour of passion may be tempted to reject the testimony of lovers; but serious writers, earnest observers of human nature, equally agree that the deeper feelings of love and friendship diminish, in some measure, the distance between souls, and take away from the will, not indeed its individual nature, but the exclusive character of that individuality. That is my first remark, here is the second.

When a man advances alone against an armed foe, and braves certain death to secure an advantage to his own people, he is proclaimed a hero. In storming a fort, and in many other military operations, an entire corps is sent to certain death, as food for powder, and, in many cases, the victims know what awaits them. These poor fellows fall by hundreds, and their bodies are thrown into some unknown ditch. Their conduct is no longer heroic, because there were a number of them. None of

them would have had the courage to do singly what all have done together, and perhaps without hesitation. The fact is known, and surprises no one. We say it is the power of emulation, example, and community of action. Doubtless it is all this; but what does all this mean? It means that the concurrence of wills creates a force which would not exist in these same wills were they isolated. In the accomplishment of a collective act, there is therefore a power which is manifested in each individual, the source of which, nevertheless, is not purely individual. Were it not so, individuals in union would not possess any force greater than that of their personal wills. Every one knows that it is otherwise; every one knows, though he may not always consider the bearing of the fact, that the concurrence of forces is a power.

My third remark is this:—In the phenomena of habit we see a nature created by the will. It is the individual who first of all makes the nature, and the nature afterwards determines the acts of the individual. (I borrow these expressions from St Augustine). Now, in the power of habit we have an example of a will which no longer manifests itself in an individual form, for the individual feels this power of habit, which, however, proceeded in the first instance from himself, as something foreign to him; and the nature formed by habit is hereditarily transmitted from one individual to others, and thus loses the personal character of its origin.

I give you, Gentlemen, these hints, which it will be easy for you to follow up by applying them to other

examples. There are a number of obscure moral phenomena, little studied, which give us a glimpse, as through a fog, of an element of will, the form of which is not exclusively individual.

Responsibility invites corresponding reflections. The idea that responsibility is purely individual vanishes directly we reflect upon it. You influence one of your fellow-men by word, example, or look, and lead him into Evil. You perfectly understand that you are responsible for the culpable word, act, or look. But do you not see also that you are partly responsible for the act of the man whom you have caused to wander from the path of duty. Let me direct your attention to what are called in judicial matters extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances, which juries sometimes abuse, are a serious reality. Could you eliminate them from your moral judgments? A poor girl, born in the haunts of vice and brought up in the midst of infamy, is not guilty of immorality to the same degree as a girl well brought up would be. Does not a part of her fault belong to those who have corrupted her? If a youth, brought up in the habit of begging, which falsehood often transforms into theft, transgresses the laws of strict honesty, will he be as guilty as the son of a virtuous family who, before he yields to temptation, must trample under foot the precepts of his father and the example of his mother? Bad influences are often a just excuse; nobody disputes it. Now, to excuse one is always to accuse another; to extenuate the blame of an action by the consideration that it was done through bad advice and evil example, is just to transfer to the authors of

such bad advice and example that part of the responsibility which is taken away from the doer. There is, then, in one and the same act, a union of different responsibilities; responsibility is not purely individual. This is a serious consideration, and addresses itself directly to the conscience. Follow out the consequences of one of your acts or words. You incur guilt to-day, in such a place; your influence extends to others; and you become implicated in the responsibility of actions which will be committed far away, and after the lapse of a long time.

So far from being exclusively personal, responsibility, when one thinks of it, is seen to be a chain of many links well fitted to cast the mind into lengthened meditation. Xavier de Maistre, an eye-witness of the disasters of the retreat from Russia, relates the frightful lot which befell the French, and he adds—"I could never look on them without thinking of that accursed man who brought them into these extraordinary misfortunes."¹ I have no wish to blunt the point of this sharpened arrow. Buonaparte was, without doubt, chiefly responsible for the disasters of his army. But trace the origin of this great misfortune; ask what brought Buonaparte to power, what led him to seek military glory as a necessity of his position, and, without excusing his immeasurable ambition, you will see the responsibility extending itself along the lengthened chain and manifold interlacings of the threads of history.

Responsibility, and the will which is its condition,

¹ Letter of Xavier de Maistre, inserted in the *Correspondence diplomatique de Joseph de Maistre*; Paris, Michel Levy, 1861, vol. i., p. 296.

are not, then, facts of a purely individual nature. Every act is essentially personal in its accomplishment, but no act is exclusively personal in its origin. These considerations open the door which seemed closed against our solution. The imputation of the common fall wears an aspect of justice as soon as we admit that, while preserving our personal share of responsibility, we may participate in the collective responsibility of the human race.

It was the idea of justice which presented itself as an objection. If injustice existed, would it be on our doctrine that we should have to lay the blame? Not at all. The injustice would be in the facts, which our doctrine simply seeks to explain. This is easily seen in the light of the great law of human solidarity. One man suffers for the faults of another, or he enjoys the advantages resulting from the good actions of another. The distribution of blessings and calamities is not made exclusively according to individual merit. It is not our doctrine which affirms this; there are the facts; and no one can dispute their number and importance. I will appeal to the testimony of a justly celebrated man, interested in a class of ideas very different from that which detains our attention. I open the works of Frederic Bastiat. This economist investigates the laws of the production and distribution of wealth. Here are some of the thoughts which flow from his pen. He observes that the idea of solidarity, rejected by the philosophy of the eighteenth century, was the object of Voltaire's ridicule; and he continues—"But, though ridiculed by Voltaire, it is a fact no less indisputable than mysteri-

ous. Why is this man rich? Because his father was active, honest, laborious, and frugal; the father practised these virtues, the son reaps their reward. Why is that other man suffering, sick, feeble, timid, and unhappy? Because his father, gifted with a powerful constitution, abused it by debauchery and intemperance. There is not a man on earth whose condition has not been determined by myriads of facts with which the determinations of his own will had nothing to do. What I complain of to-day was, perhaps, caused by a caprice of my great-grandfather, &c., &c. Solidarity manifests itself on a still larger scale, and at distances inexplicably remote, when the relations of different nations, or of different generations of the same nation, are considered. Look at the public loans. We make war in obedience to barbarous passions; we destroy thereby valuable resources; and we find the means of laying the scourge of this destruction on our sons, who, perhaps, will hold war in abhorrence, and be unable to comprehend our hateful passions. The whole fabric of society is just an assemblage of joint responsibilities intertwined with each other. There is, then, naturally, to a certain extent, an indisputable solidarity between men. In other words, *responsibility is not exclusively personal.*"¹

Bastiat shows how the law of solidarity contributes to the progress of social harmony; but we must consider here the darker side of the subject. There exists a general law which observation increasingly verifies—the law of solidarity. And this law, clearly ascertained by

¹ *Harmonies Economiques*, chap. xxi., Solidarity. The quotation is abridged.

observation, is continually enlarged in its scope and results by civilization. The consequences of a war between savages scarcely pass beyond the forest which it stains with blood. In the civilized world, war cannot break out at any point without affecting the interests of the whole family of nations. The fact is so. It is and ought to be the motto of human justice to render to every individual his due, and to concentrate its punishment upon the head of the guilty alone. It is bound, as far as possible, to compass this, but it cannot perfectly accomplish it; the nature of things does not permit of it. Where is the being so isolated that the sword of the law can strike him, or justice stamp him with the seal of infamy, without causing others at his side to suffer? In vain do we wish to touch only the individual; individuals never stand alone; who touches one touches the other.

Solidarity is, then, a very general law. Do we deem it a bad law? Let our acts decide. Death has just smitten that dwelling. Visitors go. I am not speaking of visits of ceremony; but of a true friend who goes to the house of mourning. Why does he go there? That he may take his share of the grief of others; for if sympathy is consoling, it only solaces grief by sharing it, and as Alexander Vinet has said:—

Two hearts united may misfortune dare ;
 Both can at least sustain their equal share,
 And, when most sorely struck, the pain divide.¹

¹ Here is the complete poem:—

See this old oak prostrated by the storm,
 Stretched on the ground now lies its leafless form.

Compassion, then, is the realisation of the fact that one suffers on account of another. Is compassion a vicious element in the human heart? Is what we call a kind heart a bad heart? The Stoic philosophers thought so. They might be good and compassionate men, and in their writings they recommend the practice of benevolence; but, according to their doctrine, the truly wise man is he who wraps himself up entirely in himself, and becomes, according to their own expression, round and polished as a steel ball, on which no impression can be made. Can you think this, and number compassion among the bad qualities of the soul? You cannot. And self-sacrifice? Leonidas dies for Greece, and Winkelried sacrifices himself for Switzerland. Passing by celebrated men, this poor workman, who in his ordinary life hardly finds sufficient time for sleep, takes part of his nights, already too short, to forward the work of a companion enfeebled by disease. This poor mother labours night and day to pay the debts of her son, debts contracted perhaps in a life of dissipation. All devoted hearts, all who practise the virtue of self-sacrifice, bear the burden of others. Is it a bad thing?

It stood alone ; behold it at our feet.

See now these elms which intertwine their shade,
The north wind's fury they have both outstayed,
Since they were two, and for support could meet.

So when thy head in trouble is bent low,
Thou'lt surely yield beneath the tempest's blow
Unless some faithful friend stands by thy side.
Two hearts united may misfortune dare ;
Both can at least sustain their equal share,
And, when most sorely struck, the pain divide.

Observe this is precisely the fact characterised as unjust: one suffers for the sake of another.

But I anticipate your objection. You say, there is a sophism here. Self-sacrifice is good and noble because it is voluntary; but that one should suffer on account of another, without willing it, is a manifest injustice. My reasoning is not so bad as you think. The question is, whether the fact of one suffering for another, regarded in itself and independently of our intention, is good or bad. If it is bad in itself, our intention may be pure, but the object of our will is bad; what we will with a praiseworthy feeling is nevertheless an actual injustice. Compassion and self-sacrifice would in this case be instances of perverted conscience. Now, some men think, or at least say, that self-sacrifice is foolish; but you would not consent to establish it as a maxim of science, that the fulfilment of the law of charity is the expression of a perverted conscience. Then, not only does solidarity exist as a fact, not only does observation discover it as a fundamental law of human society, but we voluntarily practise this law whenever we enter the paths of charity, and this is good. My conclusion, then, is, that if it be good it must be just, for there is no goodness apart from justice. Let us explain what we mean. The question here concerns the absolute morality which binds us to the divine law, and not that social morality which establishes the rights of individuals in regard to each other. In the mutual relations of individuals it is characteristic of charity to outstep justice, to do voluntarily what cannot be claimed as a right. If a beggar asks your assistance as his right, you may in all

justice show him the door and shut up your purse. But, in regard to the perfect law, and as before God, we never, in the performance of duty, do anything more than we ought to do, or than is required by perfect justice. It is only in God that charity exceeds the demand of justice; or, to speak more exactly, in God there is no distinction between justice and charity, because He owes His creatures nothing but the voluntary debt of His free and eternal love. All that proceeds from God towards us is pure grace. All that proceeds from us, in regard to God and the law which is the expression of His will, is duty and justice. In a deep and true sense, then, the charity which bears the burdens of others is a manifestation of justice. But how can this be, on any other ground than that, not being distinct from each other in an absolute sense, there exists between us a bond, a fundamental union,—unless, that is, the human race forms a mysterious but real unity? Apart from this thought, there is no longer any justice in solidarity.

Does this reasoning appear too subtle? Here is a simpler argument. Human solidarity is a fact. It is not only an actual fact in this sense, that we derive suffering or enjoyment from the acts of our contemporaries; it is hereditary also; we undergo the good or evil consequences of actions done by past generations; and future generations will receive an inheritance which our conduct is preparing for them. These are facts of experience which are indisputable. Now, no one *justly* suffers the consequence of any acts but his own; such is the axiom of conscience. We must choose, then,

between these two ideas:—Either we suffer for the fault of beings from whom we are altogether distinct, who are other than ourselves in an absolute sense; and, in that case, injustice is at the base of the universe, since solidarity is a general fact. Or, indeed, the human race is bound together, under a diversity of individuals, by a real unity, so that a collective responsibility is in our case justly added to our personal responsibility. Such is the alternative which presents itself to our judgment, unless we give up the solution of the problem. To admit that the universe is founded on injustice does violence to reason and destroys conscience. We are then thrown back on the conception of a human unity, a collective responsibility; and we accept it, notwithstanding its obscurities, as the only idea which reconciles experience and reason, the realities of life with the utterances of conscience.

