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LANDMARKS

OF

NEW TESTAMENT MORALITY.

BY THE

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PREFACE.

Our aim in this volume has been to compress into a few connected chapters what seemed to us to be the distinctive and salient principles of New Testament Morality. In pursuance of this aim we have striven to keep the book strictly within the limits prescribed by its title. We have therefore kept in abeyance all subjects of dogmatic Theology. The questions relating to the theological nature of sin, the origin of sin, the punishment of sin, and the atonement for sin, are outside the scope of the present treatise; for, however much they touch the moral sphere, they contain an additional or transcendental element which demands a separate mode of study.

We have only to add that as the drift of the work is not historical, we have made few references to the opinions of others, and these have gradually disappeared as we have come into contact with those familiar sources from which alone such a work must be ultimately derived—the books of the New Testament itself.

LANDMARKS

OF

NEW TESTAMENT MORALITY.

I.

RELATION OF CHRISTIAN TO PRE-CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

The religion of Christ came into the world rather as a new power than as an absolutely new creed. It never dreamed of assuming a position of complete and startling originality; such an attitude would have destroyed it at its birth. Its preliminary hope of success lay in its possibilities of union with the old faiths of humanity; its greatest claim to novelty was just its power to incorporate these faiths. From the very beginning of its career its watchword was "reconciliation;" by its own admission it came "not to destroy but to fulfil." Its proudest boast was, that in Christ it had *gathered together all things.* It professed to have found a meeting-place for the divergent views, for the divergent hearts of men, to have broken down the

middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, bond and free, and to have at last made it possible that all might "come into an unity of faith unto the measure of the stature of the perfect man."

It will not surprise us, then, that Christianity as an intellectual system reveals the fruit of other intellectual systems. If the religious life, like all other lives, be an evolution, we shall expect to find in the flower the traces and evidences of the seed. Christianity is by common admission the flower of the religious consciousness, but for that very reason it is related to the earth beneath as well as to the heaven above. It has grafted itself on the stem of nature, and has thereby become a natural religion. It professes to be the most natural of all religions, because it claims to reconcile the discords of nature. It gives expression in one voice to all those instincts of the heart which the old world had expressed in *many* voices—"in various forms and diverse parts." It has the Brahmanical sense of mysticism, the Buddhist feeling of present depression, the Parsee conviction of sin, the Confucian hope of a coming kingdom of glory. It appropriates the theocratic spirit of Judea, the æsthetic spirit of Greece, the legal spirit of Rome, the philosophic spirit of India, and it appropriates them because it claims to have been itself their originator—the light which in the past had lighted every man.

In no sphere is this appropriative power of

Christianity so distinctly manifest as in the domain of its ethics. Here, if anywhere, it was essential that the revelation should not be wholly new. A religion whose primary aim was to commend itself to the natural conscience must of necessity make its appeal to the moral instincts of the natural heart. Accordingly, there is nothing so easy as to find parallels between the precepts of Christ and the precepts of other masters. It is easy to find His golden rule amidst the teachings of Confucius, His principle that humility is the road to greatness amid the reputed sayings of Lao-Tse. It is not difficult in the writings of Hillel, of Philo, of Seneca, to lay our hand on passages that will prove the precept of brotherly love to belong to the revelation of nature. But what then? In putting our hand upon such parallels we are not *depreciating* but illustrating the work of Christianity. We are showing that the work of Christianity has been from the outset a process of incorporation, a process of reconciliation. We are pointing to the fact that it has achieved its moral greatness by reason of its moral adaptation, and that the secret of its regenerative power is its power to re-create without destroying. Christianity has not overridden the moral systems of the past; it has only overridden their antagonisms.

In the life of the old world these moral systems refused to coalesce. Each held itself to be the absolute truth, and each denied the right of existence to the other. Christianity came with a new

life, and the hostile elements ran into unity. They ceased each and all of them to be absolute truths, but they became the component parts of an absolute truth, and the strength which in days of old was thought to lie in their isolation was found to consist in their reconciliation and their union. Such has been the moral work of Christianity in the world. It has done for the ethical systems of the past what the vital force has done for the elements of the physical structure—kept them together in unity. It has given them a new reason for their existence, a new claim on the suffrages of mankind. They no longer ask to be judged by their contrast, but by their relationship. Each claims to be viewed as the member of a great whole, and finds the justification of its being in the fact that it subserves an universal interest. It is to the exhibition of this union between the new life of Christianity and the moral elements of the old world that we purpose to devote this opening chapter.

At the time when Christianity rose on the world there were in existence *three* great moral systems, which may be taken as the types of all morality—the Epicurean, the Stoic, and the Platonic. The Epicurean proposed as the basis of all action the love of self—the happiness of the individual agent. It does not follow from this that the Epicureans were of necessity sensual. They might or they might not be so; it depended on their individual ideas of happiness. The first men of the school

were the reverse of sensual. Their idea of happiness was moderation, an equable calm, a mind undisturbed by any excitement either of grief or joy. To the founder of the sect himself, and to his immediate followers, the greatest boon of life was a balanced intellect—an intellect in which each mode of thought and feeling had its legitimate amount of exercise, so much and no more. Such a doctrine is indeed very far from sensualism; it is one which could only be exemplified in the restraint of the sensual impulse. Nevertheless in its very root and essence the creed of Epicurus was the religion of self-interest. In its best and purest form it did not teach that self-interest lay exclusively in sense; but it never ceased to teach that a man's individual interest ought to be the motive of his actions. It never ceased to proclaim that the rule of my conduct should be its effect upon myself, that the guide of my life should be the search for personal pleasure and the avoidance of personal pain. Men in this school, as in all schools, might differ as to what constituted personal pleasure, or involved the highest degree of personal pain; that was a question to be variously determined by the various grades of culture and of character. But in the meantime the broad principle was laid down that every man's ideal should be himself—his own interest, his own welfare, his own happiness. In the glass of the universe he is to behold no other glory than his own, and no other image than his reflected

shadow. In looking into that glass he is to experience a process the opposite to that of which St. Paul spoke. The Apostle of the Gentiles had his image transfigured into the forms on which he gazed; the Epicurean is to transmute all forms into his own image. He is to measure everything by its power to serve *him;* that it may have power to serve the universe also is an irrelevant fact. As Professor Wallace * points out, the Epicurean is not an utilitarian; he is an individualist. He looks upon the world as *his* oyster, which he is to open. It makes little difference to him whether there be, or be not, ends to be compassed by human life beyond his personal control, and irrespective of his personal existence. He does not deny that such ends may exist, but he denies that they have any right to influence *him;* there may be gods above us, but the individual man has nothing to do with them. The individual man has to do with nothing but his own individualism—his private wants, his personal desires, his conscious appropriation of the benefits of life. His motive is happiness, his aim is self-preservation, and his highest philosophy is self-contemplation; within the limits of the world of self he must live and move and have his being.

At the opposite remove from this Epicurean individualism is the system called Stoicism. If the Epicurean placed the value of life in the ministra-

* *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth ed., vol. viii. p. 475.

tion of the race to the individual, the Stoic placed its value in the ministration of the individual to the race. The object of the Epicurean was the one; the object of the Stoic was the many. The Epicurean set before him the thought of self, and to the furtherance of self he sought to use the lives of others; the Stoic set before him the thought of others, and in the furtherance of their interest he strove to *sink* himself. He is popularly represented as a man whose philosophic aim was to reach the contempt of pain and pleasure. The popular notion is a half-truth, and the other half is much more distinctive of Stoicism. That the disciples of this philosophy did strive to obtain a mastery over their individual feelings of pain and pleasure is a fact undisputed and indisputable, but they strove for it as a means, not as an end. They desired to conquer the sense of individual pain and pleasure, not for the sake of the conquest, but for the sake of that benefit to the world which they deemed the conquest would bring. They thought that if a soul could get above a sense of its own interests it would be better able to realize the interest of the community at large, better able to consult the public welfare and to seek the common good. If Stoicism had been no more than a wish to free the soul from perturbations of feeling, then Stoicism would have been only Epicureanism under a new name; it would have been simply a renewal of the effort after a balanced mind. But here lay the

difference of the two creeds. To the Epicurean even in his purest days a calm mind was only desirable as a source of selfish rest,—something which would enable a man to hold aloof from the struggles of life. To the Stoic, on the other hand, the calm mind was an object of desire for a precisely opposite reason; he sought it as an aid to the struggles of life, as a means of making him more helpful to the cause of humanity. The real object of the Stoic's contemplation was the sphere of universal being—the family, the nation, mankind, the Universe.* His interest was not limited even to the human; it ranged over the whole creation, animate and inanimate. It took in bud and flower and tree; it embraced reptile and bird and beast. One sphere alone it sought to ignore—the pleasures and pains of the spirit that contemplated them, but in ignoring that sphere it was actuated by the hope that the spirit, oblivious to its own grief or joy, might better identify itself with the will of the Universe.

The *third* system of the old world morality is Platonism. Ideally, though not historically, it is to be regarded as an attempt to unite the two opposite tendencies which found expression in Epicureanism and in Stoicism. Epicureanism was self-interest, or the interest of the one; Stoicism was universal interest, or the interest of the many; Platonism was the attempt to unite in a new idea the interest

* A qualification to this statement, however, will be found in Chapter IX.

of the many with the interest of the one.* The new idea by which it was sought to join them was a spiritual conception of God as the Supreme Good.† The true interest of every man was the indwelling of God in his soul, and the indwelling of God in his soul would be best promoted by living together with his fellow-men in the interchange of virtuous relations; the one would become the many and the many would become the one when it was seen that each had a life common to the other—the being of God Himself. Here, then, was a *third* fragment of the old world's ethics. Let us live for self, said the Epicurean; Let us live for others, said the Stoic; Nay, said the Platonist, let us live for the one other who is not another—God! Is not this last the sum of all possible morality? In words, it certainly is. If the Platonic notion of God were coextensive with our modern notion of the universe, Platonism would have antedated Christianity by four hundred years. But Plato's notion of God was not co-extensive even with the notion of the Universe of his own day. His God had nothing to do with what is called matter. Matter was the symbol of the finite, and the finite was unworthy of God. The only things which were really worthy of interest were eternal and immutable ideas; the senses had no place in the kingdom of regenerated souls. To enter that kingdom the senses must be

* See the *Dialogues*, particularly the *Parmenides*.

† *Republic*, Bk. vii. pp. 514–518.

crucified, the personal affections extirpated, the love of the finite expunged. Men must cease to love *men;* they must fix their hearts upon love itself. Not the beautiful but their beauty, not the true but their truth, not the good but their goodness, must be the object of human affection. God was Thought, and the love of God was the love of thought. Things were but shadows, forms were but illusions, colours and sounds were but fleeting and perishable appearances; but the abstract ideas of the intellect were eternal and immutable. They were eternal because they were unseen, they were immutable because they were immaterial.

We need not say that such a conception of the love of God was destructive of what is called the love of man. It only reached its goal by the mutilation of human nature. To become absorbed in God was in a measure to be annihilated; it was to lose all knowledge, all remembrance of worldly things. But to lose such knowledge was to lose the spirit of philanthropy. If in the life of God I am to forget the claims of my own physical nature, I am bound also to forget the physical claims of my brother-man. This world as a world can be nothing to me. Looking down from the Platonic height the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, and their wants are as the wants of grasshoppers. The existence of cold and hunger, of poverty and pain, of war and pestilence, is not worthy to be named. These are already non-exis-

tent; they are shadows, appearances, unsubstantial forms which live only in the imaginings of sense, and which shall vanish with the death of sense. That was the legitimate conclusion, and the only legitimate conclusion, from the principles of the Platonic philosophy. Its doctrine of the love of God was to all intents and purposes an extension of the sphere of Epicurus. It tended to paralyze all interest in aught that was human. Whatever patriotism it may have kindled for a Divine and impossible Republic, it awakened none for the vulgar wants of a commonplace earthly soil. The Platonic love of God, like the Epicurean love of self and the Stoic love of universal nature, ended in representing only a fragment of morality.