Individuals of the human race are distinct, but they are not separate. Isolation is the word of Cain; it is the hard saying which one day fell from J. J. Rousseau, when he wrote, "What does it matter to me what becomes of the wicked? I take little interest in their fate." Charity, the supreme law of the spiritual world, does not speak after the fashion of Cain and Rousseau. Charity practises two maxims. The first is this:—Let every one bear the consequences of his own acts, and never lay his faults on to others; this is the clear utterance of conscience. Charity agrees with it, for true charity is just, and it cannot be truly good without being just. The second maxim is this:—We are many, but we are nevertheless one. Here the heart is in

advance of the reason; and all we need in order to attain to the truth on this difficult subject is just to draw out the theory of the heart's practice. Pascal said:—"The heart has its reasons which the reason does not understand;" but this is the fault of reason, for it is an essential part of its task to attain to an understanding of the reasons of the heart. If you stop to look at a building in course of erection, and notice the different stones of which it is to be constructed laid about on the ground, you will often observe on these stones certain marks, intended to indicate their position in the complete building. Now, we are stones for a building, and the heart is the mark which indicates our destination. Our various individualities should unite to form a harmonious whole, that is, a unity. God intends us to be free and responsible persons, but He intends us to form a moral and intelligent society, which is as real as the individuals composing it, since it is as much the object of God's will as they are, and the will of God is the highest expression of what is and ought to be.

We have, then, to record and maintain two truths:—Our personal existence with all its consequences, of which the most important is, that no one can divest himself of the responsibility of his personal acts; and our collective existence with all its consequences, of which the most important is, that we ought to bear each other's burdens. One of these two truths, our own personality, we see perfectly, and, in many cases, we see it too much. The other is obscure; we do not clearly discern the spiritual edifice, with a view to which we have

our being, and in which the fundamental unity of our nature is to be realized. Why is this? I do not pretend to lift the veil entirely, but to raise it, if possible, a little. Is it not selfishness, which, as it is the essential form of sin, is also at the same time the essential cause of our error? Is there not in each of us a part of charity, namely, self-sacrifice, which somewhat enlightens our darkness? Do we not accept solidarity within the range of our love, and in proportion to its strength? The members of a united family accept and practise the solidarity which binds them together, without finding any matter for wonder in it. The citizen, who is animated by a true patriotism, never raises a question as to the rightfulness of the tie which binds him to his nation. Shall we not admit that in growing in charity we grow in truth, and that we shall succeed in understanding our common participation in the fall, in proportion as we accept the task set before each one of us, of being fellow-labourers in the common work of the elevation of mankind.

Our solution of the Problem of Evil contains two principal ideas: liberty and solidarity. Philosophy, up to the present time, has too often denied the rights of liberty, which alone constitute the reality of minds. The direction taken by a part of the modern world is in danger of leading men's minds into the opposite error, and of causing the law of solidarity, in which the existence of the community of mind finds expression, to be overlooked. The individual existence of a human being seems often to be confounded with an individualism which is contrary to the nature of things. "*Indivi-*

duality," says Vinet, "is not *individualism*. The latter refers everything to self, sees self in everything; individuality consists simply in a willingness to be oneself in order to be something. Individualism and individuality are two sworn foes: the first is the obstacle and negation of all society; the second is that to which society owes all its flavour, life, and reality."¹ We should separate ourselves from the evil current of mankind, and become personal, conscious beings, not with a view to remain isolated, but in order to enter freely into a truly spiritual community. Every one should become *himself*, not that he may keep himself to himself, but that he may devote himself to the common good, according to the will of the universal Father.

The socialists and the individualists, marshalled in two camps, are in conflict, in the schools and in public life, with the scattered members of the truth. In fact, the normal development of society always leads to the more complete formation of true individuals, for society is not a mere aggregate of units, but a spiritual organization, consisting of voluntary agents who are masters of themselves, and unite together for a common purpose. On the other hand, the individual, for whom an isolated existence is impossible, only develops according to his proper nature when he realizes through liberty the law of solidarity. Harmony, as Pythagoras used to say, is the word that solves the world's enigma.

We have, Gentlemen, a fine national motto which

¹ *Esprit d'Alexandre Vinet*, by Astié, vol. ii. pp. 223, 224. See also in the *Nouveaux discours sur quelques sujets religieux*, by A. Vinet, the last note of the discourse on the Good Samaritan.

speaks not to the hearts of the Swiss alone. When we are really serious, it moves the man within us to its profoundest depths, because it is the expression of the supreme law of the universe:—“*One for all; all for one.*”

SIXTH LECTURE.

The Battle of Life.

GENTLEMEN,—The title given to this lecture cannot have surprised any one. Who does not know that life is a battle? The greater part of mankind maintain a continual struggle simply to live, to procure daily bread for themselves and their families; they struggle against ever-threatening want. Others, free from the care of providing for their subsistence, are concerned to obtain place or employment, to make a fortune, or build up a reputation; they must triumph over their competitors, and surpass their rivals. We are all in pursuit of enjoyment, and in this pursuit we have to struggle every day with anxieties, sorrows, and discouragements. Such is our life; then we leave something to our children, a large or moderate fortune or our debts, a good or indifferent reputation, and we are carried to the grave. It is not of this conflict, the object of which is to obtain what is called prosperity and success, that we shall speak to-day. Nevertheless, what we shall speak of will be our every-day life; but considered from a special point of view; our interest is centred in that good fight the object of which is not worldly success, but the realization of the laws of Good.

The battle which we have to wage against Evil is not that which we have recognised as constituting part of the destiny of the spiritual creature, and which is the condition of regular and normal progress; it is not merely against the possibility of Evil that we have to contend. The Evil is there, real and powerful; it has its armies and strongholds; it has, above all, a citadel in the heart of each of us. Since Evil is real, there is something to destroy in the struggle we have to maintain, something to slay; and although the man who feels that he is doing his duty may enjoy peace, still undisturbed and lasting repose is not to be met with in a world in which disorder prevails. This is a fearful position; further, it often happens that we shut our eyes to the conditions of life, and try to persuade ourselves that there is not much to do. "Carelessness, idleness, love of luxury, above all, fear, trembling fear—these are the things which blind or corrupt the feeble consciences of so many men who like to lull themselves into a false security, crying 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'¹ They are afraid of toil, afraid of conflict, afraid of everything but what they ought to be afraid of. Let me tell you there is an eye whose glance falls from on high on these cowards like a curse. And for what do they think they were born? God has not put man upon this earth to rest in it as though it were his home, or to sleep away a few days in an idle dream. Time is not a gentle breeze which kisses and refreshes his brow as it passes by, but a wind which scorches and freezes him by turns, a storm

¹ Jeremiah vi. 14.

which carries his frail bark rapidly away, under a tempestuous sky, on to the rocks. He must awake, and labour at the oar; he must discipline his nature, and compel his will to submit to that inexorable order by which it is incessantly fretted and thwarted. Duty, stern duty, sits by his cradle, rises with him when he leaves it, and accompanies him even to the grave.”¹ These words of Lamennais present a strong and vivid picture of our condition.

You may have doubts, Gentlemen, as to the value of that solution of the Problem of Evil which I have proposed to you. It is not necessary, as I have already said, that you should accept the most difficult and mysterious part of that solution in order to enter into the considerations we take up to-day; it is sufficient that you admit that Evil ought not to be, and consequently that its general prevalence in no degree diminishes our obligation to destroy it. The destruction of Evil is the aim of the battle of life.

Whoever fights is a soldier; and every soldier must know his flag and receive the watchword. The flag which we must plant on the citadels of the enemy is Good. The watchword is triumph. The supreme Commander is He whose eternal will is identical with Good, because He is the very essence of it, God. Let us inquire what is to be our starting-point in the struggle against Evil, what ought to be our aim, what obstacle we shall encounter on our path, and, lastly, what is the true plan of the battle. The Starting-point — Aim after Good — the Rock — the

¹ *Affaires de Rome*. The Evils of the Church.

Plan of the Battle : such will be the order of our reflections.

I. THE STARTING-POINT.

What is the starting-point in the struggle against Evil? What are, if I may so speak, the terms of enlistment under the banner of Good? Have you not sometimes left your house with the intention of going to a particular place, and found that, under the influence of some absorbing thought or absence of mind, you have taken the wrong road? When, for example, you intended to go to Eaux-Vives, you have suddenly discovered that in some mechanical way you have taken the road to the Pâquis?¹ The moment you make this discovery, you see directly that to accomplish your purpose you must return, and execute what is called, in military language, a wheel round. The starting-point of the struggle against Evil is a movement of this nature. Since we are naturally selfish, our will is naturally inclined towards ourselves as though we might be our own end and proper centre. This path is bad and misleading, for selfishness is not the road to happiness. We have, then, to return, to be converted. Read, if you have not done so already, those *Recollections of a retired Officer*,² which were published lately in our city. You will see there that, in the retreat which followed the disastrous battle of Leipzig,

¹ The Eaux-Vives and the Pâquis are two suburbs of Geneva, situated on opposite banks of the Lake.

² "Souvenirs d'un Ex-Officiel," 1 vol., 12mo, Genève, 1867; Paris, librairie, Cherbulier.

a terrible host of *fricoteurs* was formed about the French army, then on the verge of dissolution. This name was given to soldiers who, abandoning the flag and discipline of their commanders, went wandering about, some with a view to pillage and the gratification of bad passions, others merely from idleness and cowardice, and who, leaving the army which was daily diminishing to extricate itself as it could, had taken for their motto: "Every one for himself." What had these men to do in order to come back to a state of order? It was necessary they should rejoin their flag, and place themselves again under lawful command; abandon the bad motto of "Every one for himself," and take this device, which alone can secure the safety of an army engaged in a hostile country: "Each for all, and all for each." We also, instead of being united in the struggle against Evil, are naturally disbanded; we each follow our own particular interest; we must rejoin the flag and place ourselves once more under the authority of the Commander. Now, what is the will of the supreme Commander, who is the Sovereign of the universe, and the universal Father? What He desires is not the exclusive Good of this man or that, of one or other of His children; He desires the Good of all, and that is what we should all desire; the Good of all, in which every one finds his share, for whoever forgets himself finds himself again. The renunciation of that selfishness which leaves us a prey to all the assaults of Evil, or which is rather itself the principle of Evil, in order to return to the supreme law of charity, is the starting-point of the battle. But this

starting-point is the goal of a course of events in the life of the soul to which we must now give our attention.

Human life begins with an impulse of the heart apart from the action of conscience. The man follows at first his inclinations, then he submits to the rule of those around him. The child is under the influence of his family, the man is under the influence of society. In this way he may live, without having any principle of action in himself, never doing anything but obey impulses from without, and exercising neither conscience nor will properly so called. Such a man, for example, if found amongst the Puritans of England or America, will be of grave deportment and serious speech, and will regulate all his conduct by exact and rigorous rule. Transport him into careless, light-hearted company, and the same man will act wholly different. Those who live thus, only following a current to which they offer no resistance, are not born to moral life; and, regarding them from this point of view, we may say of numbers of men already old that they are not yet born. In the greater number of cases, however, conscience makes itself heard in the early life of the heart; and conscience presents itself under two forms; it forbids:—thou shalt not; and it commands:—thou shalt.

The earlier manifestations of conscience present themselves generally under the first form—that of prohibition. Thou shalt not lie; thou shalt not steal. If a man has superior tastes, and a healthy temperament, if he has grown up in respectable society, he may claim to be living without violating, in any direct

or serious way, the restrictions of conscience. Thereupon he may think that he is good, or that, as he will put it, he wrongs nobody. But, while observing the prohibitions of the moral law, this man may be living only for himself. If he is satisfied with avoiding what is evil in the judgment of society, if he does not lay himself out directly for the attainment of Good, it is of no use to say that he wrongs nobody; in reality he wrongs everybody, because he does not employ for the common Good a strength which others need. His respectable life is only a respectable selfishness. Such a position, however, could not be maintained. If the strength which has been given us for the accomplishment of Good is not employed in the right way, it decays. No man vanquishes Evil simply by refusing to do it, and while continuing to live to himself; he only prevails over Evil, in any high and serious sense, by Good. Good is not merely a rule and a prohibition. It is a commandment which assigns a certain employment to our strength, and an end to our will; and it is here that the conscience manifests itself under its second form:—thou shalt.

Thou shalt do what? Good. What Good? All Good, without any exception; it is of the very nature of Good to be obligatory, and obligatory in its completeness. Now what is Good? In the full sense of the word, it is the plan of the Creator for the happiness of moral and intelligent society. To do Good, then, is to contribute order to the universe and secure the happiness of the world. Such is the end proposed to our efforts.

Let us pause here, that we may contemplate the pure light which this thought sheds over life. Let us take, for instance, the obligation to labour. Labour is a law of nature which presents itself first of all in the form of necessity. To one it is said:—Labour that you may avoid the want which is the misery of the poor; to another it is said:—Labour that you may avoid the *ennui* of the rich. To one it is said:—If you do not labour you will want bread to nourish your body, and your children will be hungry. To another:—If you do not labour you will want that joy which is the nourishment of the soul, and in your house, however well warmed, the heart of your children will be cold. Thus labour presents itself, first of all, as a necessity, as a law which, when violated, entails severe penalties. See now how this law is transformed when viewed in connexion with the idea of Good, of the consecration, that is, of all wills to the general happiness. Labour is the fundamental and universal law of the world of minds; because, in the case of a mind, of which free power constitutes the essential character, to live is to act. Now the concurrence of all their forces, each acting in its own place and in its legitimate direction, must produce a harmony resulting in the progress and growing improvement of society. When once this thought has taken possession of the mind, the labourer who rests a moment on his spade, the artisan who for a moment suspends his work, may say without pride (pride finds no support at the source of these lofty thoughts) that they are as necessary agents in the general progress of society as men who occupy positions

of the greatest distinction. The law of labour is then transfigured. *Must* is a hard word; *thou shalt* is a hard word, which becomes sublime in proportion as we penetrate its meaning; and this word becomes sweet when we perceive that goodness is the foundation of the commandment. Yes, Gentlemen, we must all do our part, one guiding the plough in the furrow, another handling the saw or the plane, another holding the file or the square, another administering justice, another directing public business, another by teaching and study; we must all contribute to shape the destinies of the world; and we shall all perform our task cheerfully when once we understand that we all have to fulfil the common law of labour in loving brotherhood.

Such is Good. The object of each will must not be the individual who exercises it, but the development and harmony of moral and intelligent society. When this is understood, the idea of selfishness gives place to the idea of charity. This is a moral discovery similar to that of the astronomer Copernicus. The earth used to say—I am the centre of the world; the heavens turn round me, and only exist for me. Science comes and says to her:—Thou art not the centre of the world; it is thou which dost turn round the sun, and the sun himself with all his attendant planets turns, it may be, round some central sun in the immense system of the universe. Is the earth thereby degraded? No, Gentlemen, it is restored to its own place; and every place is good when we pursue our appointed path and keep in our own orbit. The conversion of the understanding consists in the substitution of the idea of

charity for that of selfishness; the conversion of the will is realised in the serious and determined resolve to do our duty; the conversion of the heart consists in loving the duty we are determined to do.

We have indicated our starting-point. Now let us see how, setting out from this, we should aim after Good.

II. AIM AFTER GOOD.

Where do we find Evil? Everywhere. Where is it necessary to do Good? Everywhere. In view of all Good, whatever it may be, we should repeat the cry of the ancient Crusaders: It is God's will! Let us be on our guard against that narrow and false religion which would allow of our separating the cause of God from the cause of Good. To this mistaken religion, which would give God nothing but a little place in our worshipping assemblies and outward forms, true religion, which ought to be the centre of our existence and the informing principle of our whole life, ever replies in the fine language of Racine:—

Faith without works, can such faith be sincere?

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Break off all compact with impiety;
From midst my people root out every vice;
Then shall you come and offer sacrifice.¹

Let us not allow Good to be in any way penned up; let us not indulge the wish to mark off domains secluded from its influence, to put up fences and build walls

¹ *Athalie*, Act i., Scene 1.

enclosing spaces which it may not enter. This error is as frequent as it is deplorable. See, for example, what takes place in the political world. Injustice is revolting in the private relations of life; we must never take what belongs to another person, and nothing is branded with more disgrace than theft. But have we not seen the sentiment that "might makes right" raised into a maxim of national right in political questions?—

These are the humours of a prince's will:

To steal a province, and respect a mill.¹

But how many citizens indulge themselves in humours of this kind! A neighbour's reputation should be respected no less than his material property. But what takes place before a popular election in reference, say, to the candidate? See with what readiness false reports against him are welcomed by the party opposed to him! They receive them without raising a single doubt of their truth, and hasten to spread them in quarters where they can no longer control them. But what matters? All is fair in politics, and morality must keep within its own sphere.

Every profession aims at making an enclosure to keep out morality. It is wicked to lie; but a barrister!—would it not be an intolerable embarrassment to a barrister to be obliged always to tell the truth? And in business? This practice does not bear the stamp of scrupulous honesty; but it is a generally admitted custom; it concerns business, and we must leave morality to its own sphere. It is just the same in the case of art and

¹ Andrieux, *Le meunier Sans-Souci*.

literature. These paintings are decidedly sensual, this music is enervating, the charm of this poetry is unhealthy, this prose will leave a bad impression on the mind. But what matters? They are fine; art is art, and we must leave morality to its own sphere.

Thus dark regions are formed everywhere, and cellars are dug which the sun is forbidden to enter. Well, the sun withdraws; but what is the result? In politics, with a swerving from morality, at first slight, but ever increasing, men come at last to the maxims of a Machiavelli, practised, too, by many who are not princes.

Politics, instituted to secure the welfare of nations, then become one of the greatest scourges of the human race. In commerce, if there is a departure from the laws of morality, small in the beginning, but proceeding from bad to worse, the effect is to undermine that confidence and credit which are its very foundations. In those great commercial crises which press so heavily on society, and which dry up the springs of labour with such fatal certainty, a part of the Evil belongs to political events, to the glutting of markets, to causes, in short, in which the influence of morality is not immediately visible. But, Gentlemen—and I put the question to those of you who are, as we say, *in business*—if you were perfectly certain that your commercial agents would never take advantage of circumstances to offend in any way against the laws of strict probity where your interests were concerned, would not business affairs go on better, though external circumstances should remain the same? Would the public finances ever be

reduced to the state in which they are sometimes found if people had confidence that they were dealing with thoroughly honest governments, and with thoroughly honest nations, who would impose the last possible sacrifices on themselves rather than pay in paper the value they received in good metallic specie? Think about it, and you will see that it is not sound policy to screen commercial transactions from the rule of morality. Last of all, art! I well know that artists are not professed moralists; I know that beauty can only be reached under the impulse of an inspiration that is in every sense free, and that by aiming directly at a moral object we should fail of true art; but I know also that the inspiration of art passes through the human soul, and takes thence its particular bent. If the artist does not keep his imagination pure, if he does not watch over himself to prevent his passions from corrupting his ideal, if through failing to do this he creates evil productions, it is not art which is responsible. Suppose that morality withdraws altogether from this sphere, you will have those manufacturers who will produce anything for gain, however hideous and demoralising. These men, when conscience awakes, and they recognise at last the germs of corruption which they have sown around them, will experience the self-reproach and disgrace which sooner or later overtake those who lend themselves to an impure service.

No, Gentlemen, neither politics, nor the various professions of life, neither art, literature, nor anything, in a word, which is truly human, can be severed from morality without becoming corrupt. Let us open all

these cellars, throw down all these enclosures, and allow Good to reign, not in the form of a narrow and paltry rule, but as a powerful impulse diffusing all around the light and warmth of this sun of the soul.

Where does duty end? Where the activity of man stops, and nowhere else. There is no sphere of human life from which Good should be excluded. When may we cease to combat Evil? When it is destroyed, and not before. All Good is obligatory, and ought to be; that is its proper nature. Either conscience deceives us, or we are under obligation to set the world to rights and seek its happiness. This is the end which is marked out for us, and toward which we must direct our aim. Now, then, for the rock.

III. THE ROCK.

Our programme is appalling; and if we regard it as a whole, it is absurd. Here we are sent forth as true Don Quixotes on the roads of life, charged to redress all wrongs, repair all injuries, and put everything and everybody in order; and you know how the Knight of Mancha put things to rights. Don Quixote was a fool, a dear, good fool; it is difficult not to love him, but still he was a fool; and our programme appears also tinged with folly. If a ship left port to visit any place, without any course marked out for it, what would happen? For the very reason that it was to visit every place, there would be no reason for going to one place rather than another. Spreading its sails to the wind from whatever quarter it might blow, and using neither

rudder nor compass, it would be seized by the first current that came, and inevitably strike upon some rock. Such also would be our destiny, if we launched forth without any definite plan in pursuit of every Good; we should be seized by the current of distraction, and come to grief on the rock of discouragement.

What a work there is to do! To be converted oneself and convert the world; to fulfil one's duty in the family and in the exercise of a profession; to guide the blind, help the poor, visit the sick; to discharge a citizen's duty as an elector, a soldier, and a jurymen; to take part in reforming institutions; to improve what is, to create what ought to be; and last, to lend an ear to every appeal on behalf of good works. Here, for example, at the commencement of the winter season, is a food society which proposes to furnish nourishment at the lowest possible prices; the thing is excellent, hasten to take part in it. Here is a society which labours to spread instruction; you will do your part, for instruction is the food of the understanding. This association is employed in circulating good books; what can be more useful than to prevent, as far as possible, the circulation of bad books? This institution has for its object the repression of the abuses of mendicancy? who would not take an interest in it? who would not regard it an excellent work to prevent alms from feeding vice, and from passing into the hands of those bad poor who are the scourge of the good? It is proposed to provide suitable dwellings at a low rent; oh how useful this is! to insure to all, as far as possible, air and light; we must interest ourselves in this work.

Somewhere else they are seeking to bring about the suspension of labour by voluntary agreement, and re-establish the custom of a weekly day of rest. Let us be earnest in aiding this attempt; for while idleness is dangerous, leisure is precious and necessary for every individual, in order to raise him to the true dignity of man. To all these works we must devote our time, our efforts, our money. We must give an hour where we cannot give a day; ten sous if we cannot give ten francs; ten centimes if we have not ten sous at our disposal. And all these good works close at hand should not make us forget good works farther off. A Swiss village or a French market-town has been destroyed by fire; we must subscribe. In a certain manufacturing city there are workmen without bread; we must contribute to supply their need. The negroes of America have great difficulty in passing through the great crisis of their independence; we must interest ourselves in the negroes of America. We must not forget the savages who have a charitable claim upon our faith and our civilisation, What a work, or rather what works! And yet there are men who suffer *ennui*, because, they say, they have nothing to do! There are people who seem to see in the progress of modern civilisation nothing but greater opportunities and facilities for killing time! Killing time, the money with which the Good of their fellow-creatures has to be purchased! In view of the mighty proportions of Evil in the world, this is throwing wheat into the river when the city is famished; and as our fellow-countryman, Blanvalet, has said:—

Kill time ! then life itself you end,
Faith, hope, and memory you slay,
And charity, whom prayers attend,
Charity queen some future day.¹

But to resume our subject. Those who fold their hands and trifle away life cannot be too often reminded of the numerous efforts which demand their help, and of the abundant harvests that are waiting for labourers; but there is another thought which more immediately demands our attention. What strikes us is that there is too much to do. The field of practical work is immense; and practical work is still only half our task. It is necessary not only to do everything, but also to know everything. We must have an enlightened conscience, so that our aim may be directed towards a really good object, and that we may not fall into the errors of a mistaken conscience. Then there must be enlightened action; for it is not sufficient to have pure aims and a worthy object, we need also to know the conditions of effective action, so as to fit the means to the end. Bastiat, the political economist, points out certain efforts of social philanthropy which, animated by pure intentions, and aiming at an excellent end, nevertheless do much mischief, because they ignore the true order of social harmony which is the expression of the Creator's will, and want to substitute for it an artificial order which would be attended with disastrous consequences. A danger of a similar nature presents itself in every sphere of human activity. Zeal destitute of judgment leads us astray; to act usefully, we must

¹ *Une Lyre à la Mer.*

know the end to be attained, the means to be employed, and the obstacles that have to be overcome. The work of the conscience demands, then, the work of the reason; the clear perception of the mind must be added to the warmth of the heart. To guard one's own heart; to maintain an unceasing conflict within and without; to do everything and learn everything; to have an opinion on all subjects; to carry our influence into every sphere—but where are we going? We shall be carried away in a stream of bewilderment. We shall do everything by halves; we shall leave one work for the next that presents itself. In the conflict with Evil we shall act like a soldier on the battlefield who lifts his sword against a foe, turns it aside to strike another before he has hardly aimed at the first, and tries to strike a third before he has touched the second. In this way we fall into a state of restlessness unproductive of Good, but which, unfortunately, will be most fruitful in mischief; for vague and unregulated zeal becomes an indiscreet zeal that carries trouble everywhere, and order nowhere. It is as Fénelon has said—"An eager and restless ardour, which would be much more likely to throw everything into confusion, than to enlighten us as to our duty."¹

You will not fail to observe that the natural tendency of civilization is to increase all these dangers. As the relations between men are gradually multiplied, and there grows up a general community of interests, preoccupations and labours, in the same proportion is our calmness of mind endangered, for information pours in

¹ *Œuvres Spirituelles*. Of the employment of Time.

about everything; we are invited to interest ourselves in everything which takes place on the globe; each day the cry for help from one end of the world to the other increases. If we yield to the stream, we shall be carried away by an ardent and restless agitation; we shall soon exhaust our strength, our time, and our resources; nature will cry for mercy, and we shall succumb, prostrated at once by physical exhaustion and mental fatigue. It is due to the honour of human nature to say that, by the side of the thousands of victims of sensuality, vanity, and ambition, there are a few who are the victims of an ardent and ill-regulated zeal for Good

The prostrate condition arising from this dissipation of our strength manifests itself in two forms. In some it is a noble sadness arising out of a sense of weakness, and the steady and persevering regard for Good is not impaired. In others it is the thought that Good, when pursued with feverish ardour, is in reality only an illusion. These conclude with Philinte in Molière, that

A greater folly you will never find
Than interfering to correct mankind;¹

and they adopt for their motto the favourite saying of an Italian statesman at the beginning of this century: *Il mondo va da se*; the world goes on of itself, and there is no need to meddle with it. There is the rock of discouragement. What are we to do? It is impossible to give up this fundamental truth, that all Good is obligatory; this would be to deny the very essence of Good. There must, then, be another truth, the complement of this, and which will enable us to draw out

¹ *Le Misanthrope*, Act i. Scene 1.

a reasonable plan for the battle of life. This truth you have doubtless seen already, or at least caught a glimpse of it. Let us try and set it forth clearly.