For here we must observe that not one of these systems is even professedly commensurate with the whole of human nature; every one of them in truth professes to be at variance with a part of the nature of man. None of them is wholly false; but each of them insists on holding one side of a truth to the exclusion of its other sides. Self-love, the love of others, the love of God—these are all good things. But they are good things in their unity, not in their isolation, not in their mutual antagonism. Epicureanism said, Self-preservation is a law of nature. Epicureanism had a perfect right to say that, for it was true. But when Epicureanism went on to say, Self-preservation is *the* law of nature, it changed its truth into a falsehood. It denied that others

as well as self had a claim on every man. It set up the love of the individual as an antagonist to the love of the race, and by that act it lost its claim to interpret the whole heart of man. Stoicism said, The preservation of the race is a law of nature. Stoicism too had a perfect right to make that assertion; it was founded on the moral instincts of the soul. But when Stoicism went on to say that the preservation of the race was *the* law of nature, it became one-sided, and therefore untrue. It proposed to crucify the individual, to ignore the natural cravings of the heart, to dry up the well-springs of personal joy, and in so doing it became itself unnatural, a contradiction to the Universe it meant to serve. Platonism said, The love of God is the law of nature, and besides it there is no other law. And truly in saying thus Platonism spoke well, for to love that which is at the summit of the Universe is to have the key to all love. But when Platonism went on to say, that God had nothing to do with the perishable shows of earthly things, it denied Him to be at the summit of the Universe. It narrowed Him into a corner, it excluded Him from all participation in the finite, it made the love of Him incompatible with the love of toiling millions. It placed the circle of His life in a region outside the lives of men, and he who would enter the precincts of the Divine temple must drop at the threshold all sympathies with the human.

Here, then, are three ideas whose isolation, whose

mutual antagonism prevents any one of them from being true—self-love, brotherly love, Divine love. Is there anywhere to be found a bond that can unite these fragments? Is there anywhere in existence a system that can recognize the truth of each in an unity that embraces all? Such a system Christianity professes to be. Whatever may be the view taken of the relation of Christian theology to the creeds of the past, there can, we think, be no doubt as to the relation of Christian morality to the moralities of the past. Christianity has put its design in this matter beyond a doubt by giving in a single sentence the sum of all it means to teach: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, this is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Let us examine this remarkable passage as a contribution to the science of ethics. Leaving out of view in the meantime all reference to Judaism, let us try to see what bearing such a precept had on the moral creeds of Gentile ages. Are we in the presence of a moral revolution? Are we about to witness the annulling of all former verdicts of conscience? Is the new doctrine of the blessed life to be one which sets at naught all the old doctrines, and ushers the human soul into an untrodden field? Such are the questions that meet us on the threshold. In part they are answered as soon as asked.

It does not take long to see that we have not here the elements for a revolution. "Love thy God;" "love thy neighbour;" "love thyself"—these are the component parts of the moral law of Christianity. But every one of these precepts has already met us in the old world. "Love thyself" was the creed of the Epicurean; "love thy neighbour" was the creed of the Stoic; "love thy God" was the creed of the Platonist. It is the elements of heathendom that meet us in the moral code of Christendom. Christianity rears a new temple, but it is from the scattered stones of ancient ruined structures. Within her moral Pantheon she finds a place for the three great representatives of Greek humanity; nay, it is on the union of these that she proposes to base her ethics. She proposes to construct a system in which the barriers to all other systems shall be broken down, in which self-love shall no longer be the antithesis to the love of our neighbour, in which neither shall any longer be opposed to the love of God. In this sacred temple of reconstructed truth the pleasure of the individual is to coexist with the development of the race, and the spirit of religion is to be furthered by both; Epicurus, Zeno, and Plato are to stand side by side.

Here is a scheme of very striking originality—an originality which lies in the very power to gather and appropriate old materials. But we are as yet only on the surface of the inquiry. We have seen that Christianity claims for herself the three frag-

ments of Greek morality, and proposes to unite them into a great whole. The aim is good, but how is it to be achieved? It is clear that in the Christian system the three Greek elements cannot arise simultaneously. No doubt they are intended ultimately to exist together in the same mind and at the same time, but that is the goal, the final stage of their being. To reach that stage the Christian consciousness has to pass through a process in which one or other of the three elements seeks the undivided empire of the soul. The question is, In what order do they claim this empire? Conceding that there is in Christianity an Epicurean element, a Stoic element, and a Platonic element, which of them comes first in point of time? Do we begin with the love of God and then pass down to the love of men, and end at last with the love of self? Or, do we follow the opposite course? Do we begin with the love of self, and rise up into the love of men, and culminate in the love of God? These are the alternatives; which shall we pursue? Let us see whether the Christian code itself can help us to a decision.

Now in that sum of Christian morality to which we have referred there is one point which is very distinctly indicated; it is implied beyond all controversy that in the development of the individual mind self-love must precede brotherly love. The grounds on which we base this conclusion are the words: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself.*"

The idea clearly is, that a man in the act of benefiting his brother-man can have no other standard than this: What would I like done to myself under similar circumstances?—in other words, an application of the Golden Rule. The very fact that I wish to give pleasure to my brother implies that I have already experienced the sensation in myself, and would not object to experience it again. What is the impulse that impels me to save a man from drowning?—is it not the sense that life is dear? If I never at any moment had felt life to have been a source of personal joy, it would be impossible for me to be stirred to pity by the prospect of a man losing life. The essence of all human love is sympathy; that is to say, it is the power to feel yourself in the place of another. Sympathy in its intellectual aspect is the imaginary appropriation of another's grief or joy. But before a man can imagine he must feel. If you have never felt that pleasure is sweet and that pain is bitter, if you have never known the personal joy of individual possession, if you have never experienced a thrill of delight at the moment when you have received a stroke of good fortune, how is it possible that the good or bad fortune of your brother-man can be fraught to you with any sympathetic interest? How is it possible that you can attribute to another a sense of pleasure or a sense of pain which you yourself have never felt within your own soul? It is not possible, and therefore one

part of the problem is already solved. No man can seek the interest of another until he has learned in experience the meaning of *self*-interest; the Epicurean element of self-love must precede in order of time the Stoic element of brotherhood. "Love thy neighbour as thyself" is the doctrine inscribed upon the porch of the Christian temple, and it has not been effaced by the hand of time. It is the watchword of modern science at this hour. That self-love must be prior to all other loves, that the appreciation of personal interest must be anterior to enthusiasm for the interest of others, is a truth which the spirit of evolution has appropriated as its own, but it has appropriated it from that very source which is superficially supposed to be its opposite—the religion of the Son of man.*

What, then, is that process of transition by which the love of self passes into the love of others, by which the rule called Number One is transformed into the Golden Rule? It is that very power of sympathy of which we have been speaking. There is in the human mind, in all its phases and in all its stages of development, a power of conceiving how another would be affected by experiencing its own pleasures or its own pains. We say, in all stages of its development. The statement may appear absurd to those who hold the doctrine of Hobbes, but in reality it is no less compatible with

* See the chapter of Herbert Spencer, entitled, *Egoism versus Altruism.* —*Data of Ethics*, p. 187.

that doctrine than with any other. Let us say, for the sake of argument, that men were originally in what Hobbes calls a state of nature—a state of mutual enmity. Let us suppose that at first the only principles which regulated the actions of men were a spirit of aggression on the one hand and a desire for retaliation on the other; we say that even from such seemingly discordant elements we can educe the fact of man's power to sympathise with man. For, have we ever considered what is implied in the desire for retaliation; nothing less than a man's power to put himself in thought into the place of another. What a man says under the influence of the revengeful spirit is this: My neighbour has done to me that which has given me pain; if I do the same to him I shall give him pain! What is this thought but an act of intellectual sympathy? The man is under the influence of a spirit of revenge, but that spirit itself implies as the very condition of its existence that he has the power to think of his own pain as if it were not his own pain but the suffering of another. Now, that is intellectual sympathy, and intellectual sympathy is the root of all sympathy. True, it is as yet only the feeling with another, not the feeling for another. It is a higher thing to feel for than merely to feel with. If I feel for a man I am on the borders of love, but I may feel with him and be on the borders of revenge. In certain moods of mind it may give me pleasure to

imagine my brother affected with my pain; this is just what is called the spirit of revenge, and it is one form of the spirit of evil. Nevertheless the power which in this case makes for evil is the very power which in other circumstances will make for good. To be able to feel that my pain may at any moment become the pain of another is the essential condition to all benevolence. The first and longest step of the process is already taken even in the state of savage enmity, for the power of sympathy underlies the spirit of retaliation, and the germ of peace is folded in the heart of war.

In the unfolding of this germ Christianity follows a very different method from that pursued by Stoicism. Stoicism's method is the annihilation of self to make room for others; Christianity's is the enlargement of self to include others. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" means, in its full acceptation, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as a part of thyself. It is the doctrine of Christianity, and it is corroborated by modern science, that what a man calls his individual nature is in truth but one member of a great organism. "No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself," is the aphorism in which the religion of Christ expresses its sense of the solidarity of the Universe. The main lesson which as a social being it desires man to learn is the fact that his individual joy cannot be purchased by individualism. "The hand," says St. Paul, "cannot say to the foot, I have no need

of thee." No man is himself without another. The personal life only reaches its full consciousness when it has identified itself with all life. The nearer it comes to this identification the nearer it approaches to individual joy. In its expansion from an isolated unit into the member of a family, in its growth from simple membership into the responsibility of headship, in its passage from the cares of the householder to the cares of the citizen, from the cares of the citizen to the enthusiasm of the patriot, from the enthusiasm of the patriot to the love of the philanthropist, it goes from stage to stage of personal strength, and reaches more and more of personal joy; the Stoic becomes an Epicurean again; he that loseth his life finds it.

So far, then, the order of the Christian evolution is clearly determined. We have seen that in the view of Christianity the love of self must in point of time precede the love of others. But there is a *third* object of love recognised by Christianity, and recognised more emphatically than either of the others: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." In what order is the love of God to come? Is it to precede, or is it to follow, the love of our neighbour? To that question Platonism and Christianity both give an unequivocal answer; but the answer of Platonism is not the answer of Christianity. Platonism says, Love God before all other things; begin at the head of the ladder, and then descend as far as you can descend without

losing sight of the Divine Idea. Christianity, on the other hand, says, Begin with the love of *men;* start from the foot, and not from the top of the ladder; enter first into communion with the heart of your brother, and ascend thence into fellowship with the heart of God: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God whom he hath not seen?"

And clearly, if the love of God is to form any part of a moral system, it is unquestionable that Christianity is right. If God is to be to me anymore than an abstraction, He must be conceived by me as the fulness of humanity;* if He is to be conceived by me as the fulness of humanity, I must already have mastered that conception. What meaning of Divine Love can I form that has not its root in human love? When I define God Himself as Love, I merely intensify my imagination of the human feeling. If I have no human feeling, what meaning can I attach to the Divine attribute? When I call God light, I convey to myself a distinct idea; but why? Because I have experienced the physical nature of light. When I call God Love, when I speak of His love to me, when I speak of my love to Him, I have again a distinct idea; but why? Because in my own person I have learned what it is to love. We are not here asking whether our notion of personality be or be not adequate to explain the nature of God; that is a question for

* This is indeed the moral basis of the Christian doctrine of Incarnation.

the theologian, perhaps still more for the metaphysician. We merely say that if the love of God be included in the study of ethics at all, it can only be a sublimation of the love which the good man bears to goodness. If there be any moral value in the love of God, it can only be in the fact that God is a moral being. There is nothing necessarily moral in the idea that a man loves; it depends on what he loves. There have been men who have fixed their heart upon a false ideal of heroism, and whose love has made them immoral. What makes it a good trait in any man to love God is the fact that God is conceived to be good. The love of God is the love of morality personified; that is the reason why we praise the pious. But before a man can love morality in God, he must love it in man; his thought of the Unseen must be modelled on his image of the seen. Morality must precede religion. If to me virtue is not already beautiful, it will not be made so by the mere fact that it dwells in God; rather must God become God to me because it dwells in Him. By the steps of the finite must I climb to the source of the Infinite beauty. By the path of the Stoic I must reach the joy of the Platonist. By the service of my brother, whom I have seen, I must find the love and the loveliness of God whom I have not seen.