IV. THE PLAN OF THE BATTLE.

Good is of absolute and universal obligation; but this universal obligation is divided, by the Master from whom it proceeds, among each of His creatures. We are all called to concur in the general Good; but no one is personally and wholly responsible for setting the universe to rights, and accomplishing the happiness of the world. This elementary truth, passed over in the preceding considerations, will now become our light.

Every creature has his place determined by the Supreme Will. Take away from each one's situation whatever may appear a disorder; take away all the Evils which proceed from the individual will, from the will of others, or from faulty institutions; and you will arrive at the conception that, in a state of order, there would be equality of duty, and equality of happiness, but that there will always remain diversity of positions. Absolute equality could not exist, even in the material universe.

Imagine a world composed of precisely similar atoms. Have you a realization of absolute equality? By no means; those atoms are different by virtue of the position they occupy; and if your world has a centre, those perfectly similar atoms will be unequal in this sense, that they will be at different distances from the centre. Perfect equality cannot, then, be found, cannot be con-

ceived of, even among atoms hypothetically similar. The same diversity exists between minds; and this diversity is the condition of the world's existence. Every one occupies a position which is allotted to him in a way that is independent of his will. The first thing a creature has to do is to accept his position as the expression of the absolute sovereignty of the Creator. Not to accept his position, but to cast a covetous eye on the situation of others, is to commit the sin of envy. Now envy, when it allows itself free course, finds no point in the world where it can stop. At last it wishes to usurp the place of God. It is the first temptation which explains to us the origin of Evil. Envy, which brings so much trouble into society, and pours so much bitterness into the soul, is the most direct outflow of the primitive fall.

Do not fear that this thought has a stationary tendency. Do not fear that our acceptance of the place assigned to each of us must lead us to remain, as the old Turks are represented, seated with arms and legs crossed, waiting the decrees of destiny. It is the law, as we have seen, of every moral and intelligent creature, that he should be ever improving his condition, and making perpetual progress. Every position in the kingdom of mind is a function to fulfil, a work to do. For a creature, called to know and assert himself as a free agent, to remain stationary, is to abandon his position and to desert his post.

We have now found the light we wanted to enable us to draw our plan of battle. From the diversity of situations there results a subordination of duties. No

one is the centre of the world, and no one ought to be the end and aim of his own will ; but every one is the centre whence his personal action proceeds. Conceive of every man's will as a point whence radiates a force. Imagine this point surrounded by a series of concentric circles ; and conceive that the force, in developing its energy, is not to pass to one of these circles until it has filled those which lie nearest to its starting-point : such is a picture of the normal exercise of our activity in the practice of Good.

We must begin with ourselves. We are all guardians of each other. In the order of Providence, however, every one is charged to watch over himself ; and we may interpret in a good sense the proverb : "Charity begins at home." To labour in the cause of Good, we must first of all be good. Not that there is any question here of an order of succession. A man who wanted to be good before he did Good, would be like a child refusing to get into the water until he knew how to swim ; for to be good is to do Good. It is not a question of an order of succession, but of an order of importance. In the fulfilment of duty, our first glance must always be turned on ourselves. We must not preach to others, I do not say a law which we have not wholly fulfilled, for in this case no one could speak, but a law which we are not seriously and sincerely striving to fulfil. We must not bind burdens to lay them on the shoulders of others, while we ourselves refuse to touch them with the tip of our finger. The first duty of every one is to set himself right, to

regulate his actions, feelings, and thoughts in accordance with the law.

This obligation includes that of keeping himself in a condition to perform his task. There are exceptional cases in which a man must be willing to sacrifice unhesitatingly his health, and, if necessary, his life; but ordinarily it is his duty to husband his strength in order to be capable of accomplishing his work. Rest is necessary to us. Relaxation, even pleasure, has its place in a well-regulated life; for man needs recreation. The law which ought to rule this order of facts is contained in the word we have just used. *Recreation* must recreate or renew the strength; its object determines its proper limits. The law is certainly violated whenever the pleasure which ought to recreate our strength consumes it. If we weaken body and mind by excess in eating and drinking, if we need to rest during the day from the fatigues of a night spent in the ball-room, at the play, or at a tavern, who can deny that the order of nature has been disturbed?

Of as great, and even greater, importance than relaxation to the maintenance of moral life is the habit of securing for ourselves seasons of quietude, silence, and self-recollection. In a world in which disorder prevails, the law of charity becomes a law of conflict. But to fight we need be strong; and no one will keep up his spiritual strength if he does not often seek solitude, and separate himself from the turmoil of life, in order to nourish his soul with those lofty thoughts which concentrate its forces. We never act

more effectively for the service of others than when we momentarily stand apart from it to return to it in the calm contemplation of those great laws of spiritual order which bind us to all our fellow-creatures, and feeling the presence of God, the universal Father and common centre of His creatures.

Having looked to ourselves, we must consider others. This passage from self to others suggests an important consideration. To seek the welfare of others is the law of our will; but they are our fellow-creatures, that is to say, they also have a will, and we are not their masters. There is a common Master of all souls, but this master is none of us. Whenever, then, we have exercised our legitimate influence on our fellow-creatures (and this influence will be great just in proportion to our love for them), there we ought to stop, out of regard to their freedom, for indiscretion is fatal. An indiscreet zeal for Good does mischief by arousing the susceptibilities of the spirit of independence. Underneath the joint responsibility which binds us together, each one is responsible for himself and his own concerns.

As to doing good to others, a good rule is indicated by the idea of concentric circles. We must care, first of all, for our own, for those whom we call ours in a particular sense, our nearest companions in the voyage of life. This essential rule is often violated. Here, for example, is a very charitable lady. She frequently visits the poor, which is very good; she is a member of all the benevolent societies, possibly that is too much of a good thing. For, madam (allow me,

Gentlemen, this literary form, notwithstanding the exclusively masculine composition of our assembly), if your husband, returning fatigued with the labours and business of the day, expects to find the fire lighted, his dinner ready, and a kind welcome to cheer him, and learns on reaching his home that madam is at her charity committee, will you not have neglected your first duty for a work excellent indeed in itself, but which has become bad owing to its having usurped a place which does not belong to it? And you, Sir, if you are wanted at home for advice, to decide something, or for anything in which a man's aid is required, will you be doing right to remain away from home, even to be present at a meeting for the public Good? If the wife is at her committee and the husband at his meeting, will there not be at least a just equilibrium? But the children! the children! The fire of wood or coal burnt out at an hour when it ought to be alight, is it not the symbol of another fire of which the flame has gone out? Are you not depriving your children of those recollections of the parental roof which ought to be the safeguard of your daughters' innocence and the support of your sons' strength against the seductions of life? Professional duties belong to the same rank as those of the family. A clerk has no right to be a philanthropist if he neglects for that his employer's books; and a banker is not justified in doing the finest things in the world, if in so doing he allows the interests of his clients to suffer. And we, Gentlemen, who discharge the functions of citizens in a free State, if our country calls us to take part in a

general election, have no right to go that day to Bonneville¹ to help our neighbours at Faucigny in some enterprise for the public Good.

We have no right to sacrifice a nearer to a more distant duty, whatever its worth and importance. That is the principle; and by taking heed to it we shall avoid the danger of dissipating our strength. We are speaking now of the ordinary rule, and of ordinary men. There are special vocations which make other demands; there are men called by their very profession to sever the ties of family and country, when necessary, out of regard to a general interest which they have accepted as their first duty. There are also urgent cases when a duty, ordinarily remote, becomes an immediate duty for everybody. When fire, for example, threatens to consume a city, professional occupations and domestic duties give place to the general interest of the preservation of the city. These are exceptional cases; as a common rule, the observation of the proper subordination of duties alone permits of effective labour for the development of Good.

This truth is important; but it must not be abused. There is nothing more elastic than man's time and strength; selfishness limits, charity augments them. If you punctually fulfil your immediate duties, but are disposed to depreciate those who do more than you; if you are always ready to throw your little glass of cold water on every generous effort, you show that your performance of duty is really nothing more in

¹ Bonneville is the chief town of Faucigny, a valley of Savoy which bounds the territory of Geneva.

your case than an enlarged selfishness. Do away with the mischievous pursuits of ambition and vanity, the enervating indulgencies of sensuality, and the temptations of indolence, and every one could find time for the performance of good deeds beyond the limit of his nearest and most pressing duties. But the inequality appears very great in this respect. Many men, beyond their own toil and the rest which is really necessary to them, can only perform some acts of individual benevolence, lend a hand to a neighbour, a passing service to a stranger, or speak a kind word to the afflicted. Here is seen one privilege of the well-to-do classes, which, at the first glance, appears immense, the privilege of being able to labour largely in works of public benefit. Take the case of a merchant who first of all concentrates all his efforts on his business with a view to provide for his family, meanwhile, however, rendering what services he can consistently with his object; and suppose that, having attained by his labour a competency to which with a wise heart he has fixed modest limits, he retires from business, and then devotes all his energy to aid, succour, and comfort others, and to promote undertakings of general usefulness, you have before you one of the best types of the human race, and a type, thank God, which is not rare in this country. In this freedom to act for the common Good which results from easy circumstances it is still necessary to avoid dissipating our strength; all our forces are increased by concentration. As a general rule, ten men devoting themselves each to a particular work, will obtain a better result than these

same ten each taking a part in ten different works; and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius gave good advice when he wrote this practical maxim:—

Do not take upon yourself too many concerns.¹

In this freedom to devote oneself to the public Good the generous heart seems at first sight to possess a great privilege. The privilege is real, but it is not so great as it seems, because every one may labour for the public Good by accomplishing his own special duties. In fact, it is of the first importance to the general interest that private duties should be properly performed. They have a proverb in the country not of ill-application in town: "Every one to his trade, and the cows will be well cared for." The most majestic oak, with its wide-spreading and mighty growth, is only the result of an infinite number of particular motions produced by tiny drops of sap in the tiniest of vessels. Whenever private duties shall come to be properly fulfilled, there will be much less to do for what is called the public Good, a great part of the undertakings for public Good having no other object than to remedy the result of private disorders. Do away, for example, with idleness and drunkenness, and also with indiscriminate almsgiving, and there will still be poor; but there will no longer be anything to do in the way of repressing the abuses of mendicancy. Establish temperance and purity of morals, and three-fourths of the hospitals will be

¹ *Pensées de l'empereur Marc-Aurèle Antonin*, Joly's translation, chap. xx.—Faults to be avoided.

emptied, and one branch of charitable activity singularly reduced. If governments and nations would obey the laws of justice and reason, it would be unnecessary to found an association for the relief of the victims of the battlefield. I have always regretted that the excellent work on behalf of the wounded, in which Geneva had the honour of taking the initiative, was not prefaced with an energetic protest against the barbarities of war.¹

Such, Gentlemen, is the plan which I propose with a view to the battle of life. We are under obligation to every form of Good, but in an order which determines the place assigned to each one of us by the Supreme Will. Then enthusiasm restrained by rule will be durable because restrained, and fruitful because durable. Conspiring efforts will realize the harmony of the spiritual world. In the presence of the hosts

¹ The *Journal de Genève* published, in its number of the 3rd April 1868, a letter from Dr Théodore Maunoir, which contains the following passage :—“Some time ago, an eloquent and authoritative voice, before an audience of more than 2000 persons, did justice to the elevated sentiments which dictated the *Treaty of Geneva*. But the eminent professor regretted that the head of this treaty was not inscribed with a protest against war. The International Committee of Geneva, and all the members of the Conference, would have thought themselves justly chargeable with an absurd simplicity had they inserted a phrase stigmatising war. The horror of war appears most abundantly in all the speeches, acts, and writings which have been published on this occasion.” I reply : We may, without absurdity, seize every occasion to stigmatise war so long as the habitual fear of war paralyzes industry and damages credit ; so long as excessive military preparations take away the hands required for agriculture, and the resources needed for the promotion of industry and public instruction ; so long as political communities devote more efforts to the perfecting of guns than to the improvement of mankind.

of Evil we are scattered; and this is our weakness. It is selfishness, the maxim, "Every one for himself," which scatters us. The order of battle is to summon our hearts to march resolutely against the enemy, rallying around the flag, each in his own rank. It is a glorious thing to march under the banner of Good, beholding a divine light shedding lustre on the humblest duties; to take part in the great struggle, and to catch a glimpse of rest after the struggle in the order, regular development, and growth of a holy life; to descry beyond the anguish, disorders, and distractions of society, vexed with suffering and sin, "a heaven of stars, rational, loving, and free, an unchangeable heaven, full of serenity, light, and love, where all that we have ever dreamed will be realized."¹

Such is the work we have to begin on earth and to pursue in the immortal future. Is there any one here who finds life dull, existence tame and heavy, the succession of days monotonous? let him only embrace these ideas, and he will feel that life is worth the trouble of living. And to any one who may doubt the reality of Good and its final triumph through want of a firm faith in God, I would say, in the words of Socrates:—"The thing is worth the cost one risks in believing in it; it is a noble risk to run, a hope with which one must, as it were, be bewitched."²

The great disciple of Socrates, Plato, has depicted in pages which will never perish³ while human litera-

¹ Le Père Gratry, *de la Connaissance de l'âme*. Epilogue.

² The Phædo, p. 314 of Cousin's translation.

³ The Banquet.

ture endures, the movement of the soul rising from beauty to beauty until it contemplates the supreme beauty. And who has not felt a wistful yearning after the supreme ideal? Where is the libertine who has not felt that it is a noble thing to be master of one's passions? What liar does not feel in his conscience the preciousness of truth? What coward does not in his heart honour courage? What selfish man would not have to drown the voice of his own nature, and learn to despise himself, before he could turn self-devotion into derision? Good is truth, for it is the expression of that supreme thought which has determined all that is and all that ought to be; Good is beauty, and our heart bears witness to it; the soul tends towards it by all the lofty aspirations of its nature. Good presents itself to us as a splendid vision, the attraction of which we cannot but feel. We spring towards it, but Evil is there; we fall back into our darkness, the clouds return, and we ask whether the magnificent vision was not after all a deceitful illusion. The vision is true, Gentlemen; Good is the highest reality, for it is the manifestation of the Supreme God. We see it; what do we lack that we do not possess it? Strength. This will be the subject of our next lecture.

SEVENTH LECTURE.

Succour.

GENTLEMEN,—What we lack in view of Good is strength to accomplish it. Except where we are blinded by some enchaining passion, we feel we perfectly understand that the practice of Evil makes us miserable; but we have not the courage to break away from our misery. Where can we find the strength we need ?

In order to answer this question, let us look for an illustration in the strength which we have at our disposal for bodily action, or in what is called physical force. In truth, we have here something more than an illustration. The connection between our two natures is so close, thorough, and constant, that they are never apart. Our spiritual life only manifests itself on condition that organs exist, and by means of them. Only a false idealism, the result of an erroneous philosophy, can ignore the moral value of the discipline of the body. On the other hand, the influence of morality on the functions of the body is indisputable; "health," as has been said, "is more a virtue than a science."¹ The man who has sufficient resolution to govern his body according to the true laws of nature will secure better health

¹ Joubert, if I am not mistaken.

than another who yields to excess, though he has the advice of the most skilful physician. Physical and moral force have, then, very close relations; and if the action of the will upon the organs of thought be taken into account, it will be found that there is never a complete separation between our corporeal and spiritual natures. But, without entering into the discussion of a subject which would lead us too far away, let us simply seek in bodily strength an illustration of moral strength.

How is the power which we exercise in muscular movements supported and increased? By its very exercise; this is the reason why manual labour, walking, and gymnastic exercises contribute to good health. But exercise only supports strength by spending it, and would soon destroy it were it not nourished with food. We take food sometimes in a solid and sometimes in a liquid form, and the solid portions of our food must be reduced to liquid to serve the purpose of nourishment. Nutrition is effected by a wonderful combination of the functions of the digestive apparatus with the functions of the circulation; and in the combination of these functions there is a primary phenomenon, from which all the rest proceed. This phenomenon is respiration. Contact with the vivifying principle of the atmosphere is the necessary condition of the nutrition of the body. At the moment of birth, when an infant separated from its mother is commencing its own proper life, the first essential is that the air enter its lungs, it must breathe; until it has breathed it cannot take its natural food. Such are the facts in which we are about to find an

illustration of the nourishment of the strength of the soul.

I. THE FOOD OF THE SOUL.

Spiritual strength is increased, first of all, by its own progressive exercise. Many men are found weak on important occasions, because they have despised little efforts and virtues. But this strength, which is supported and grows by its own exercise, needs nourishment, and spiritual nourishment consists of ideas and feelings. Ideas are, as it were, the solid part of the soul's food, and feelings the fluid part. Just as solids will not nourish the body without being reduced to liquid, so ideas do not act upon the will until they are transformed into feelings. Ideas may remain in the understanding without any practical result; it is in feeling that we find an impulse, and consequently a force.

What are those ideas which increase the soul's power for the accomplishment of Good? First of all, the continued contemplation of the moral law. Consider the different classes of our duties, their agency, no less marvellous than that of the phenomena of nature, their mutual relations, and their general dependence on the law of charity, from which they all proceed, as rays of light from the sun. Above all, consider the profound harmony that subsists between duty and happiness, that you may be preserved from the illusions of life. Then availing yourselves of the labours of wise men, for instance of the thoughts of Socrates, and of the admirable pages of Cicero, you will see that all pursuit of

happiness outside the limits of moral order is doomed to disappointment; that in the ordinary course of things labour procures comfort, and truthfulness commands respect; and that whenever occasions arise for the renunciation of these blessings, there is in the very sacrifice we make to duty a joy in the approbation of conscience which is superior to all joys. Such thoughts will give you real strength for the struggles of life.

As to the feelings from which we may obtain help in the conflict with Evil, there is first the affection which Good inspires, as the result of the thoughts just mentioned. The calm contemplation of the moral law, undisturbed by those evil passions that are ever ready to rebel against rule, naturally awakens a love of Good, which is an addition to our strength, because it inclines the heart to side with conscience. Good, in fact, possesses a beauty of a certain order, which, when we have learnt to appreciate it, surpasses every other kind of beauty. An illustration will help us to understand this. When you leave a theatre or some social gathering on a calm clear night, raise your eyes and direct their gaze towards the heavens. You will see that the sky, studded with stars, has a calm and profound beauty, a beauty of quite another kind from that belonging to scenes lighted by the blaze of candles and lustres. The contemplation of the moral law produces a feeling analogous to that inspired by the sight of the heavens. It awakens the feeling of a beauty superior to any we can find in the sphere of passion and self-interest. This is the reason why the words of Kant have often been quoted, and will be often quoted again:

“Two things fill the soul with perpetual admiration and awe, increasing each time our thoughts return to them, and the more attentively they are regarded: *the starry heavens above us; the moral law within.*¹”

The sight of Good awakens, then, an affection which draws us towards it. If we meditated oftener on the wonders of the law, we should not be so feeble in our resistance to Evil. This help is real, but it is of an abstract character. We possess a more usual and efficacious means of inclining our hearts to the side of conscience. This means consists in the employment of our personal affections. Nothing imparts greater strength in struggling with temptation than those personal affections which coincide with the love of Good; and this help is often at the command of our will. Suppose, for example, a young man brought up by respectable parents, (observe, by the way, that many parents who have little claim to real respect, following a profound natural instinct, strive to show themselves worthy of respect in the eyes of their children); he is away from home, and assailed by strong temptation. Conscience is at stake, perhaps his honour, and he is on the point of yielding. At this moment the thought of his family occurs to him. He may turn away from this wholesome thought, and surrender himself to the imaginations of a heart fascinated by Evil. But if he tries to retain the beneficent gleam which has flashed through his mind; if for a while he fixes his thought on his father, or on the mother whose heart

¹ *Critique de la religion pratique.* Conclusion, page 389 of Barnis' translation.

he was about to break, do you not see that he gives himself, by the act of his will, a mighty strength for Good. The personal affections are, then, our succour in the battle of life. This is why it is so important, in cases where choice can be made, to choose with care the persons on whom we bestow a share of our affections, in order that these affections may be an aid and not an obstacle in the work of our moral culture. This is why it is important to preserve and cultivate, with greater care than the flowers in our cemeteries, the memory of those who have left this world, after walking before us in the right way, in order that their memory may remain as a salutary influence, and that, though dead to the life of earth, they may still speak, and come to our aid in the struggles of life. This is why, lastly, the moral life can only attain its full development when the heart has been opened to the feeling of Divine love, and so has fixed its affections on the only Being who is always, and in every respect, absolutely identical with Good. The love of the creature, even the best, may always, at some time or other, be found in contradiction to the law. The only love which is in infallible harmony with conscience is the love of Him who is the Master of conscience, and the Author of the law.

Ideas, feelings: of such consists the food of the soul. This spiritual nutriment is furnished not only in the relations which we sustain towards our contemporaries, but also in the tradition which unites us to the whole human family. In the Arab's tent, and in the Alpine shepherd's hut, this tradition is presented under the form of stories told around the hearth; in our civilisa-

tion it is presented principally under the form of reading. Reading levels the barriers of space and time, and places at our disposal all the intellectual treasures of the human race. What a variety of resources it offers to enable us to nourish our soul with strengthening ideas and feelings. Read history, and penetrate beneath the surface, till you come to the great laws which are discovered in the course of human affairs; you will see justice predominant at last. Read biographies, true ones, those which present men to us just as they were, without covering them with draperies that do not belong to them; you will see the heroes of Good often made the mark of persecution and outrage, because the world is out of order, but you will see them preferring their conscience to all the treasures and pleasures of earth. You will see men of great selfishness, who have sacrificed everything to the satisfaction of their wishes, and who, possessed of wealth and power, and seated perhaps on the most illustrious thrones in the world, have nevertheless died weary of life and despising themselves.

We may thus derive from reading (without even mentioning books which preserve the precepts of wisdom and the maxims of experience) thoughts and feelings which will come to our help. But we must not forget that nourishment is only transformed into force on the twofold condition that it be of good quality, and be used in suitable quantity. If you read books which pander to your passions and double their power; if you read "those writings which are, as it were, the sinks of the human mind, and which, in spite of their flowers,

only cover a frightful corruption,"¹ you will get no Good. As regards the quantity of intellectual food, listen to these wise warnings of Alexander Vinet:—"Our age is sick from reading too much, and reading so badly. Reading, which some one has called an *occupied idleness*, and which might be called an *idle activity*, is the principal occupation of many people, whose power of thought, incessantly but feebly exercised on a thousand different points, withers like the flower of the field, and becomes at last destitute of all vigour, spontaneity, and independence. Without a voluntary reaction of the reader on the thoughts of the author, reading is often an evil rather than a good. It is useless to swallow what is not digested. Woe to him who forgets it! Woe to him who shares in that voracity, that appetite unrestrained by prudence which has caused our age to be compared to a boa swollen with blotted paper, and whose digestion seems an agony. Read, but think; and do not read unless you determine to think while you are reading, and after you have closed your book."² Here it is not only the culture of the understanding which is endangered, but the force of the will; for just as healthy and well-directed thought is a power for Good, so indecision, hesitation, and debility of thought are causes of weakness.

True ideas and pure feelings are, then, at our command for the nourishment of the soul's strength; but it often happens that bad passions are strengthened by

¹ Lacordaire, *Lettres à des jeunes gens*, page 198 of the first Edition.

² *Choix de lectures prises dans les auteurs classiques de la littérature française.* Final Note.

false ideas and wrong feelings. Instead of wholesome food we take poison; we follow at least a detestable moral regimen; this bad regimen weakens us, and then we complain of a want of strength. Whose fault is it?

These considerations are important, but do not go to the root of the matter. On the supposition that a will is inclined towards Good, we see how it can strengthen itself; but it is this very will, this force set in the direction of Good, which fails us. Our will is diseased. It seems, then, that when we appeal to our will to strengthen our will we are going round in a circle. This circle is not absolutely vicious, for every one has a certain degree of force, and to know how to increase that force, by giving it a suitable direction, is so much gain. Nevertheless an important element of the problem remains: Is there any direct means of increasing the power of the will? Does there exist in the life of the soul a primitive phenomenon which resembles respiration in the life of the body? This inquiry brings before us the questions relative to prayer. The subject is very wide, and at the same time very serious. The reflections which I am about to offer have a general bearing; I limit, however, our study to the precise object we have in view, to a search after strength for the will. May we ask God for the strength we feel we need? In life's conflict are we reduced simply to our own resources, and the help of our fellow-creatures, or may we invoke the help of the Almighty?