We have thus tried to indicate in brief compass our view of the relation which the morality of the Christian religion bears to the morality of the pre-

Christian Gentile world. We have exhibited the *three* great types of the Hellenic mind—the Epicurean, the Stoic, and the Platonist. We have selected these, not so much because they were the forms of thought which were brought into closest historic contact with Christianity, as because they are the forms of thought which embrace all possible types of morality. The distinctions comprehended in the names Epicurean, Stoic, Platonist, are by no means merely Hellenic distinctions; they will be found in all lands, and in all ages. Other foundation for the conduct of life can no man lay than one or other of these—the love of self, the love of humanity, the love of God; and the religion which unites these has become the foundation of absolute morality. That honour we have claimed for Christianity. We have tried to show that the morality of Christ derives its originality from the fact that, alone of all ethical systems, it has proposed a scheme of moral reconciliation. In the eighteenth century it was held to be a reproach that the elements of its teaching were as old as the creation. We venture to think that in the nineteenth century —a century which values all things in proportion to their powers of adaptation—that which was a reproach has become a glory. The modern conception of originality, and the glory of originality, is in some respects the reverse of the ancient one. We no longer seek nor desire to see the advent of a phenomenon which has no connection with aught

that has gone before; we should not now think such an advent a grand thing. That which commands the admiration of our age is the appearance of a force which manifests itself in the incorporation of other forces, of a life which can gather up and appropriate the scattered elements of bygone lives: that is our modern ideal of creative power.

And that is the ideal we find in Christianity. Coming into the world as a new moral force, it has availed itself of the old moral materials, and in the combination of these materials it has taken a position which is unique and unparalleled. It has offered a bond of union to elements which in all the ages of the past had existed in a state of isolation and antagonism, and in assigning to each a function of life within itself, it has vindicated before the world its eternal right to be. Each system of moral thought has been justified by the cross of Christ. Things waxing old and ready to vanish away have in Him received their youth once more. Elements which Paganism itself had discarded, have in Him been found to have their legitimate place in the life of man, and their legitimate use in the world of being. The birth of Christianity was the resurrection of the fading hopes of nature; the Gentiles came to its light, and the leaders of ancient thought to the brightness of its rising.

II.

RELATION OF JEWISH TO CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

It may seem a strange thing, that in our survey of the relations existing between Christian and pre-Christian ethics we should have taken no account of that system, which beyond all ancient codes is entitled to the name of moral—the religious creed of the Jews. Our omission was no oversight; it had its ground in the fact that neither in the view of the rationalist nor of the supernaturalist is Judaism admitted to be essentially pre-Christian. Alike to the rationalist and to the supernaturalist Judaism and Christianity are one; to the former Christianity is the flower of Judaism, to the latter Judaism is the seed of Christianity. The author of *Ecce Homo* tells us on the very first page of his work that Christianity had its root in a movement which did not begin with Christ; and Mr. Hardwick, approaching the subject from the standpoint of an exclusive orthodoxy, is not afraid to say that if the originality of Judaism be sacrificed, the originality of Christianity must fall.*

* *Christ and other Masters*, 2nd ed. I. 81.

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We have thought it best, therefore, in the view of this unwonted unanimity of diverse schools, to separate the case of Judaism from the case of Gentile forms of thinking, and to assume that the essence of the Old Testament is identical with the essence of the New. We have in the first instance allowed Judaism to make common cause with Christianity in the proclamation of a great moral law adequate to embrace the ethical wants of all nations, and we have confined ourselves solely to the inquiry: What has been the historical relation between the Gentiles and this moral law? We must now, however, take a more internal view of the relations of Christianity. It often happens, to one looking on the starry heavens, that what to the naked eye appears a united mass of light breaks up through the telescope into a multitude of luminous points, with myriad miles between them. Some such analogy as this is seen in the contemplation of Judaism and Christianity. At a distance they are one; viewed from the distance of heathendom they present the appearance of an united and compact body, in whose members there is no discord and in whose nature there is no division. But when we draw nearer we find that this unity was an optical delusion. The one begins to break up into the many, and the compact body reveals dissonance in the heart of its members. The two systems, which to the distant gaze seemed to constitute one doctrine and one life, are seen in their

immediate prospect to be animated by mutual antagonisms. Whatever may be said of the ideal relation between Judaism and Christianity, there can be no doubt at all as to their relation in actual history. The Jew from the very beginning looked upon the Christian as his enemy. Christianity declared in so many words that her mission was the fulfilment and not the destruction of Judaism, but the older system uniformly refused the proffered reconciliation. The religion of Christ had to fight its way to empire over the prostrate form of its rival, and the unity which it professed in thought was never realised in fact. Nay, in the very statement, "Think not I came to destroy the law," there may be detected already the germ of a disunion. There was implied in that sentence a perception of the fact that there was something in the attitude of Christianity which seemed to oppose the advance of Judaism, that to the eye of nature at least, which is the eye of history, there is an element in the Cross which seems to resist the progress of the Law, and threatens to bring to an end the moral precepts of the code of Moses.

Now, this was no mere prejudice on the part of Judaism; it was the instinctive perception of a real danger. The danger of Judaism lay in the very promise of Christianity—*I came to fulfil.* For let us remember that there is a kind of fulfilment which implies destruction; the butterfly is the destruction of the caterpillar, the man is the

destruction of the child. So in like manner is moral love the destruction of moral law: "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away." When St. Paul declares that Christ has abolished the law of ordinances *contained in precepts*, he is speaking of a destruction through fulfilment. The nearest approach we can find to an illustration is the idea of a blind man restored to sight. Let us imagine this man reading with the eye the same words which he used to read with the fingers. Wherein would consist the difference? Clearly it would not lie in the result, that in each case would be the same—the acquisition of a certain point of knowledge; but there would be a complete difference in the manner in which the result would be achieved. In the old days it was reached by touching the letters one by one; it would now be gained by seeing the word as a whole. In the former case it came by an enumeration of materials; it would now come in a flash, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. In the first instance it was the result of a process of reasoning; it would now be the fruit of an intuition, the product of an immediate light.

Something like this is certainly in St. Paul's mind when he speaks of the abolition of the precepts. The man under the Jewish law reads by touch and not by sight. He cannot grasp the word as a whole, and therefore he counts the letters one by one. He cannot lay hold of the general principle of love, and therefore he tries by arith-

metical calculation to number and perform the various acts which a loving man would do; he seeks to make the hand supply the defects of the heart, and he lays down rules to guide the hand. Now, what St. Paul says is this: the moment you get a heart the rules for the hand will go for nothing; the moment love comes law will vanish. Let but the light of that positive command illumine your soul, "Bear ye one another's burdens," and there will be no longer any need for the negative mandates, "Thou shalt not kill," "Thou shalt not steal," "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour;" they will be at once fulfilled and abolished in the spirit of universal love. Let but your heart be kindled into the warmth of human feeling for your brother, and there will be no longer any need to learn from the schoolmaster the rules of social etiquette; the innate graciousness of the spirit will render such rules superfluous for evermore. The law is but your schoolmaster to teach you the acts of life; but when life itself shall open upon you, you shall perform the old acts by a short and easy method, and reach the old result by a way which to the schoolmaster was unknown.

Christianity, then, is by its own profession the supplement of Judaism, and in this lies its power at once to fulfil and to destroy. The question now arises, What are the elements in Judaism which are supplemented in Christianity? They are precisely those three ethical duties which we found in the

previous chapter to constitute the sum of Christian morals—the love of self, the love of our neighbour, and the love of God; the doctrine of the Epicurean, the doctrine of the Stoic, and the doctrine of the Platonist. The thought which is forced upon us by the preceding inquiry is the fact that Judaism is defective in not giving sufficient prominence to any of those Gentile systems which Christianity has united; it has not allowed sufficient weight to the instinct which created Epicureanism; it has not given scope enough to the instinct which awakened Stoicism; it has not found adequate room for the instinct which necessitated Platonism. In the supplementing of these deficiencies lies Christianity's superiority over Judaism, and therefore we must look in turn at each of these.

First, The creed of the Jew was defective in this —that it did not allow sufficient prominence to the instinct of self-love. The statement must appear at first sight the wildest of paradoxes. If there is one thing which more than another we are wont to associate with Judaism, it is its tendency to foster an Epicurean selfishness. We think of the Israelite as a man whose moral code impelled him to seek his own material glory; we think of him as one who did good only that he might receive individual pleasure, who abstained from doing ill only that he might avoid individual pain. The truth is, the popular notion about Judaism is a delusion. There never was a religion, excepting

perhaps that of the Brahmans, in which the claims of the individual were so little recognised. That there are glittering promises of material gold to the performance of virtue is a point that cannot be denied. But it is a great mistake to think that these promises were held out to the Jew as an individual; they were spoken not to the man but to the nation. The first commandment which carries temporal promise with it refers to the relation of the family: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land." Whose days are to be long in the land? Not those of the isolated unit, but those of the national family of Israel itself. To the eye of the moral Law-giver the whole nation is pictured as one man. The life of the nation, the immortality of the nation, the perpetually increasing greatness of the nation—these were to be the objects of every Israelite's care, the sum of all his hopes, the goal of all his desires. He was to live for the *family*. His greatest joy was to be the faith that a covenant had been made with his *house;* his greatest grief was to be the fear lest his iniquities should be visited on his children. His aim would have been sublime, if the national prosperity for which he strove had been a spiritual prosperity. But his idea of the prosperity of his descendants was the advent of an age of wealth, of luxury, of physical conquest, of universal dominion—an age when his children's children would be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare

sumptuously every day. To give up his individual life to this, was to surrender himself to an impersonal materialism, it was to sell his birthright for a mess of pottage; the object was unworthy of the sacrifice, the goal was the triumph of the flesh.

And the result, as Hegel says, was a dimness in the individual hope of immortality.* The Jewish hope in a state of future glory was during all the years of the nation's greatness exclusively a *national* aspiration. It was when the nation as a nation began to decline that the individual as an individual began to rise; the Pharisee pointed to the resurrection of the dead when there was no longer any prospect of political glory for the living. As long as the nation remained in strength it allowed no man to preach any immortality but its own. The individual was to live for the sake of the race, and for the sake of the race was he to die. There was always the hope indeed in the heart of each man that he might be alive at that coming of the Messiah which was to complete the national glory, but a coming so long deferred must have made the heart sick. No man can read the Old Testament without feeling that on the whole the individual is depressed. The harp of the minstrel rarely strikes a chord of unmingled joy. There are psalms which alternate between light and darkness, but where the singer tells of himself the shades predominate. Every note speaks of a sense of

* *Philosophy of History*, p. 205, Lond. 1857.

individual weakness; every cadence breathes the feeling of personal insufficiency; every song is to some extent a song in the night, and the refrain which echoes through its chords is this: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him?"

Now the first aim of Christianity—the first in order of time—was to inspire the individual man with a sense of his own claims, in other words, to create a just self-love. It is popularly believed that Christianity did this by revealing immortality; it would in our view be more correct to say that it revealed immortality by doing *this*. What kept the Jew from realising his immortality was the fact that he did not realise himself. Christianity for the first time spoke to his individual soul. It told him that his soul was in the sight of Heaven an infinitely grand thing, so grand that there was nothing he could take in exchange for it. It told him that the acquisition of that whole material world, which he coveted for his country, was not in importance to be compared for one hour with the culture and development of his personal life, that the kingdoms of the earth and the glory of them were a poor and insignificant possession when weighed against the glory of an individual contemplation of God; and if it be asked how Christianity taught the soul of each man to think thus highly of itself, there can from any side of religious opinion be only one reply—it taught individual men by the revelation of an individual

man. The glory of personality was first learned by its exhibition in a personal life, a life from which all extraneous ornaments were extruded in order that it might reveal its own native light. In Him whom they called the Son of Man men beheld a new species of power—the power of individual purity, of personal sacrifice, of private virtue. They saw that there is in the life of each man the possibility of an infinite glory, which would be his, though he were alone in the universe; that the human spirit is in itself, and amidst the meanest surroundings, capable of rising to the Divine; and that the rise into the Divine is reached by stooping to the limits that environ the human soul.