II. PRAYER.

Prayer is a universal fact. In prayer, as in everything else, the essential disorder of mankind is exhibited. A brigand of Calabria prays the Virgin, it is said, to aid him in committing a foul deed; the head of a State, on the point of undertaking a war which is clearly unjust, appoints public prayers to invoke God's aid in support of iniquity; these are examples of that complete perversion of prayer which prayer for Evil becomes. There are men, like that honest Greek, Ischomachus, whose portrait Xenophon has drawn,¹ who ask from divine power victory over their enemies, fair fame, good health, and all the joys of earth. But we also find, everywhere and at all times, some amount of true spiritual prayer, that which asks strength for Good of Him who is at once the Source of all Good and of all strength. You will find this prayer in one of the most celebrated choruses of Sophocles, which commences with these words—"Grant that I may preserve in all my actions and words a holy purity!"² And our prayer, Gentlemen, I mean that which we all learnt in our childhood, be so good as recall it to your minds. What have we been taught to ask? "Our daily bread," to remind us who it is that makes the corn to grow in the furrow. What besides? "That God's name be hallowed," that is to say, that all men may be more and more penetrated with this fundamental truth, that the will of God

¹ In the Economy.—See *La Vie éternelle*, 7th Lecture, at the commencement.

² *Œdipus tyrannus*.

is identical with Good. What do we ask besides? That His will may be done, that Good may be accomplished, and that by forgiveness and help we may be delivered from Evil. Here is spiritual prayer in its majestic simplicity, the true prayer for Good; and it is about this that we have to speak.

I must dispel a fear which will arise in the minds of some amongst you. Do not fear that I want to penetrate into the deeper secrets of the life of souls, and to introduce the instrument of reasoning, always too rude for such analysis, into the more delicate functions of the life of the spirit. Doubts are raised as to the value of prayer; I wish to examine the objection, and I hope to annihilate it; that is all. I do not intend to give a demonstration of prayer, but if possible to leave you to pray in peace, according to the wishes of your heart. You will hear it said that prayer belongs to the infancy of humanity, and gradually disappears before the light of reflection and the results of modern culture. This is a question of fact; and I do not see that the fact announced is correct. The instinct of prayer seems to exist in our day as strongly as ever. Art reckons upon it so surely that it is constantly appealing to it. In order to expunge from the productions of art the idea and feeling of prayer, you would have to tear up the finest pages, I will not say of Racine, but of Hugo, Lamartine, and de Musset; you would have to deface the finest pictures in our museums of painting, and to impose silence on the loftiest strains of music, for it is always when it rises into accents of prayer that music reaches the highest summits of art. Observe, I am not

speaking here of the personal feelings of the artists, but of a general feeling to which they would not address themselves had it disappeared. Is it science which is found to be in contradiction to prayer? If it were so, Kepler, it seems to me, would have had some suspicion of it. Newton would have doubted it, and Faraday would not have just died leaving to the scientific world the example of a piety only equalled by his genius.¹

It does not seem to me, then, when facts are consulted, that prayer is disappearing before modern culture, as some maintain.² But the principal objection is put to the account of philosophy. It is said, in the name of philosophy, that prayer is unreasonable. It is a serious allegation; for while we are often obliged to do things opposed to the reasonings of men, we must not do anything contrary to reason, to that primitive and true reason which God has put within us. But is there really an incompatibility between philosophy and prayer? In the course of my studies I have become acquainted with a great number of philosophers, both of the present time and of past ages. Many of them, I assure you, and many of the greatest among them, were

¹ See in the *Archives des sciences physiques et naturelles* of the *Bibliothèque universelle* (October, 1867) the notice of Faraday by M. de la Rive.

² An assertion the very contrary of that which I combat is contained in the recent work of M. Emile Juventin, entitled *État des croyances* (1 vol. 12mo, Paris, Meyrueis, 1868). The author says, page 22, "All accounts agree in leading us to think that, in different quarters, the number of men of prayer is increasing in a perceptible manner." The point of view occupied by M. Juventin, the profoundly reflective character of his mind, and his constant effort to give an impartial record of facts, lend great weight to his words.

pious men who prayed like little children, for there are not two ways of praying. This very day even, just before coming here, when cutting the leaves of a book that is just issued from the press, the *Vie des savants illustrés*, by M. Figuier, I lighted upon the account of the death of a celebrated philosopher and bold innovator, Peter Ramus, who died a victim of the massacre of St Bartholomew. When he found himself in the presence of the assassins, who had broken open the door of his study, he begged a moment, only one, and uttered aloud these words of prayer, which have been preserved—“O my God, I have sinned against Thee; I have done evil in thy sight. Thy judgments are justice and truth; have pity on me, and forgive these unhappy men; they know not what they do.”¹ When Descartes, a liberal and powerful mind if ever there was one, succumbed to the mortal attacks of his last illness, he fell into a kind of delirium, which did not change, however, the regular connection of his thoughts. Those who listened to his last words were astonished to hear that this geometrician and metaphysician spoke, not of the sciences which had occupied him so much, but of the greatness of God and the misery of man.² I do not wish to multiply these examples; only one more. I refer to a philosopher whose life and writings I studied for a long while: Maine de Biran. Maine de Biran achieved success as an administrator and statesman entrusted with high

¹ See *Ramus*, by Charles Waddington (1 vol. 8vo, Paris, 1855), p. 254. The author gives proof of the correctness of the story which M. Figuier has transferred to his pages.

² *Vie de Monsieur Descartes*, by Baillet, Book VII. chap. xxi. p. 419.

political duties; but he was always drawn by an irresistible instinct to the observation of himself and to the study of the great questions of human destiny. He owes his estimation in the ranks of science to this, that he recognised, more fully and exactly than any one before him, the part sustained by the will in all the manifestations of human life. He discerned a participation of the will, not only in our actions, but in our ideas, our feelings, and even in our bodily sensations. Now, at the very time that he was establishing with increasing clearness, and by a searching analysis, the part which the will ought to fill in the life of man, at the same time, by a lengthened and often painful experience, he proved also the weakness of the will. With a gentle and continuous effort of the soul, prolonged through many years, which, in the midst of wavering and doubt, was always directed substantially towards the same quarter, he turned towards God, and died in prayer.¹ There is, then, no more incompatibility between philosophy and prayer in our time than in the age of Descartes and in the days of Ramus.

Now, when a doctrine subversive of prayer has taken possession of a man's mind, does this doctrine succeed in destroying, in the soul of him who professes it, the natural instinct of prayer? No; this again is a question of fact. Never has the philosophy which denies all intercourse between man and God been developed with more breadth and brilliancy than at the end of the last century. What happened? It is said that sailors, to all appearance utterly godless, will go down on their

¹ *Maine de Biran, sa vie et ses pensées.* 1 vol. 12mo, Paris, 1857.

knees in the midst of a storm, and there are other storms in the world besides those of the ocean. At the close of the last century, men who had been trained in atheism, who openly professed it, found in their heart, in the midst of the whirlwind of the Revolution, the instinct, the need, and the accents of prayer.¹ Here is an analogous fact which occurred under less mournful circumstances. An estimable writer of the beginning of this century had been brought up in the philosophy of his time, and had learnt to deny the power of prayer. He had just finished a work in favour of a cause which he took much to heart; he had done all that was in his power to do, and wrote to one of his correspondents the following lines:—"It is for God to do the rest, I have prayed to Him with fervour and tears, an unusual and perhaps inconsistent thing for me to do, but my heart was full, and I felt obliged to pray."²

The instinct of prayer exists, then, in spite of the doctrines which reject it. To be able to pray it is not even necessary to have a positive faith in God. Everybody can pray, except atheists, who are certain that God does not exist. But are there such atheists? Are there, I do not say doctrines of atheism (unhappily there are plenty of them), but men perfectly certain that God does not exist. We may be allowed to doubt it; many fires seem extinct, when the fire still smoulders under the ashes. On every other supposi-

¹ Isnard, for example. See *La Vie éternelle*, fifth discourse, at the end.—See also Laharpe's Biographies.

² Correspondence of S——.

tion but that of real atheism, all may venture to pray; and I see no objection to the reasoning of a poet who, after having exclaimed—

Believe me, our prayer is no cry of despair!
We address God in hope of an answer;

seems to ask: But what if God does not exist? and continues—

If heaven is empty, we give no offence;
And if any one hears, let him pity us!¹

Philosophy in general is not incompatible with prayer; the systems which deny the existence of any intercourse between God and man do not destroy the instinct of prayer, even in their own followers; and no doctrine, except atheism properly so called, legitimately prohibits a man who feels the need of strength from seeking help from God. There exists in science, nevertheless, a considerable under-current which draws away souls from God, an under-current which has been increased by the labours of men who were personally pious, but whose doctrine did not agree with their life. There is a philosophy, and a very important philosophy, which affirms that prayer is irrational, or, in other terms, that a creature who makes use of his reason is prohibited from seeking the assistance of God. What is this doctrine? We have already met with it and described it; it is that which denies every element of liberty, and sees in the universe nothing more than an assemblage of phenomena governed by laws of absolute necessity. If everything is fixed by necessity, if there

¹ Alfred de Musset, *l'Espoir en Dieu*.

is no principle of liberty in the world, there is nothing to ask for. The conclusion is just; but I add: there is nothing for us to do; this conclusion is equally just. The doctrine which denies the efficacy of prayer denies in like manner the efficacy of man's efforts in toil. This is the only argument which I am going to develop. In opposition to prayer we have the idea that everything is fatally fixed; I seek to prove that if the objection is valid, it is valid against labour.

Do you believe in the reality of human power in labour? Look at the action of man on nature! We fertilise the soil; we embank the rivers; we improve the vegetable species and animal races; or, acting in a contrary direction, we exhaust the soil by imprudent culture; we cut down the trees on the mountains until the streams, deprived of their natural banks, flood the valleys; we impoverish the breed of animals. Our action upon nature is very limited; most certainly we cannot make our planet wander from its orbit; an earthquake annihilates the labours of entire generations; but this limited power is real. What are its precise bounds? No one can tell. It is not very probable that mankind will ever realise the dream of a modern utopist, and succeed in changing the ocean into a basin of lemonade; but if good sense does justice to senseless dreams, genius has often baffled, and will often baffle again, the dreams of fools. We exercise an indisputable influence over nature. Do we not also on society? Do we not influence our fellows by example, word, and look? Do you stop the

engineer who purposes to raise a dyke, the horticulturist who proposes to improve his plants, the mother who wishes to incline the hearts of her children towards what is Good, the politician who seeks to influence society, do you stop them and say : What are you pretending to do? Everything is absolutely and necessarily fixed. No; when human power is in question, our age leans rather to the side of pride than to the side of discouragement. What now do they all want to do who labour, whether in the domain of matter or in the spiritual world? They are in presence of an order of things which they are endeavouring to modify; they do not think, then, that everything in the world is determined by necessity.

You understand the drift of my argument; and you think, perhaps, that I am venturing on a piece of sophistry. You agree that man can exercise an influence on nature and on society; but you think that the action of God is fixed and unchangeable, and that, therefore, an argument founded on the efficacy of human labour could not induce you to accept the efficacy of prayer, since prayer is intended to modify *divine* action. The foundation of the objection is the idea of an absolute distinction between the action of man and the action of God. Now, this idea is false; you shall see it is false.

What is in man's power when he acts on nature? He can (it is an observation of Lord Bacon)¹, he can

¹ "The power of man is confined to bringing together or separating natural bodies; all the rest is effected by nature working inwardly and out of our sight."—*Novum Organum*, Book I., Aphorism 1.

separate or bring together two parts of matter. And beyond this? Nothing. In all his labours, from the construction of the smallest watch to the erection of the grandest cathedral, man never does more than bring together or separate parts of matter; all the rest is done independently of him, and almost always by means of which he is ignorant. You raise some water, for example, in the body of a pump, and you say, My labour raises water in the body of a pump. Agreed; but on what condition? On the condition of the constitution of water and of all the forces which act in this liquid—on the condition of the attraction of the globe and the weight of the atmosphere. When you raise water in the body of a pump, heaven and earth labour with you; all the powers of nature consent to submit upon a single point to the action of your will, contrary to the natural course of things. And when you raise water simply with your hand, the case is just the same, because, beginning with the determination of your will, all the forces of nature have been in action in the interior of your body to transmit the decision of your will to your hand, and from your hand to the water which it lifts. The philosophy which establishes an absolute distinction between the work of man and the work of God is, then, a shallow philosophy. It supposes that which is contrary to all we know of actual life, that man may do something without entering into concurrent action with the forces of nature which manifest the will of the Creator.

The natural course of things, that is to say, the direct work of God is, then, incessantly modified by the

labour of man. Shall we say that our labour changes the designs of God? No; for God in creating us free has made us partakers of His power, and wills that we should be "co-workers with him;"¹ to labour is not, therefore, to change His designs, but to accomplish them. Man feels within him a power of action; he acts; he sees the results of his acts; and he ceases to call them philosophers who affirm that everything is determined by necessity.

Now, here is the question we have to consider: Is prayer a power? Have we received ability to draw strength from its very source, to seek it in God? We have the instinct of prayer, as well as of action, and God, who has made us workers, has made us suppliants also. But so many men do not pray! And so many men do not work; or, which comes to the same thing, they only work under the iron rod of necessity! Man is constituted for labour, the idle notwithstanding; and man is constituted for prayer, though there are lips always closed before God.