Second, If Judaism was deficient in self-love, it was also deficient in brotherly love. The exclusive character of the religion is one of the commonplaces of history. But it is by no means so clearly understood wherein this exclusiveness really consisted. Warburton seems to think that the idea of the Jew was national isolation, and he says that its providential design was to preserve Monotheism.* Kalisch, on the other hand, has shown that there never was a time in Jewish history in which a cosmopolitan element did not mingle with the national separatism.† The truth is, the Jew was not only prepared, but was *desirous* to call all men his brethren; the goal to which he looked forward

* *Divine Legation*, II. 419.
† *Bible Studies*, Part II. p. 29, *sq.*

was the time when all the ends of the earth should desire the salvation of the Lord. But then his was only a *prospective* brotherhood. He would compass sea and land to make one proselyte, but as long as the proselyte was not made he recognised no brotherhood. It was not a geographical limit that confined his charity, it was a moral one. He could not love his enemy *as* his enemy—while yet he remained his enemy; that was not only foreign to his practice, but foreign to his thought. In the palmy days of his nation he was no separatist, he desired above all things an universal religious communion; but he desired that the concessions should be all on one side—the side of his enemies. He kept his love in reserve against the coming of that time when all flesh together should see the glory of the Lord. It did not occur to him that there is a charity which beareth all things—that there is a love which hopeth all things—that there is a place in the heart for those who are out of the way. That revelation was given to a nobler faith.

That faith was Christianity. The leading thought in the religion of Christ is this—love to the sinner while he is yet in his sins. The love which Christianity reveals to the world is a love in one respect quite unique; it is a *redemptive* love. Judaism can tell men to fix their hearts on the welfare of those who are like themselves in life and doctrine; Christianity says that the heart has a wider province than that. It says that love ought

not to be suspended until we have made others like ourselves; it ought to reach down to them even in their unlikeness. It should not wait until we have brought up the erring from the valleys; it should itself go down to the valleys to seek them. Love in the Christian system is not a power by which I am to claim brotherhood with humanity when humanity shall have reached my standard of moral purity; it is a power by which I am to claim brotherhood with men in their impurity, and through which I am to struggle to make them pure. The sense of human brotherhood is itself to be the lever by which I am to lift the fallen. I am to realise the fact that those who are lying by the wayside, unworthy to join in the march of life, are still even in their prostration my brothers and my sisters, are still members of the same family of which I am a member, are still the legitimate objects of my solicitude and of my care. I am forced to feel like Paul, that under the influence of this new faith I am debtor not only to the Jew but to the Greek—not only to the wise but to the unwise. The love that loves against lovelessness, the love that, as the writer to the Hebrews expresses it, can endure a contradiction against itself: that is the inheritance which Christianity has bequeathed to me, and it is an inheritance which imposes a responsibility to which Judaism was a stranger. It makes me neighbour to the Samaritan, to the Gentile, to the outcast, to the

unbeliever; I owe them all a debt of gratitude, because from the mere fact of being men they have wakened within me the spirit of love.*

The sphere, then, of Christian brotherhood is wider than the sphere of Jewish brotherhood. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that even within its own sphere the brotherhood of Judaism reaches the intensity of the brotherhood of Christianity. St. Paul certainly had a different opinion; when he says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ," he clearly means to imply that we cannot reach this goal by merely fulfilling the law of Moses. And indeed it may be said that, as a whole, and making allowance for isolated exceptions, the law of Moses exhorts not so much to bear as to forbear. It is not so much a command to confer benefit, as a prohibition to inflict injury. It does not so much aim at the glorification of humanity, as at the prevention of any act which would maim or mutilate humanity. Hence its most powerful watchword is not, Thou shalt, but, Thou shalt not! It seeks to refrain the hand from doing wrong rather than to nerve the heart for doing right. It forbids to kill, to steal, to perjure, to covet; and though in this last instance it reaches something like an inward state, it is at best only a negative inwardness. It tells a man not to desire that his brother's wealth may be transferred to him, but it does not tell him to

* This point will be treated in more detail in Chapter X.

desire that the good which is possessed by him may be equally possessed by his brother; the command to "covet the best gift"—the spirit of charity—was reserved for another dispensation. Nor is the religious side of the Decalogue more positive than its practical side; the duties of the sanctuary are, like the duties of the community, prohibitions from doing wrong. To worship no other God, to make no image of God, to take not God's name in vain, to do no work on God's Sabbath—this is the sum and substance of the religious code of Judaism. The one positive precept of its moral law is assigned neither to its sanctuary nor to its community, but to that relation of the family which is its symbol of all sacredness: "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land."

Third, We have already in part anticipated the final deficiency in the code of Jewish ethics. It is not only defective in its provision for self-love and for brotherly love, it also falls short in its effort to reach Divine love. Judaism has not only an individual want and a social want, it has also a distinctively religious want; for it is quite true, as Hegel has pointed out, that there is a chasm between the God of Judaism and the world of nature.* God is outside of His works. It is felt that to bring Him into direct and immediate contact with anything He has made, would be to lower our

* *Philosophy of History*, p. 204. See also his *Logic* (Wallace), p. 236.

sense of His absoluteness. Therefore He is made to dwell alone, in a region unapproached and unapproachable. He speaks from the height of an inaccessible heaven. Men can hear His words, but they cannot see His face. He communicates His messages, but He never reveals Himself. All that His creatures can see is His law. The only communion which His height can have with their lowliness, is the intercourse between him who commands and those who obey. To the Jew law becomes the symbol of Divine communion, or rather the substitute for such communion. Into the *life* of God there is no entrance; into the reason or spirit of His mandates man cannot gaze. But man can listen to the mandates themselves, can read them, count them, weigh them, follow them. He can receive them unquestioningly, teach them dogmatically, and obey them blindly: this is to the Judaic conscience the whole duty of man.

Yet St. Paul declares that all this would not suffice to make a human being holy: "By the works of the law shall no man be justified." There is a very prevalent misconception as to his meaning when he uttered these words. He is thought simply to mean that no man in his natural state could possibly keep the Jewish law. The fact is true, but it is far short of Paul's meaning. What the Apostle meant to say is this: If you Jews could keep every item of your law; if you could observe every precept to the letter; if you

could fulfil every statute to perfection, you would not thereby earn the right to be called perfect men, and for this reason, that you would after all be only keeping a law, only fulfilling a statute. To do all that is commanded you, *because* it is commanded you, is good, but it is not yet the highest good. The highest good is to see the goodness of the command itself, and in seeing it to lose the sense of law altogether. It is to transmute the instinct of obedience into the spirit of choice, and change the yoke of service into the sense of freedom. A perfectly obedient child may be a perfect child, but he is not a perfect being. What makes him fall short of a perfect being is just the fact that obedience is his motive. He has only reached the husk of morality, not its kernel. He thinks it right because it is commanded; he must come to learn that it has been commanded only because it is right!

That is really what Paul designs to say. No man can be esteemed a just man for any number of just actions performed in simple obedience to law. Nothing can make him just but the love of justice, and that demands not a law but a spirit. The law will only be perfectly fulfilled when it ceases to be thought of—when its requirements are kept from another motive than itself. Let us make our meaning, or rather Paul's meaning, clear by a simile which he himself was very fond of using—the relation of husband and wife. There is a law

of marriage which binds a man to protect the partner of his life; but no man would be deemed a just husband who protected the partner of his life merely from obedience to this binding civil power. Let us suppose for a moment that a voice were to sound from heaven, annulling all marriage contracts and making void all marriage bonds; what would be the effect of such a message upon the mind of a true husband? It would simply have no effect at all. He would be told that so far as outward law is concerned he could do as he liked; he would answer that outward law had never been the ground of his obligation. He would say that he had all along been dead to the marriage law, that its existence or its non-existence could be no matter to him; that what constituted *his* obligation to protect the partner of his life was an inward bond of love which could neither be tightened by command nor loosened by prohibition, but which must remain steadfast through all time and impervious to all change. Something like this was in the heart of St. Paul when he cried: "Ye are dead to the law through the body of Christ." He was standing in an universe from which the old earth and the old heavens were vanishing away. The ties of the past were loosening around him. The nation which had been the centre of the Theocracy and the symbol of Theocratic power was sinking into death, and with it seemed to be perishing all the sanctions of morality. But in

the midst of this world of dissolution Paul stood undismayed. Heaven and earth might pass away; the law of God, in so far as it was a state commandment, might pass away, but God himself would not pass away. The Apostle had within him a principle of Divine love which said all the law meant to say and more. All the commandments put together could not reach the one commandment of love. There was something higher than to *obey* God—to share the *will* of God, to be partakers of the *life* of God. Let a man once be adopted into the house of the Father, and he was no more a servant but a son. The laws of the servant might be abolished for him, for the filial relationship must destroy the relation of the master, and the birth of a kindred sympathy must render superfluous the voice of command.

But it would be a great mistake to suppose that these transitions from the life of an outward into the life of an inward morality were accomplished in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. However distinct in idea may be the antithesis between Judaism and Christianity, the process by which the one shades into the other has been historically slow. As a matter of history, Christianity did not at once reveal the full length and breadth of its difference from Judaism; here as everywhere it sought to conquer by leavening. It breathed a new life into the old body and bade it work its way. The new life worked its way, not by destruction but by

assimilation, and therefore by slow degrees. It took the old elements, Judaic and Gentile, into its system, and it waited for time to work them into its nature. The result is, that in the morality of the Gospel there are elements which seem to contradict each other; which in their isolation, as Mr. Mill would have it, *do* contradict each other.* There are more motives than one assigned for the living of the Gospel life, and for this reason, that it is a life. Its essential condition is the condition of all life—growth, development. It is not a full-grown man created at once for a garden of perfection; it professes to follow "the law of the spirit of life"—the law of progress, the law of evolution. It ascends from small to great; it climbs from less to more; its motives rise with its attitude, until at last it reaches that stage where not only is the highest motive seen, but where all the lower are seen to have been but shadows of the highest. An unfolding of this view demands a separate chapter.

* *Liberty*, p. 88, *sq.*

III.

THE MOTIVES OF CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

The code of Christian morals is first exhibited in the life of the Christian Founder; it is lived before it is written. The doctrine to be proclaimed to the world was in the first instance embodied in a human life. If we would seek the history of the development of that doctrine in the world and in the individual soul, we must trace it up to its fountain-head in the person of the Son of Man. We must try to determine before all things what was the moral order of the life of Jesus, what was that law of development by which men perceived His moral glory. That they did not perceive His moral glory all in a moment is transparent on the very face of the history. That the light had to shine for long in a darkness that comprehended it not, and that the steps by which the darkness climbed into the light were steep and arduous, are amongst the most indisputable facts in the whole range of Christian annals. What were those steps? What was that order of thought by which the disciple slowly mounted into sympathy with the Master? If we can put our hand upon

this initial process of Christian development, we shall in all probability have reached that universal law which determines the Christian development of all future disciples.

Let us merely premise that in the pursuance of this design we shall take the portrait of the Master as we find it. We are not writing a theological treatise, nor attempting a critical exegesis; we are aiming simply at an exposition of what Christian morality claims to be. We shall therefore close our eyes to all fields of religious controversy—to the mythical theory, and the creed of Paulus, and the school of Tübingen—and shall merely ask, What does the Gospel narrative say? What does it say of the order of Christian development? What does it tell of the process by which the Son of Man won the hearts of the sons of men? What does it reveal of the nature of that growth by which the human spirit ripens from the outer into the inner life?

The design of the Christian Founder, in so far as His design was purely ethical, was to reveal the morality of Judaism no longer in the form of a law, but in the form of a vision—the vision of a human life. By a choice unique in history, the life He selected to be the world's revelation of morality was His own. At the very moment when He expresses most strongly the absence from His nature of all self-consciousness, He declares unequivocally that He came to be the model of ethics to the world

(Matthew xi. 28, *sq.*). His desire above all other things was to win the love of men. But it must never be forgotten that He desired to be loved not because He was a person, but because He was a personification. Every man, saint or sinner, finds a joy in being loved. But the Son of Man in desiring to be loved did not contemplate Himself in His person but in His character. It was not because love was sweet that He wanted to win the hearts of men; it was because He deemed Himself to be the type of moral purity, and held that in loving Him men would love the pure. To say, "Lord, Lord!" to magnify His name apart from His character, was nothing to Him; nay, He looked upon it as a hindrance to moral progress. "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee," cried a woman in the crowd. "Yea, rather," is our Lord's reply, "blessed are they that hear the word of God." It was because He believed Himself, and proclaimed Himself, to be the Way, the Truth, the Life, that He insisted on receiving human love. To love Him was to keep His commandments. To fix the heart on Him was to fix the heart on the virtues of the Mount. It was to love absolute justice, absolute purity, absolute truth. It was no sentimental emotion, no ebullition of feeling, no mere expression of a personal endearment. The love of what He loved, the admiration of His moral loveliness, the devotion to that type of character which made His humanity Divine—that

was what He meant when He said, "Come unto me." *

To accomplish this aim one thing was required as a preliminary condition—man must first be attracted within the radius of His person. It was impossible that the immediate ground of the attraction should be the beauty. Morality can only be revealed in action, and moral action demands an already gathered community. It was only by coming within the circle of Christ's presence that man could learn anything of His nature. His nature was to be exhibited not merely, nor even mainly, in words; the very soul of His ethical teaching was to come forth in the deeds of His social life. The problem was, how to create the society, how to make that social circle which would render such deeds possible. Clearly to create such a circle He must at the outset appeal to men, not as He wished them to be, not as He designed to make them, but as He actually found them. He must seek to attract them, not by the appeal to an incipient higher nature in themselves which as yet they did not know, but by stirring up the elements of that old nature which had long been in possession of their souls. He could only commend the new doctrine by throwing a momentary veil over its novelty, by showing that it was not a complete disruption between the old and the coming genera-

* See the antithesis of the *two* kinds of love in the Greek of John xxi. 15–17.

tions, by demonstrating that in some sense true and real the aspirations of the past would be perfected by the faith of the future.

Christ then had at the outset to attract men, not by Himself but by something in themselves; He had to appeal to the hopes of their old nature. That nature was Judaism, and from a certain point of view it was also Epicureanism. It sought a material kingdom, a visible crown, an outward reward. It was to this Judaic or materialistic hope that Christ first addressed Himself; He was known to the multitude in the breaking of temporal bread. Do not think that in thus attracting men by physical benefits the Son of Man was stooping to a Jewish accommodation; He was directing their minds to a vital truth. He had indeed come to found a kingdom, a material kingdom, a kingdom which, if not of this world, was still to be *in* this world. When He broke the bread to the multitude, He taught that there was a real connection between the power to follow Him and the power to distribute bread. When He promised that those who should come after Him would receive *in this life* houses and brethren and lands, He drew men by no fiction, but by a profound reality. Christianity in its ultimate development is indeed intended to perfect a man's relation to houses and brethren and lands. It is designed to make better householders, better landlords, better members of the family circle. It is to strengthen the bonds of master and servant,

parent and child, brother and sister, husband and wife. It contemplates in its last result the resurrection of the body politic—the incorporation of the state and all its institutions. It looks forward to the time when the secular shall itself be the sacred, when the week-day shall itself be the Sabbath, when the workshop shall itself be the temple, when the Government shall itself be the Church. The outward rewards of Christianity are real rewards, and the kingdom which it designs to rear is a kingdom more real, more secular, more purely earthly and natural, than that fantastic and supramundane fabric which constituted to the Jew the Messiah's empire. Nay, we may go further. Christianity came to give what, as we have seen, the Jew did not dare even to hope for—that individual freedom from care which the Epicurean sought to win. It told the Epicurean that his was not a dream. It told him that there was indeed to be found a divine absence of care, a state in which the individual soul would rest completely from its labours, a sense of perfect freedom from all the burden and heat of the day, and it offered itself as the pioneer to that Elysium where the human yoke was easy and the human burden light.

Such was Christ's message to the multitude, to that outlying mass which He desired to bring within the radius of His person; He appealed to their individual wants. Is it surprising that to the long-repressed individualism of the Jewish nation such

an appeal should have sounded like music? Is it wonderful, that to men, who with all their materialism had not been allowed to hope for more than a national independence, the promise of personal comfort should have been unspeakably dear? At all events, it was so. The multitude heard Him gladly because He manifested a sympathy with their human struggles, and offered Himself as a ministrant to their daily wants and toils. They came for the sake of the loaves, but they came, and their coming was itself the first step to the goal. They were, as regarded the person of the Master, as yet only utilitarians; they sought Him for what He could give. But in so doing they were already in the presence of a Power they did not seek, a Power which sooner or later must make its influence felt and known. In the pursuit of their own shadow they were brought, as it were by accident, into contact with a great light, and the accident was thenceforth to become the essence of their being. They were to catch the glow of a principle which as yet they did not see, and to find the joy of a life which as yet they did not understand.

For this brings us to the point of transition between the first and second stage of Christian morality. Men began by reverencing the Master because He was the minister to their wants; from this there is but a step to another and higher reverence—the reverence for the ministration itself, the veneration for that law of Christ's nature which

impelled Him to minister. If the first stage of Christian morality was Epicurean, the second was distinctly Stoic. Men had been the objects of a law of ministration; they must now become the subjects of that law: "Freely have ye received, freely give!" The principle is the Christian doctrine of substitution, or the imputation of oneself to another. It said, Ye who have had wants and had them relieved, put yourselves in the place of those who have still wants that have not been relieved. You have found joy in your relief; try to figure in your heart the joy they would find in their relief. You have had the bread broken to you by coming within the radius of the Christian influence; try to bring others within the same radius that they may share the same bread. You have experienced the age of promise; now the age of duty is come.

It is in this, its second phase, that Christianity comes nearest to Stoicism. It is now that for the first time there breaks upon the mind of the disciple the momentous fact that each man has a duty to the whole—a duty whose sphere is the universe and whose standard is the Golden Rule. But here too as in Stoicism the door which opens the revelation is the door of personal sacrifice. In the Judaic or Epicurean stage of Christianity the end contemplated above all things was physical enlargement; in the second or Stoical stage the end contemplated was physical repression. There was recognised in the

human soul a law which was not *of* the human soul, a law which placed it in the front ranks of creation, but which at the same time demanded its allegiance and its service—the law of duty. The very name of duty wherever it be found, implies that on one side of the nature there is a process of fence-raising. Moral obligation signifies by etymology a binding of the nature of man. It means that in one direction of the soul a barrier has been put up to check the inroads of another, to prevent that other from becoming too free. Were there no such binding the word obligation would have no meaning; it gets its meaning from the fact of struggle. The Christian sense of obligation appears in a sense of conflict: "There is a law in my members warring against the law of my mind;" "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary;" "Think not I am come to send peace on earth; I am not come to send peace but a sword;" "If any man will be My disciple, let him renounce himself, and take up My cross and follow Me." These are strong words, and they carry a weighty message. They tell us that we have passed into another atmosphere than that in which the Master broke the loaves to the multitude. In contact with that Master, man has begun to know his higher self. But the lower self is not yet dead within him; it remains to dispute the field. There is no longer only one motive in his life; there are now two motives drawing opposite

ways. Duty says, Bear ye one another's burdens; interest says, Every man shall bear his own burden. The Stoic and the Epicurean elements of the human soul are in conflict; who shall reconcile them?

We must point out indeed that even from the beginning of this stage of moral conflict Christianity contemplates such a reconciliation. Take the opening words of that most remarkable of discourses, the Sermon on the Mount. Christ's thought is clearly this: however wide and impassable may seem to be the gulf that separates the world of duty from the world of interest, there is in reality a bridge between them. Do not think that pleasure lies wholly with the bad, and that self-denial is the only possession of the good. I tell you that self-denial is no more an end for the saint than it is an end for the sinner. I tell you that the value of self-denial is just the fact that it promotes a higher interest than self-seeking can ever secure. If I preach poverty of spirit, meekness, the dissatisfaction with self which men call mourning, the spiritual aspiration which they call hunger and thirst, it is not because individual greatness is an evil and individual joy a sin. It is because in these things individual greatness alone consists and individual joy is alone to be found. It is because the fruit of these is personal blessedness—the kingdom, the comfort, the inheritance of the earth, the satisfaction of the spirit, the right to rejoice and be exceeding glad.

It may be asked, How has Christianity succeeded in achieving this end? Stoicism crucified the individual, but it did not thereby seek to produce joy; it did so as a means of crucifying the desire of joy. Christianity exhorted to take up the cross, but it did so as the road to a crown. It not only declared that there was an Olivet behind the Calvary, it said that the Calvary was indispensable to the Olivet. Can we explain this contrariety between the two systems? We can; and the explanation constitutes the real point of difference between this stage of Christianity and all stages of Stoicism. For let it be remembered that the Stoic did not, any more than the Epicurean, emancipate himself from the bonds of self-contemplation; nay, his very doctrine involved self-contemplation. To despise pleasure and pain is not only a purely individual act, but an act which has self for its *object.* To make the business of life the study of individual nothingness is to make the business of life a self-study; it is the soul's worship of its own despair.*

But the "poverty of spirit" of which Christianity speaks is totally different from this. Humility in the Christian sense does not mean to think of one's self *humbly;* it means not to think of one's self at all. The idea which expresses the Christian view of sacrifice is not the restraint of self, but the death of self; restraint implies an effort, and therefore a constant self-inspection, but death is a complete

* Cf. Col. ii. 18—"a voluntary humility."

self-forgetfulness. It is not that the ideal Christian is to despise his pleasures or his pains; he is never to think of them. He is to pass through a form of death called *love*, in which his own being is to be lost in the being of others. That is what St. Paul meant when he said, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." He meant that it was possible by the power of love to become so much the part of another life as to have no consciousness of one's own, that it was possible to be so absorbed in an impersonal interest as to lose all sense of personal care. "Bear ye one another's burdens, for every man shall bear his own burden," is a saying which ceases to be contradictory in the developed Religion of the Cross. Bear thou the burden of thy brother, for thou too hast a burden of thine own; it will be too heavy for thee without the self-forgetfulness of love. Only in the preoccupation of thy heart with the wants of others can thine own individual wants be lulled to rest. Wouldst thou have freedom from personal care—Epicurean freedom, bounding freedom such as youth rejoices in? thou shalt find it in the life of love. In that fire, which itself is incapable of being extinguished, all that is not itself shall be extinguished; all the wood, and the hay, and the stubble of merely individual desires shall be burned up like chaff before the blaze of a divine enthusiasm for humanity; he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal.

This brings us to the *third* stage of Christian

morality. In its first stage it contemplated the promise of virtue; in its second it looked at the duty of virtue; it was now to enter on the love of virtue. Its first vision had been all the crown; its second had been all the cross; its third was to be the vision of the crown in the cross. There is as it seems to us in the Gospel narrative a clearly marked line of demarcation between the age of simple duty and the age of love, which is at once the abolition and the fulfilling of the law. Already in that narrative there begins to be prefigured the reign of that influence which theologians call the Holy Spirit, but which called by any name is a great fact of history. The tone of the Christian Founder is never so joyous as in those chapters which predict the Spirit—the transition from duty into love. When He says, "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you," what does He mean? We do not ask what does He mean theologically, but what bearing has such a statement on the subject of Christian ethics? Is it not clearly this: that to the mind of the Christian Founder there is already present the advent of a time when that life which was now costing His followers so great a struggle would become as natural to them as breathing? He saw that a day was coming when the crucial word for morality would not be duty, nor yet obligation, but love. His first or outward coming had sent into the world not peace but a sword, it had revealed a dualism in

man's nature, and had made the human soul a theatre of strife. But in His second or inward coming all this was to be changed. There was to be no more sea; there was to be no more pain. The virtue which now was a sacrifice and received a sacrificial name was to become a positive joy. It was to be a component part in the very life of man, so that to part with it would henceforth be itself the sacrifice, to lose it itself the pain; it was this absence of the sense of struggle that was predicted in the words, "My peace I give unto you."