We have the instinct of prayer. Can we verify its results? Certainly we can. Here is a man that was exposed to a great temptation. Feeling himself on the point of falling, he cried to God, and was upheld. You say, perhaps, he is a strong man, and if he had not prayed the result would have been the same. Are you quite sure of this? There is a severe epidemic in a city. The doctors and public officers do their duty, the particular duty with which they are charged. But

¹ "We are labourers together with God," says the Apostle Paul, 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, iii. 9.

here are men and women who, without being under the obligation of any particular duty, without seeking renown, without the motive of scientific interest, without hoping either for a cross of honour or a Monthyon prize, devote themselves with entire self-forgetfulness to the relief of public misery; and they have prayed. You say, perhaps, they are unselfish and devoted natures; had they never prayed, their conduct would have been the same. Are you quite sure of this? These men declare that they have found strength in prayer, and the fact has taken place within them. Who are you that you should say to them: No! To labour is not to change the plans of God, but to accomplish them, since God has created us for labour. Prayer makes no pretension to change the plans of God; it accomplishes them, since God has created us with the need and instinct of prayer.

Prayer and labour are open to the same objections; but these objections arise out of the notion that there is no liberty either in man or God, that the world is a fatal and fixed mechanism. From this point of view, which is that of open or disguised atheism, there is doubtless nothing to ask; but neither is there anything to do. The doctrine of universal fatalism is so contrary to the immediate sense of reality, and to the conscience of mankind, that we have good right to ask that it shall furnish its proofs. Now these proofs never have been given, and they never will be.

The two powers, labour and prayer, are in harmony with each other; they are harmonised in the demand for strength with a view to action. Frequently (it is

the theme of more than one modern writer) prayer, which was the practice of ancient times, is opposed to labour, which is the virtue of modern times. I do not know that the ancients prayed much more than we do; and I am convinced that we do not labour much more than they. As to the opposition between prayer and labour, it has no foundation in truth, but it is very often suggested to the mind by the abuses of spurious devotion. Prayer, offered as a substitute for labour, would be a mockery, if not a crime. You know Fontaine's fable, "The rat who had withdrawn from the world." A big fat rat, well furnished with supplies in his Dutch cheese, receives a deputation of his fellow-countrymen of Ratopolis, blockaded by the cat nation.

They'd been obliged to set out with an empty purse,
 Affairs having gone so much for the worse
 In their menaced republic.
 'Twas little they asked for ; help was sure to arrive,
 If not in four days, without fail in five.
 My friends, said the hermit, I view
 With most devout unconcern all things here below.
 I am but a poor recluse, as you know,—
 How can I help ? What can I do
 More than pray that kind Heaven may send you relief ?
 And I hope that your present suspense will be brief.
 Having thus spoken, without a word more
 The newly-turned saint shut-to his cell door.

That is a bad kind of saint. The sick man, who has neither gold nor silver, neither strength nor perhaps even speech, gives his prayer; and alas for him who would despise such a gift! But for him who can do

something to say to his fellow-creature : Brother, I am unwilling to disturb my rest to serve thee, but I will pray God to help thee, is manifestly to mock both men and God. Prayer, true prayer, should be the source of beneficent action. To any one who says: Act instead of praying, we should always be able to reply: I pray that I may have strength to act.

These two harmonious powers, labour and prayer, have the same condition and the same limit. Their common condition is perseverance. In this respect we often fall into an error which becomes the cause of much discouragement. We reason and act as if every prayer ought to obtain immediately its full effect, as if it sufficed to cry just once : My God! and all would be accomplished. This is the error of a child who, in his puerile impatience, wishes a labour finished the instant it is undertaken. If prayer is a natural function of the life of spirits, it is a perpetual function. If prayer is the respiration of the soul, it must be incessantly renewed. Without wishing to limit the power of divine grace, we have no right to expect, in the ordinary course of Providence, that a single invocation addressed to the Author of life will set free the will from chains of habit which have been increasing in strength perhaps for ten, twenty, or thirty years. Perseverance is, then, the common condition of labour and prayer. As to the limit of these two powers, it is found in the designs, unfathomable by us, of the Supreme Power. How many prayers receive no apparent and immediate answer ! How many efforts seem to fail of their end ! Sovereign Wisdom reserves

to itself the right to determine ultimately both the success of our efforts and the issue of our prayers.

We have found, then, the direct source of strength, of the strength which we must afterwards maintain and increase by good spiritual discipline. Is this all? One of you, Gentleman, has written to me what many others have thought without writing it: Shall we not speak directly of the help which is found in Christian faith, in faith properly so called? Is there not strength in believing in God as manifested in Jesus Christ? This question is important; will it not be touched on? The question will be considered immediately, and within the precise limits indicated by the programme of our inquiry and the composition of this assembly.

III. THE QUESTION OF FAITH.

Our meetings have been announced as having for their object a *philosophical* study of the Problem of Evil. This meant that we should come here with no other antecedent understanding than that of bringing serious hearts and honest minds to the study of an important question. There does not exist between us the tie of any faith which has our common consent, and sways us with a common authority. With all the diversities, shades, transitions, which actually exist among us, and which escape our abstract divisions, we form two distinct classes. Some profess to be Christians, that is to say, to accept the supernatural testimony of Jesus Christ, and, if they are consistent, to go wherever the authority of Jesus Christ may lead them.

Others are simply here as men, with their reason, heart, and conscience. Hitherto I have been able to address myself to all without distinction, because I have kept on the common ground of humanity. Now I am under the necessity of making a distinction.

We, then, who are Christians, or, to speak more exactly in many cases, who desire to be Christians, what have we to say respecting the subject of our study? We say that it is in faith on the Crucified of Golgotha, and in a participation in the blessings which flow from this Fountain of mercy, that the soul may find, by effectual prayer, the strength necessary to work this change, this conversion which is to turn it from the ways of selfishness, and make it enter the paths of charity. You who believe, whatever the amount of your faith, your belief is your treasure. But this treasure is not like that of the miser; whoever possesses it must spend it, because it increases in proportion as it is shared. You have, then, to render the testimony of your faith. You ought to fix the attention of men on the source of strength within you by means of your works and sentiments, by being good and cheerful; for all true faith is a source of goodness, and a spring of joy. Then you ought to add speech to example, and propagate your convictions by word of mouth. But take care not to offend legitimate feelings. Do not increase by any fault of yours the difficulties which truth experiences in penetrating the souls of men. When you address those who profess the same faith as yourselves, remind them boldly of the authoritative rule to which you and they owe a common subjection.

But when you have to give a reason of your hope to those who are simply your fellow-creatures, without being believers, never forget that they are your fellow-creatures, that they have, like yourselves, a will which is rightfully subject to God, but which, in reference to men, remains its own master. In everything respect the liberty of others; and to express it in two words, if you wish to render useful service to the cause of the Christian faith, propose it, do not impose it.

As for you, Gentlemen, who do not profess to be Christians, but have come here designing to pursue a philosophical inquiry, the testimony of believers is a fact which is laid before you, and which you are called to account for. You could not neglect it without ignoring the conditions of the inquiry which brings us together. Philosophy, in fact, is a perfectly free investigation, with which no dogmatic prejudice must be permitted to interfere; and philosophy is an investigation having an universal object; it is distinguished from particular sciences precisely by this universality of its object. Liberty and universality; these are the two characteristics of philosophy. In your search after an explanation of the world, you meet with the testimony of Christians which occupies a large place in history. What must be thought of the fact on which their faith is based? If this is for you a forbidden question, your investigation is not free. If this question is strange to you, your investigation is not universal. In the one case, as in the other, you are departing from the conditions of philosophy. In a truly serious and free inquiry, you must bring yourselves to face the question

of faith, that is to say, the question of the nature of the testimony of Jesus Christ. To leave it untouched, because it is regarded as decided in a negative sense, would be to act under the influence of a prejudice; and this prejudice would constitute a dogmatic presupposition which, though contrary to that of believers, would none the less change the character of science.

The question thus presented may receive two solutions. Is the testimony of Jesus Christ a divine testimony, the basis of a legitimate authority? If, after examination, you say no, you will seek some other basis than that of faith on which to build your thought and life. If, after examination, you say yes, you will enter into the enclosure of faith. If you have said no, either your inquiry will continue without issuing in any result, or you will become a positivist, hegelian, deist, or pantheist, or, further, you will think out a doctrine which will be your own. You will have a philosophy; this philosophy may even be Christian to a certain degree, in this sense, that you accept a part of the Christian teaching; but the doctrines which you may thus accept will remain for you simple doctrines, resting on no basis of faith. In this way the greater part of the contemporaneous French philosophers, called spiritualists, embrace in their thoughts elements the historic source of which is plainly Christian preaching. Thus, also, I have offered you a philosophical solution of the Problem of Evil, drawn from a dogma, but which we have separated from it, and may accept, if we think it accounts for the facts, without accepting the Christian faith as a whole. However this' may

be, if you have said no to the question of faith, you will remain on the ground of common philosophy.

If you have said yes, if you have received the testimony of Jesus Christ as a divine testimony, the faith resulting from your inquiry has become the starting-point of a new effort of thought; for, as St Anselm said, faith seeks understanding. You will then have to shape your thought and life on the basis of Christianity. If you are a learned professor, you will construct a theological system. If you are not, but simply a man of the world, desirous of rendering an account of the consequences of your faith, you will propound what you may call the philosophy of a *Christian*, because these words, *of a Christian*, will remove all misunderstanding, and make it clearly understood that you are no longer on the ground of common and simply human philosophy, but within the enclosure of faith. Where the divine testimony is accepted, there the search after bases of truth stops, as a ship casts anchor on entering a port, and the work of thought assumes another character. Philosophy, properly so called, ceases within the enclosure of faith, but continues if faith has been the object of a rational denial; but wherever there existed, prior to inquiry, a denial which was only a prejudice, true philosophy, which is an impartial and absolutely independent science, could neither cease nor continue, because it would never have begun.

Does it not seem to you that a mind truly free could not pass by a fact of so much importance as the action of the Christian faith in the world without examining

it with the most serious attention? Many men, nevertheless, I mean men of science, have never made this examination, have never entertained the idea of seriously considering the question of faith. How is this? The fact is explained in part by historical causes into the details of which we cannot enter here. I will, however, indicate one of them :—the abuse of authority, and the intrusion of the civil power within the sphere of beliefs. At a time when the crime of heresy, determined by ecclesiastical authority, might lead to serious temporal consequences, men who wished to maintain independence of thought, and who had no taste for martyrdom, could conceive of nothing better than to declare that, devoted to philosophical pursuits, they kept themselves quite outside the sphere of religion, and did not direct their inquiries at all to the truths of faith. Then arose the whimsical theory, that there may be two truths; one to which one adheres as a philosopher, and another, which one accepts as a believer. It was then that the Italian Pomponazzi¹ published a book against the immortality of the soul, but declared that, in his character as a Catholic, he fully accepted the doctrine of a future life from the point of view of faith. The abuse of authority was answered by a refusal to inquire. One of the causes which hinder, even now, the spread of the Christian faith is the fact that numbers of men will not examine religious questions, owing to a vague fear, a heritage from the bondage of the past. But times of liberty have come. It is contrary to all reason to think that

¹ In French, Pomponace, or Pomponat.

there can be two truths. True liberty and strength of mind only exist in the man whose gaze pierces the clouds of prejudice, and contemplates in its grandeur and simplicity the problem which is raised by the existence of the Christian religion. What have I, then, to do now? I have to show you how the question of faith, which presents itself in so many ways, results directly and necessarily from the inquiry which has brought us together.

Good has a history. It has had its struggles, its reverses, and its triumphs. Now, in the history of Good there is one name which occupies a rank apart from all the rest; no one really disputes it—the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Moral light was developed in the ancient world by the reflection of wise men applied to the discernment of the voice of conscience, and to the discovery of the laws of moral and intelligent society. But whilst moral light increased, morals kept growing worse; and Roman civilization presented a hideous mixture of debauchery and cruelty. There was, as it were, a complete divorce between the conscience and life of humanity; and the more clearly wise men saw the image of Good, the more they felt their powerlessness to realise it in the world. It was then that the word of the Galilæan was heard, and became the starting-point of the restoration of society sinking into the abysses of corruption. On this subject I can refer you to a work which will not be regarded with suspicion, at least in the sense in which I may be by some among you. It is the work of a French writer, M. Denis, who

has written a "History of the Moral Ideas of Antiquity."¹ M. Denis seems to positively deny the reality of any supernatural manifestation in Jesus Christ. He gathers together a number of passages with a view to prove that moral light increased through the labours of ancient philosophical research. He proves it; but he is obliged to maintain also that the corruption of morals increased in proportion as wise men saw with more distinct and clear discernment the true laws of nature; and he acknowledges that the power, the force which began to realise the moral law, did not come directly from the labour of philosophers, but from Christian preaching. It is the Christian Word that has awakened the progress which characterises and constitutes modern civilization; those even who do not admit the divinity of the Gospel are often brought to proclaim this fact on historical grounds. In order to accept this declaration we must admit that the world is progressing. Allow me to make a personal confession on this subject. I know that it is a good rule to speak of oneself as little as possible; but you know also that when men contribute their thoughts to a common stock, nothing perhaps is worth so much as the recital of a personal experience. Here, then, is my experience in regard to the idea of progress.

Every one, either owing to the circumstances which have surrounded his entrance into the world, or, as I think, as the result of his temperament, is led to turn with affection towards the past or towards the future. I have always had a predominating taste for the past,

¹ *Histoire des idées morales dans l'Antiquité*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1856.

either owing to the general circumstances which I have just indicated, or perhaps because, somewhat susceptible to poetry, I find that these roads of time, already so happily praised by our Töpffer,¹ these roads running between tall hedgerows, turning round the corners of fields, and winding according to the course of the streams, are more pleasing than the best laid railroads or the finest lines of telegraphic posts; perhaps, also, because in the spectacles presented by political Europe, from my youth up I have always had a feeling of anything but esteem for those men who applaud everything new, taking care to procure as good a place as possible for themselves in the new order of things—for those men who turn their backs on all the setting suns, and adore all the rising stars, and who are seen applauding after success the very thing which they blamed whilst victory was doubtful. As the result of all these causes, I was disposed to disparage everything new, and to put little faith in progress. Now, in the year 1854, I was invited to undertake a course of lectures, at Geneva, on the influence of Christianity upon the destinies of society. It was necessary to take a comprehensive view of the whole development of history for eighteen centuries past. I learned that all novelty is not progress, that in the movement of society there are falls, retrograde steps, states of enfeebled conscience and of weak and wavering public opinion; but that, nevertheless, if we look at great movements and long periods, we see a growth, and a progressive growth,

¹ "Progress in its Relation to our Young Townsfolk and their Schoolmasters," in the volume of *Mélanges*, by Rodölphe Töpffer.

of self-respect, justice, and benevolence in laws and customs. I observed that if all the waters in the rivers go down into the depths of the ocean, the human wave, though it often recoils, on the whole flows upward and heavenward. From that time, without wishing to applaud every innovation, or renouncing the undeniable right of stigmatising mischievous novelties and protesting against unjust triumphs, I have seriously believed in progress, and this impression has never been effaced. I was vanquished by truth.

But whence does progress come? I have told you. The human soil was prepared by the work of conscience and the reflections of wise men; but ancient wisdom found the light without meeting with the power. It did not succeed in providing mankind with a lasting principle of life. The germ of true strength was deposited in the soil by Christian preaching. From that time the tree of Good has enlarged. It may be covered with moss, with misletoe, with dead branches; but the sap of eternal youth circulates in its branches. To every one who has caught a glimpse of its natural proportions the tree appears still very young; and those who despise its shade are like men who turn away in disdain from the ancestral oak which shaded their fathers, and which may spread its boughs over generations to come, to plant in arid sands acorns that are already withered.

We have within us two instincts: the love of the past, and the love of the future; and these two instincts are equally true. Without yielding to any

illusion, without expecting states of society on earth which earth can never realize, without disguising from ourselves the assaults, storms, and disasters which may overtake us, which are perhaps close at hand, it must be admitted that human societies tend to reflect with diminishing imperfection the kingdom of Good. But the future proceeds from the past; progress is the development of pure germs deposited by tradition. Our love for that which has been, and our desire for novelty, are harmonized in our attachment to a tradition held fast and purified, and so much more surely held as it is more earnestly purified. The division of men into two camps, one of which is for preserving everything that exists, and the other for destroying everything—this division, which shows itself everywhere, in the quarrels of a village, and in the politics of an empire, in the conversation of two individuals, and in the greatest conflicts of the world of ideas, has no right to exist. A struggle between two exclusive parties is natural perhaps to our bad hearts, because it is a struggle of interests and passions. But have you not seen the dawn of a better time whenever you have been set free from these interests and passions? Innovators, do you wish to destroy the Good of the past, and renounce the inheritance of ages? Conservatives, do you wish to arrest the work of the present, and hinder Good from growing for the future? No, sirs; between the flags of these conflicting factions there is a third, that of men who, by the labour of the present, desire to make ready the future, developing all the Good of the past, and gradually destroying its Evil.

This is the party of peace, justice, and truth. That is the future; we hail it with confident hope. Now look back, and say if that is not the past; say if that which constitutes the substance and glory of our civilization is not the development of Christian thought; say if the reconciliation of all individuals and nations on a common ground of justice and benevolence is not the work of Him who has willed to display His glory in the highest, proclaiming peace on earth to men of good will?

Jesus of Nazareth presents Himself in history as the source of the grandest array of social forces for the attainment of Good; this is assuredly a strange fact, and one which demands serious consideration. It is surprising that the germ of human progress should have been deposited in human soil, not by the schools of Greece, nor by the practical wisdom of Rome, but by an inhabitant of Nazareth, in Galilee. But do not consider the social action merely of the Son of Mary; look at His influence on individuals. Alfred de Musset, the victim of sensual passions, the dangerous character of which he never ceased to own even whilst he yielded to them, stopped one day before the great figure of St Augustine, and seeing this ardent son of Africa triumphing completely over passions which were ruining himself, he wrote this line, which is not one of the poorest acts of homage that the memory of the bishop of Hippo has received: "The most manly man that has ever been, St Augustine."¹ Whence had St Augustine the strength which conquered his passions? He has told

¹ *La Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle*, Second Part, chapter iv.

us so distinctly that no one can be ignorant. We have spoken of Pascal. Pascal was afflicted to such a degree that from the age of nineteen he never passed a single day without suffering bodily pain. In this feeble body was lodged a soul so bold and daring, so ready to go down into the lowest depths of thought, that none of the torturing perplexities of the mind could remain unexplored. And it is Pascal who said, speaking of the state of his own soul: "Joy, joy, and tears of joy!"¹ Whence came the strength which made him triumphant over pain? He has written it down in characters that will never be effaced. But why do we linger over illustrious names? The Christian faith acts too feebly for Good; it is at once the fault and shame of those who profess it; but still it acts. Make yourselves acquainted with what is passing in the world, far and near. What temptations are vanquished! What lives are changed! What consecration! What tears of relief! What rays of light even in the anguish and darkness of death! In a word, what strength—strength to encounter pain, sadness, disgust, and temptation—what strength for Good has been produced, and is produced still, every day, by this single name, this word of two syllables—Jesus!

Suppress this name! If you could blot it from the memory of men, what mourning would pass over the earth, what a thick cloud would veil our sun! a darker cloud than that which spread over the agony of the ancient world, because the darkness which comes after light is darker than the darkness which precedes it.

¹ Edition Faugère, vols. i., page 240.

All serious conviction has its rights, and deserves respect. If a man, after having weighed and reweighed his thoughts, is thoroughly convinced that the Christian faith in itself, and independently of any abuse that may be committed in its name, is injurious, he has the right, and not only is it his right, but his duty, to destroy what in his eyes is a dangerous superstition. But (and I say it not in the name of my personal belief, but in the name of the plainest interests of humanity, in the name of weakness sustained and grief consoled) how guilty rash haste appears here! How criminal anything like levity! How sure one ought to be of his convictions, and confident in his denials, to be able, with a clear conscience, to devote his tongue and his pen to the destruction of any faith there may be in the earth!

But shall we only look at a single aspect of the question? Shall we not add to the study of the Good which proceeds from the Christian faith an examination of the Evils which it is charged with having produced? Let us beware how we leave this side of the subject in the shade. What is the complaint? That under the mask of religion, men seek after wealth, power, and material interests. In the name of religion constraint and oppression have been practised by despotism to such a degree that all the friends of liberty have been thrown perforce into the camp hostile to faith. In two words, the complaint is, that religion is often a cloak covering the wicked purposes of sensuality and pride. Is this a fact? It is a fact, an indisputable fact. How is it? Shall we impute it to the Christian faith? Do

you think that the Brahmins of India and the priests of Mongolia never seek, under a religious pretext, the satisfaction of interests which are far from spiritual? Can it be, then, if not the Christian faith, at least religion in general which produces these sad results? Do you think that all patriotism is perfectly pure, and that private interests are never hidden under the cloak of public interests? Can you be so young, and have so little knowledge of the world, as not to know that, if faith has its hypocrites, politics and philanthropy have also their Tartuffes? As to persecutions, will you make the Christian faith responsible for the orders of Roman emperors who wanted to suffocate in blood the rising Church? The blood of the disciples of Buddha has been shed in India; is this the fault of the Christian faith? And here, again, if not the Christian faith, must religion in general bear the blame of it? The interests of monarchs and the passions of nations have made, and still make, numerous martyrs; the proscriptions of Sylla had not a religious origin, and when the reign of terror caused waves of blood and torrents of tears to flow, it was not on account of religion. Do you not see that you have to do with passions which arise out of the evil heart of man, and attach themselves to anything? You take for the cause of the Evil that which is but the occasion for its display. The passions are let loose, especially when religious interests are involved, on account of the general importance attached to religion. When social interests are in the ascendant, these passions attach themselves to social interests; hypocrisy and persecu-

tion then occur in the sphere of politics; we have seen it, and we shall see it again. But let us go directly to our question.

Is Jesus of Nazareth responsible for the Evil which has been done in His name? Is it He who, by His example, has taught men to seek after earthly wealth and power, using heaven for a pretext? You know that fanaticism showed itself, under His very eyes, in the persons of His disciples. What did He say to those who wished to call down fire from heaven upon an inhospitable village? "Ye know not what spirit ye are of." And to him who wanted to draw the sword in His defence? "Put up thy sword into its sheath." And on another occasion? "My kingdom is not of this world."¹ Jesus has had imitators, and He has them still. For three centuries the Christians never shed any other blood than their own, and the gates of prisons were opened in order to close upon them. For eighteen centuries there have been, and there are still, men who have sincerely practised indifference to earthly Good, and renounced all selfish aims. Now, I ask you who complain of the evils which religion has produced, Are these the men who are the true Christians, or the others? Jesus foresaw, and condemned beforehand, all the abuses to which His word has been put. There is not a single protest of a noble heart and generous conscience against the unworthy use which may be made of religion which the word of Jesus Christ does not echo, and to which it does not lend support. The earth has seen foul rites of worship; it has had pious

¹ St Luke ix. 55; St Matthew xxvi. 52; St John xviii. 36.

debauches and saintly cruelties; vice, armed with sacred authority, has come down from the immortal regions; and the conscience of Socrates was better than Olympus. But, in the Christian world, that which is the occasion of abuses will always be the source of protest against them. In the Christian world, when the grievous facts of hypocrisy and fanaticism appear, as they do appear everywhere, one may always appeal from the temple to the God who is adored in it, from the priest to Him whose minister he calls himself. The Christian word flows like a fertilising spring through the soil of humanity. Flowing through this evil humanity, the spring becomes charged with slime and impurity; but look at its source, there it always flows forth clear as crystal. Do not make it responsible, then, for the slime and impurity which it receives, which it carries along with it, and purifies. Jesus, I repeat, is the greatest name, a name without a rival in the struggle against Evil. The question, then, presents itself to every attentive and impartial mind: What was this man whose position is so exceptional in the history of the development of Good?

I put this question, I do not enter upon it; it would be a departure from our programme, and it is worth the trouble of being treated separately. Besides, it is time to conclude.

Before the commencement of our meetings, on their being announced under the title they bear, I received from a stranger a letter written by a pen guided by the soul of an artist. I was asked whether it is not the

contemplation of the Beautiful and the Good which is salutary, and whether it is not dangerous to regard Evil too much. I reply: It is not good to regard Evil, and we must hasten to turn away our eyes from it, if we feel weak in its presence, and have any well-founded fear that we shall yield to its solicitations, instead of resisting them. But Evil is so closely connected with our life that it shows itself without our looking for it; and, as Pascal said, "It is good to accustom oneself to profit by Evil, since it is so common, while Good is so rare."¹ I hope, Gentlemen, that we shall not separate without having learnt something to profit by from our view of Evil. Let us recapitulate the principal features of the inquiry which we finish to-day.

Good ought to be; it is the will of God. The realization of Good has been entrusted to a free creature. Were freedom wanting, there would be neither Good nor Evil. From the existence of a free creature results the possibility of rebellion and its consequences. Rebellion takes place; the human race swerves from its law by a voluntary act, and we suffer the consequences of the common fall. But Good is the cause of the Almighty; and the Almighty will never want for time to accomplish His designs. The cause of our discouragements is often found in our impatience. We want to measure with our short measure the ways of Him who is patient, because He is eternal.

Evil ought not to be; God does not will it. To name it is to proclaim at once our duty to battle with it, and the holy hope of victory over it. For him who

¹ Seventh Letter to Mdlle. Roaunez. Edition Faugère, vol. i. p. 51.

has no wish to call in question the authority of reason, and the value of conscience, but preserves an unshaken faith in the goodness of the principle of the universe, Good beams forth from the very study of Evil, and all the complaints of discouragement are transformed at last into a song of hope.



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