For, let us remember that this inwardness of the Divine law was the essential peace of Christ Himself.* The growth of the human nature that was in Him was a growth towards this sublime goal. He, too, had His Gethsemane—not, indeed, in the form of a wish to evade duty, but in the guise of a hope that duty might be found to coincide with a path less strewn with thorns. None the less it was a struggle, and a struggle which lay within the natural limits of humanity. But there came to Him a time when Gethsemane faded from His view, and a Divine strength made the burden light. When He emerged from the shades of Gethsemane He emerged from the shadows of His own soul, He rose into peace. The struggle, whatever it was, had all passed away, and He had accepted the path of the Cross as for Him the destined path. So complete

* See Arnold's chapters on the Secret and Method of Jesus, in *Literature and Dogma.*

was His new sense of rest that He longed to make it the possession of the world. He could wish nothing better for the world than that it might be able to enter into His joy—the joy of completed conflict: "Father, I will that these be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory," are the words in which He expresses that desire. He wanted men to feel that the straight gate and the narrow way had become to them what they were to Him, a wide gate and a broad way. He wanted them to realise what He realised—that the outward law had become an inward law, that duty had become nature, that sacrifice had become privilege: that was the sense in which He uttered the words, "My peace I give unto you."

This aspiration of the Son of Man was of course only fulfilled in that great Pentecostal outpouring which inaugurated the dispensation of the Spirit. It is then that for the first time the antithesis begins between law and grace. That antithesis is no merely verbal one; it marks the completed transition from an outer into an inner morality. Grace is the new word which expresses the first sense of Christian freedom. It expresses man's consciousness that he has passed into a new relationship toward the will of God, that it is no longer outside of him compelling him as a schoolmaster, but that it is written in his heart and embodied in his life. To find grace is to find the passage from duty into love. It is in one sense the destruction

of the sense of moral obligation. The Divine Will ceases to stand over against the human will as its master and its monarch; the human is made one with the Divine. Mr. Herbert Spencer, looking at ethics from a purely scientific standpoint, has quite independently arrived at the same conclusion as the New Testament. We say quite independently, for it evidently comes to him as a discovery, and he advances it as a paradox. He suggests that the motive of moral obligation will lose its force in proportion as the moral life itself advances.* What is this but the recurrence of the old refrain that when a man is touched by grace he is no longer under law? What is it but in other words to say, that to love is to be dead to the law, that to burn with the enthusiasm for humanity is to outstrip at a bound all the requirements of duty? "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—that is to say, naturalness. A man will no longer say, "It is my duty," but, "It is my nature;" no longer "I ought," but "I must." It is the difference of talent and genius; a man *ought* to use his talent, a man is *compelled* to use his genius. In the one case there is an obligation from without, which, nevertheless, may be resisted; in the other there is an obligation from within, which, because it is the nature of the man himself, admits of no resistance. Grace is the reconciliation of compulsion and freedom. It takes away all power of choice by

* *Data of Ethics*, p. 127.

making goodness the only law of man's being. Henceforth his service becomes his perfect liberty, and his implicit obedience is identical with his empire; the truth has made him free, and he is free indeed.

We have thus tried to sketch the evolution of Christian morality as it is exhibited in the immediate presence of the Christian Founder. We believe it will be found to coincide with the order of moral development embraced by every completed spiritual life.* There is first the unclouded promise, which without perspective shows the distant goal as if it were already nigh. Then there is the intervening cloud, which turns the sunshine into rain, and the morning into the burden and heat of the day. Lastly, the cloud becomes part of the morning, and that which was a hindrance to our vision is changed into the climax of the glory, the master-light of all our seeing. Neither the Epicurean's ease nor the Stoic's yoke is by itself the goal; the goal is only found when the yoke is easy and the burden light.

It will be seen that in the treatment of this subject there is a point which we have assumed but not discussed. We have spoken of an intervening cloud. We have said that the very idea of moral obligation implies that there is a part of our nature which needs to be restrained, that the very word duty indicates the putting up of a fence to prevent

* This subject will be treated in Chapter VIII.

the inroads of some other power. The question which we have not asked is, What is that power? What is that tendency of human nature which has made the erection of a fence obligatory? Why is it that in the present state of things we need to speak of duty at all? Why does not the moral soil yield to us its fruit spontaneously, as the physical soil did to Adam? There can be but one answer, and it lies not in theory but in fact. There is clearly a disharmony in the nature of man. The fact will not be denied by the representative of any school, Christian or Pagan, Theist or Atheist. The whole heat of the discussion centres round the point, Whence came this disharmony? Some tell us it was by chance; others, by necessity. Some say it came from a fall which crushed one side of human nature; others tell us it was the result of an evolutionary rise, by which one part of human nature got the start of another. We shall not dispute the point. Our purpose is not theological, but moral, and therefore we shall avoid the question of origins. We shall not seek to determine how the disharmony arose; perhaps in order to find its origin we would require to be ourselves in a state of harmony. It may be that to know how sin came would be already to transcend the nature of a sinful being, for how could we know its origin without conceiving that state which preceded its origination? Be this as it may, ours is a humbler aim. We do not inquire into the

beginning, but only into the fact of things, and only into that fact as it was understood by Christianity. The course we have to follow is simple and clear. There is recognised in the Christian system, as in all systems, a chord which jars on the universal harmony. What is Christianity's explanation of this jarring chord—her explanation not of its origin but of itself? What is the Christian exposition of that great dissonance, which men call sin, whose marring influence has permeated every stage of the rhythm of this universe, and the consciousness of whose presence has proved so powerful an agent in the formation of every religious creed? That is the question which Christianity sets herself to answer. She answers it by no appeal to antiquities either sacred or secular, by no reference to a theological system whose authority must be infallible, by no effort of metaphysical subtlety or philosophical speculation, but by a simple flashing of the lantern upon the secret places of the human soul, by "commending herself to the conscience of every man." The nature of this revelation will be considered in the following chapter.

IV.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SIN.

The earliest exponent of the ethical nature of sin was the Apostle Paul. The exposition of its theological nature belongs to the Old Testament. It was the mission of the Jewish literature to exhibit it as a violation of the law of God, and this was doubtless a great work to do. But it was after all only one half of the problem; it was reserved for another dispensation to unfold the other half. Judaism said, Sin is a violation of the law of God; it was left for Christianity to say, It is a violation of the law of man.

As we have said, the man who first made this declaration was St. Paul. To him in a special sense the problem of sin presented itself as a problem of ethics. It was not so much a mystery of the universe as a mystery of his own soul. That it had raised a middle wall of partition between himself and God was a fact ever patent to his mind, but there was another fact, if possible, more patent still—that it had raised a middle wall of partition between himself and a part of his own mind. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver

me from this body of death!" "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these two are contrary;" "The evil that I would not, that I do, and the good that I would, that I do not; there is a law in my members warring against the law of my mind;" through all these there breathes one thought—the idea of inward conflict. What are the elements of this conflict as they appear to the Gentile Apostle? The notion of war implies at least two combatants. What are they? That is the first and fundamental question. A subsequent question will be, Which of them is evil? or, Wherein consists the evil of either? But before any decision can be arrived at as to the cause of moral obliquity, it will be necessary to put our hand on those elements of human nature which in the view of Paul are in a state of disunion. The Apostle describes these under the names of the flesh and the spirit. What does he mean by that? Does he mean the body and the soul? Assuredly not. Paul would never have said that matter lusted against mind. None knew better than he that the principle of lust or desire is essentially a mental principle. When he said that by the cross of Christ the world had been crucified to him, he certainly was not thinking of the demolition of streets and buildings. He knew well that the world is not without but within a man, and that no abstinence from outward meats or from outward pleasures could make a man unworldly. The

very centre of his gospel lies in the assertion that the circumcision of the flesh availeth nothing. If matter had been, in his view, the antagonist of what he calls the *spirit*, it is hard to see why he should not have hailed circumcision as the saviour of mankind; it is hard to see why he should not have welcomed an agency which seemed evidently to symbolise the crucifixion of the material nature of man. But Paul felt that no material crucifixion was of the slightest value. He felt that if he could give all his goods to feed the poor, nay, that if he could give his very body to be burned, it would profit him nothing, if the act were not prompted by charity. Here is a conclusive statement, a statement which at once and for ever negatives the attribution of asceticism to the Christian system. It is declared in the plainest terms that no outward impoverishment however complete, no outward torture however severe, no outward mutilation however humiliating, would bring a human being one step nearer to the great goal of final perfection, that the sacrifice of the physical man is neither acceptable to the worshipper nor the Worshipped until behind the sacrifice is heard the living voice: "Lo, I come, I delight to do Thy will."

When Paul speaks then of the *flesh* and the *spirit*, he is not alluding to two kinds of existence, but to two kinds of thought, more correctly, two kinds of love—self-love and universal love. In the view of Paul things were classified as belonging to the

flesh or to the spirit quite irrespective of their material or mental character. The pursuit of a material object might be an act of the spirit; the pursuit of a mental object might be an act of the flesh. To seek wealth as a means of charity would to him have been in the highest sense spiritual; to seek knowledge as a source of fame would have been viewed by him as essentially carnal. Two men might gaze on the same physical scene, and, to the one it might be a scene of the flesh, to the other an experience of the spirit. To the one it might be fraught with impressions of lewdness and impregnated with suggestions of impurity; to the other it might be laden with a burden of grief for the sins and sorrows of humanity. It was thought, and thought alone, that gave a character to things.

The flesh and the spirit then in the system of St. Paul refer not to the scene through which a man travels, but to the vehicle in which he travels. They describe not his surroundings but his state, not his acts but his motives. The flesh represents the love which he has for himself; the spirit stands for the love he bears to others. The flesh is the self-centring principle by which a man is impelled to seek his own good; the spirit is that power of self-forgetfulness by which he is enabled to seek a good not his own. The flesh is the individual unit; the spirit is the universal man. The question now arises, Which of these is to be sought and which shunned? The answer which naturally and

spontaneously suggests itself is that in the view of St. Paul the flesh is the evil part of our nature, and the part which needs to be repressed. If this be Paul's meaning, if in the Christian system the desire of individual good counts in itself for sin, then we have no hesitation in saying that the Christian morality is a mutilated morality. For it is quite true what Auguste Comte says—that to repress the personal instincts is not to improve but to destroy the morality of man.*

We have already pointed out that no man can do good to another without first saying to himself, This is what in his place I should like done to me. The imagination of personal pleasure is the very condition of benevolence. If the sense of self-interest, that which St. Paul calls the flesh, be a sin, then the whole moral life of man is made an impossibility. But does St. Paul say so? Does he mean for a moment to suggest that the flesh or the individual part of a man's nature is sinful; that to seek the things of the flesh is to love sin? So far is he from saying so, that the very passage which seems at first sight to favour such a view is found on closer inspection to be the strongest and the most conclusive evidence against it. If Paul had merely said, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit*, we might have thought that in his view the flesh was the sole aggressor and the spirit the only martyr. But Paul does not stop here. He

* *Positive Philosophy*, ii. 131. Miss Martineau's translation.

goes on to say that in the manifestation of moral evil not only does the flesh lust against the spirit, but the spirit lusts *against the flesh*. Here is a new light upon the whole subject. The spirit is no longer the sole martyr in the struggle, nor is it on account of the spirit alone that Paul deprecates the life of sin; he deprecates it quite as much in the interest of the flesh. He is not a whit more anxious for the spiritual than he is for the carnal nature of man, because he knows well that the soul without the body would be as dead as the body without the soul. Therefore he is eager that the flesh should not any more than the spirit have an antagonist, a foe to its development. He is eager that the individual man, like the universal man, should be protected from all enmities, should be shielded from all influences which would hinder his growth and nourishment. The Apostle of Gentile liberty demands a free soil for the tree of natural life; he would have nothing to war against the flesh.

The truth is, St. Paul has no idea of blaming either the flesh or the spirit. He sincerely commiserates both. He regards both as the victims of a third power which has produced disorganisation in their joint action, and prevented either from achieving its destiny. Sin is to him that which has set the flesh and the spirit at variance. Its evil lies in this, that it has impaired the united strength of two great and glorious powers which

were made to work in unison. What it is in itself he does not pretend to know, does not seek to inquire: for him as for us it means the *mystery* of iniquity. What Paul does seek to fathom is the manifestation of the mystery. He asks, What is sin in the world? what is it as an actual fact? how does it show itself? in what way would its absence be shown? These were Paul's questions, and they were practical questions, to be answered not by speculation, but by observation. To answer these questions he did the only thing that a man could do—he looked around him. He cast his eye upon the world as it actually was, upon the men and women who composed the society in which he lived and moved. And what did he see in this society? He saw an anomaly in the world of nature. He beheld two laws of the universe, evidently meant for good and certainly designed to co-operate with one another, breaking up into mutual antagonism, and becoming a source of the wildest anarchy. He beheld the flesh and the spirit, which the hand of God had joined together, put asunder by another hand, and that which originally was constructed to be a bond of union becoming mysteriously and unnaturally an element of discord. It was the supernatural in nature that troubled the heart of the Apostle—the presence of a false note in the rhythm of the universal music. It mattered not to which side he turned, whether to the flesh or the spirit, the same jar met his spiritual ear, the same

irresistible evidence that there was a broken cord in the organ of human life. Let us look for a moment at the matter in detail.

The flesh lusteth against the spirit. Here is the first side of Paul's problem, the first manifestation of the great mystery. He saw in the world around him, nay, he felt within his own breast the operation of that power which we call self-love. He perceived it to be in itself a good power—a power which made for righteousness. He felt that if a man was to love his brother as himself, it was well that he should have some amount of self-love; otherwise he could have no standard by which to judge of his brother's grief or joy. But Paul saw that if this power made for righteousness in idea, it made for unrighteousness in fact. It ought to have been a source of sympathy; it actually was a source of selfishness. Instead of making his own wants a standard by which to measure the wants of humanity, each man took them as an incentive to live to himself alone. Nay, this was not all, nor even the worst. The very power to conjure up what another would feel had been degraded into an instrument of human torture. Conscious of what pain was in himself, he imagined how it would be felt by another. That power of imagination was meant to make him merciful, but it had made him cruel. It had incited him to wars, to murders, to revenges. It had goaded him on to the gratification of spite and spleen. It had inspired him to the

commission of deeds unworthy of the lower creation. It had led to the satisfaction of malice and hatred and envy and all uncharitableness. The light had led astray which yet was light from heaven. Paul saw this, and he said there was something wrong: "Men and brethren, these things ought not so to be." He felt that here if anywhere there was a miracle of miracles, the violation not of one law but of universal law—the law of creation's harmony, the law of God. He felt that he had outraged a principle of the universe, and therefore had become an alien in the universe. By no theological dogma, by no national training, by no metaphysical subtlety, but simply by the logic of stern facts, his mind was forced to the conviction that something had separated between him and his God.

Look now at the other side of the Apostle's problem: *The spirit lusteth against the flesh.* He saw in the world another tendency the opposite of self-love, by which men were impelled to sacrifice, rather than to seek their own; they called it the sense of duty. It prompted them often to great deeds of self-denial. It led them at times to forego the natural pleasures of life. It sent some into the desert, into the hermitage, into the ascetic's cell. It drove others to seek untimely martyrdom. It caused all to believe that the essence of virtue lay in its being the absence of individual joy—the crucifixion of the flesh. Now what Paul asked was this: Why should virtue have any such tendency?

Why should the Divine life in the soul be the only life without pleasure, without individual pleasure? Was there piety in the fact of pain? Why should individual joy be the antithesis of life for the universe? Was not the very existence of such an antithesis a proof that there was something wrong? Why should not a man's life for God and for his fellow-man be prompted by a motive of Epicurean joy—by a joy of the individual heart, in which there was no sense of obligation, but the perfect calm of a satisfied desire? The spirit ought not to crucify the flesh, ought not to feel that its own merit was greater in proportion as its task was felt to be difficult. In the very sense that something was being sacrificed, in the very experience of a struggle in the individual life, in the very conviction of a submission to self-denial which deserved the name of merit, the spirit was already bearing testimony that it had not put all things under its feet. It was uttering from another side of the creation the same voice which the flesh had already uttered—that man had violated the law of God.

Such is clearly the meaning of St. Paul in the second and less obvious clause of the passage now under review. The spirit is convicted of antagonism to the flesh by its very sense of merit. Where there is individual pleasure, in other words, where the spirit does not lust against the flesh, there is no sense of merit. The mother does not think it meritorious to love her child, and why? Because

it costs no struggle; the flesh is married to the spirit, the law of duty coincides with the path of interest. The mother's love is to her an individual joy, and she would not dream of claiming merit for that which is a joy. Now this is the ethical meaning of that doctrine which has always been peculiarly associated with what is called evangelical Christianity—the doctrine that the true saint is unconscious of any merit. To make use of a former illustration, talent will be the same when it becomes genius. Let poetry become the expression of a man's nature, and he will no longer be proud of his verses. His sense of merit will decline with his literary toil. In proportion as art becomes nature it will become unconscious, it will reach the nearest resemblance to its extreme opposite—mechanical inspiration. The harmony of the spirit and the flesh would make virtue so much a personal joy that the spiritual man would be spoken of as the natural man, and the sense of merit in the performance of duty would be exchanged for the sense of privilege in the enjoyment of nature.

But there is a correlative side of this subject, which must not be omitted from the Christian ethics of sin. If it be true that in the Christian system the sense of merit declines with the advance of spiritual life, it is not less true that with the same advance the sense of demerit increases. The nearer a man comes to the realisation of a harmony of soul, the more keenly is he impressed with the

actual discord in his own heart. This, too, is an universal law and no paradox. Absolute sin can have no sense of sin. It is essential to the very existence of conscience that a man should not be all evil. "I had not known sin but for the law," says St. Paul, *i.e.* only a man's waking virtue can detect his power for vice, only by his effort to rise does he learn the depth of his fall. Hence the immediate fruit of all virtue is pain.* Just as the first effect of a stream of light projected over a hitherto unbroken darkness would be to reveal to those who dwell therein the presence of that darkness, so the first effect of a vision of purity is to render the human spirit conscious of its own impurity. That is the reason why in the initial stage of Christian tuition the emphasis is laid on repentance and on confession. It is not that the confession of sin is in itself of any value, but it is an index of the spiritual life. Its value is founded upon the fact that no man can begin with the recognition of darkness; he can only see darkness after he has known light. If then a man confesses a vision of darkness, it can only be because the light has come, and that is the value of his confession. He had not known sin but for the law; the fact that he knows sin is a proof that he has become the subject of law. And the deeper he penetrates into this subjection, the more will he feel the power of darkness. The loftier be a man's ideal, the humbler

* Cf. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, pp. 41, 42.

will be the man. "Not as though I had already attained," "If by any means I might attain," "I count not myself to have apprehended," "I am the least of all the Apostles"—these are the words of one who was very near to the blaze of the absolute vision, who had touched the very threshold of the temple of holiness. The light which made him feel dark was the illumination of his own heart, the vision which made him blind was the brightness of his own ideal. The picture of a stainless moral life had been hung up in his soul, a life in which sacrifice had become an Epicurean joy; he had seen the glory of the cross. For that very reason all other things were without glory, himself included. He felt the despair of admiration. He could never reach his ideal. It was too beautiful; it lay beyond his grasp; it seemed to fly before him as he advanced, and he could only follow afar off. In the presence of the perfect portrait he felt himself the chief of sinners.

And yet this man Paul was not afraid at the same moment to say, *Be ye followers of me.* He was not afraid in the deepest consciousness of his sin to offer his experience as a goal for human attainment. How are we to explain this paradox? Why should a man assert his moral dignity in the very hour when he feels his moral depravity? The reason lies in a fact which forms one of the most remarkable features in the portraiture of Christian ethics. It is from the sense of sin, which tells him

he is a slave, that man first learns his right to be free. There have been systems which have taught that man's will is in bondage, there have been systems which have taught that man's will is in liberty, but Christianity alone has united the contradictory conclusions, Christianity alone has seen that man's moment of conscious bondage is his moment of potential freedom. What does Paul mean when he says, *The law of the spirit of life hath made me free from the law of sin and death?* He means that the law which told him he was a sinner told him that sin was alien to his nature. Had it not been alien to his nature it would not have come to him as a pain, nor would he have felt it to be a bondage. He would no more have experienced it as a privation than a man born blind experiences as a privation the want of sight. His sense of darkness proved that light was his birthright, and he felt that his birthright must be within reach of his normal powers. His ideal of purity was itself his moral obligation to seek it, and the fact of his moral obligation was the proof of his power. He said, like the German thinker of a later age, *I ought, therefore I can;* in proportion to my sense of obligation, so is my measure of power.* Between Saul of Tarsus, the Protestant of the first century, and Emmanuel Kant, the Protestant of the eighteenth, there is, indeed, on the purely historical side a very marked intellectual

* See Kant's "Categorical Imperative," *Metaph. of Ethics*, p. 27, 3rd ed.

resemblance. Both rose into being as the result of a reaction. Both set themselves in antagonism to a conventional and legal theology. Both sought to re-establish religion upon a basis of inward morality. Both made the starting-point of that morality to consist in something which was not national but universal. Both, above all, through the sense of actual dependence, arrived at the prophetic recognition of a possible freedom, recognised in their very power to feel their chain the evidence that the chain was not their birthright, and the power that impelled them to be free. In a word, to the religious reformer of the first century, and to the philosophic reformer of the eighteenth, the chain of moral corruption presented itself as a burden of responsibility, and where there is a burden of responsibility there is already a sense of independence. The man who is weighed down with the conviction of something which he ought to do, may indeed be bowed to the earth as one who bears the yoke, but the load which makes him a servant is the weight of his own riches. The study of the Christian doctrine of sin leads us directly to the gates of a new problem—the Christian exposition of the ground of human responsibility. To the study of that new problem we must now direct our attention.

V.

GROUND OF CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY.

At the close of the previous chapter we pointed out that there is a very close connection between the sense of human depravity and the sense of moral responsibility. But it must be observed that in this statement the word "sense" forms a very important factor.. It is just by leaving out this little word that some creeds and confessions have fallen into a contradiction in terms. The sense of depravity is not identical with the state of depravity; the former begins when the latter is passing away. Yet at certain epochs of the Christian Church it has been no uncommon occurrence for these two things to be confounded. It has been no uncommon occurrence for the preacher in one breath to proclaim at once the moral deadness and the moral responsibility of the soul. We have been told again and again that all the imaginations of every man's heart are only evil continually; that he is incapable in his own strength of thinking one good thought, or of doing one good thing; that, without the aid of a supernatural life transforming him into a new creature, it would be impossible for him even to desire a

participation in the pure and holy. And yet at the close of all these statements—nay, as a corollary from all these statements—there has come the assurance that we are under the wrath and curse of God, and only waiting to receive the just reward of our sins. Now it is quite competent for any divine to hold either of these, but not both. He may say, if he choose, that man's nature is depraved to the extent of being incapable even of conceiving goodness, or, he may say that man's nature is so bad as to be every moment in danger of the Divine judgment, but he cannot hold these two propositions at the same time without intellectual suicide. The one is the contradictory of the other; if the one be true, the other must be false. The one is the doctrine of human impotence, and therefore of human unaccountableness; the other is the doctrine of human responsibility, and therefore of human power.

No man is responsible for that which is naturally and originally beyond his power. We lay this down as a first principle of ethics, and we use the qualifying phrase advisedly. We can conceive circumstances in which a man's impotence may be itself culpable. He may have allowed the passion for strong drink by repeated acts of indulgence to gain such an ascendancy over him that resistance to it has become impossible. In this case the impotence is not natural nor original; it is acquired, and exists within the man as a monu-

ment of blame. But the position of man in the theological systems under consideration is very different from this. It is not the position of one who has squandered his fortune and become poor; it is the case of a being who never had a fortune to squander, who has been born and bred in poverty. and has no conception of the pleasure which money brings. As if to leave no mistake on this subject, the sin of man is declared to be original—born with him. Of course no one would say that the fact of original sin is incompatible with responsibility. A man may be born with a hereditary bias towards drunkenness, but if in addition to that bias he is born with a hereditary strength of will, it becomes his duty to root it out. Let us suppose, however, that this bias towards drunkenness were the only evidence the man gave of life, that he gave no sign of any other sensation, nor of any other manifestation of will, you would then represent the case of the theologians in question. A sin which is at once original and universal, born with the man and diffused through the whole nature of the man, cannot possibly involve the imputation of guilt. Guilt demands power. If I am responsible for living in ignorance of God, it is because I have faculties which bring me into some relation to God. Why am I not responsible for my ignorance of what will happen ten years hence? Simply and solely because I have no faculty which relates to the future. If there be not an original righteous-

ness as well as an original sin, theologians must abandon the belief that religion has anything to do with morality.

The key-note of Christianity is, man has power to be saved! The proof is that it *offers* salvation. It holds out a gift which may be taken by the putting forth of the hand, and thereby it assumes that man has a hand. It declares in the most explicit terms that the motive which it brings to bear on the human soul ought to be irresistible. "If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin" (John xv. 22). These words are very striking. Taken in their purely ethical aspect they imply that the principle of virtue, as Christianity has revealed it, ought to exert an invincible influence over all men, that its empire should admit of no competitor, and that its dominion over the human heart should brook no bounds. And this is not less remarkable from the fact that it is spoken not of saints, but of sinners, of men who have chosen to live contrary to the law of virtue. One asks, On what ground can such a statement be made? If these men have been born in a state of absolute depravity, in a depravity which has rendered immoral not only every deed and word but even every thought, why should it be said that one manifestation of virtue ought to be more compelling than another? What meaning would there be in saying of a blind man, "If I had not brought the light of the sun to him,

if I had only given him candle-light, I would not have blamed him for not seeing"? wherein would consist the absurdity of such a statement? Simply here, that to such a man there can exist no difference between candle-light and sun-light; there can be no degrees in negation. Yet it is not a whit less absurd to say that a totally depraved man is rendered in any degree more guilty by the fact that he has rejected the highest manifestation of spiritual light and love. Moral blindness, like physical blindness, must be just as impervious to the rays of a Sun of Righteousness as to the glimmer of a merely earthly heroism, and it is alike as blameless in its failure to perceive the one, as it is in its inability to discern the other.

There is then a presupposition involved in the Christian revelation. It assumes that man is endowed with a moral nature, with a power to choose what is good. But the question now arises, Where is the evidence of such a power? The problem is comparatively easy so long as it lies between the revelation of Christian morality and the systems of Christian theology, but it assumes a more serious aspect when it embraces the wider battle-ground between the revelation of Christian morality and our experience of the facts of life. For the question simply is, Have we a free choice? Is there within the human soul a power of goodness? That is the great problem of one of the greatest theological works of modern times—

Julius Müller's *Doctrine of Sin.* An ardent advocate for the liberty of the will, he feels that unless man has been allowed to choose virtue for himself he cannot be said to love virtue. To make a man worthy of the name of good, there must have been some golden moment of his life in which his choice between good and evil was free and unbiassed, a moment in which he stood on the mountain's brow and saw on the one side the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and on the other the kingdom of righteousness and its power. But Müller cannot find any such moment in the life of man. At no stage of individual existence can he discover an unbiassed will. We are what we are by reason of what we have been; the present is the child of the past. We have never had a chance of choosing virtue, for the choice of vice has been bequeathed to us as an inheritance. We have come into the world with corrupt natures, and the corruption has weakened the will's power. Virtue no longer stands before us as she is; she is seen through a mist, through a glass darkly. Her beauty is veiled to the human eye. Man would choose her if he could only see her. But the mist of his own corruption prevents him from seeing her; his eyes are blinded, therefore his choice is not free.

Whence then, asks Müller, is this sense of responsibility which beyond all doubt exists within us? If in point of fact we have never since the day

of our birth enjoyed one hour of freedom, if there has not been one solitary moment in which our will has been suffered to fix an unbiassed gaze on the alternatives of good and evil, how is it that every moment of my life I feel as if I were free, feel when I do good that I ought to have done better, when I do wrong that I ought to have refrained? Müller answers, It is because we have come from another world where the will was free! There was a life before this life in which we had our choice of right and wrong. We stood upon a pre-existent mountain, and saw the alternative of the two kingdoms, and said with open eyes: "Evil, be thou my good!" And the result has been this present world of material corruption, this world in which the eye is under mist and the will is under chains and the heart is under ice. The slavery has come to us with birth, because before birth we elected to be slaves, and the sense of responsibility alone remains to tell us we once were free.*

The barren speculation here indulged in is one that can neither be verified nor contradicted. The point which concerns us is that we are quite independent of either its verification or its contradiction.

The hypothesis is purely superfluous, and for this reason that the facts of nature explain themselves. There is no need to go out of the present world to find a solution of the difficulty; the solution lies

* Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* vii. 6.

within the moral world itself. We agree with Müller that freedom is necessary to responsibility, we agree with him that the sense of responsibility demands the existence somewhere of a power of choice. But we say that this power of choice is here. We go further. We say that every developed man, whether he is classed in the category of good or bad, has in point of fact chosen the good in preference to the evil. We say that the difference between a virtuous man and a vicious man does not lie in the difference of their intellectual choice. We believe the aphorism of Socrates to be capable of verification in all experience: No man is wicked from choice. We all know what led Socrates to give utterance to that remarkable statement. The Sophists were denying moral responsibility. They said, How can there be a standard of right and wrong when so many deliberately prefer wrong to right? Socrates said, It is not so; no man that has come into consciousness of his moral nature can for a moment hesitate, or does for a moment hesitate, between the alternatives; the absolute standard of virtue is proved by this, that it is always chosen. That is what Socrates meant, and perhaps profounder words were never uttered in the whole sphere of morals. For, we ask, What do we mean by such terms as right and wrong, good and evil, virtue and vice? We do not ask how we came by the ideas; we leave that question to the metaphysicians. We may hold with Butler

that conscience is a natural tribunal within the soul,* or we may hold with Bain that it is only the last result of a process of utilitarian education;† for our purpose it is all the same. We take up the man just where the evolutionist lays him down, and our anatomy begins where his comes to an end. It is denied by no school of physics or faith or morals that the ideas of right and wrong belong to normal humanity; on this rock we build our structure. In whatever manner we came by these ideas, it is admitted on all hands that we have them now; the simple question is, How much does this admission imply?

It implies nothing less than this, that man has freedom to choose rectitude. The very fact that he calls right by the name of right and wrong by the name of wrong is a proof, not only that there is no barrier to his choice of virtue, but that his choice of virtue is already made. If the form of virtue were hid from him it would be quite impossible that, even in language, he should use such an antithesis as that implied in the ideas of right and wrong. The moment a man says, I have done wrong, he chooses the other course, declares that the other course is better, preferable, more worthy of being followed. And he does not choose it a whit the less should he continue to follow the lower path; the very condemnation in that case is that

* See Sermons 1 and 2.

† See *Emotions and Will*, pp. 283–286.

he is acting in opposition to the choice of his higher nature. Every sting of a remorseful conscience is a choice of that nature. Every sense of sin is a preference of the human will for holiness. Every effort even to shut the moral eyes, every attempt to drown the voice of conscience in a vortex of other voices, is an indirect testimony to the fact that man in some mode of his being has declared goodness to be the strongest motive.

It may be said, indeed, if man thus habitually chooses the good, why does he so generally follow the evil? It was man's following of evil that led Julius Müller to say that the form of virtue must be dimly seen by him. What if the cause of the anomaly should be exactly the reverse? What if it should be found that of the two alternatives, the one which is the dimmer is not the virtue but the vice? What if the reason of man's degeneracy be, not so much the inability to see virtue clothed in her own garments, as the inability to divest vice of garments not her own? For our part we have no doubt about the matter; we hold the faith of Socrates. We believe that in the present system of things no being has ever been heard to say, Evil, be thou my good! It is true, there are certain states of primitive culture in which commendation is extended to many acts that are now called criminal. And the argument would be indeed very strong if they were commended as criminal acts. But the truth is, the thing which is not seen by

the savage is just the criminality or moral turpitude. He considers theft as an act of adroitness, robbery as a proof of strength, duplicity as an evidence of wisdom. Adroitness and strength and wisdom are all good things, and in themselves all objects of desire. Accordingly, when these qualities are displayed, as they may be, in a course of selfish aggression, the savage loses sight of the selfishness in the admiration of the traits by which it is accompanied. Nor let it be thought that the savage is peculiar in this respect. We believe he only exhibits in a coarse form the principle on which all vice makes its progress in the world. To the civilised man as to the savage the secret of the power of vice is a false heroism.

> "Vice is a creature of such hideous mien,
> That to be hated needs but to be seen."

So doubtless it is, but then the word "but" is very deceptive. It implies that to see evil *as* evil is a very simple thing. The truth is, it is not only the most difficult part of the process of moral regeneration, it is, strictly speaking, the moral regeneration itself. If a man saw evil to be evil and evil only, he never would follow it. This he does not readily see, and in the mere state of nature never can see. Evil always comes to him as something more than evil, and it is always chosen by him for the sake of the something more. Sometimes it takes the form of interest. Sometimes it takes the shape of man-

liness. Sometimes it offers itself as an ocean of forgetfulness in which to drown a load of care. In no case does it present itself as what it really is; if it did, Pope's aphorism would be fulfilled, and it would be hated; it is not hated because it is not clearly seen.

Now it is in strict and rather striking accordance with this that in the teaching of the New Testament the degree of a man's spiritual illumination is said to be proportionate to the degree of clearness in his vision of sin. At the top of the spiritual ladder we find the saintly Paul calling himself the chief of sinners; at the foot of the ladder we hear the ideal types of paganism spoken of as unconscious of their own depravity (2 Thess. ii. 7). The passage just referred to is indeed in this connection worthy of some consideration. Paul says that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," in other words, that sin is operating in hearts that are quite unconscious of its presence. It is most hid from those in whom it has become a nature, an atmosphere. It is too near to them to be perceived by them; the revelation which they need most is a revelation of their own actions. Now, according to St. Paul, there is something which prevents such a revelation: "He that hindereth will hinder until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed." Who is "he that hindereth?" Is he the Devil or the Roman Emperor? We should say he stands for both, and a great many other poten-

tates beside. Whatever Paul meant historically, there can be no question what he meant ethically, and this alone here concerns our purpose. The power which in his view prevented sin from being seen as sin was the worldly or carnal principle. The power which blinded pagan Rome was a false ideal of greatness. Men had come to think that the secret of man's glory lay in the abundance of the things he could call his own. The pursuit of self had thus become heroic, and all the *forms* of selfishness had been masked under heroic *names*. It has been more or less the same in every age. The true character of vice has a hundred times been hid by a false glare and a false name. Duelling has been called a debt of honour. Opposition to the spirit of religion has been styled freethought. The life of impure morals has received the name of libertinism—suggestive of freedom from a chain. The effect in each case is the same. Sin is not seen to be what it is, and is made to seem something which it is not. We are forced to experience what Paul experienced—that there is something in the human heart which prevents the revelation of man to himself, a curtain which hides from him his own actions and shuts him out from the possibility of self-scrutiny. The region where man is strongest is precisely that region where he is most a slave; he has a very dim perception of the nature of his own evil.

This, then, is the conclusion at which Christianity

and human nature have both arrived. Man is partly a slave, and partly free. His slavery consists in the fact, that in the world of actual practice he finds it hard to detect sin as sin; his freedom lies in this, that in the world of thought and theory he never hesitates in his preference for the good: "The evil which I would not, that I do; and the good which I would, that I do not." * It will be observed that in the view of St. Paul embodied in this passage the one free thing about man is just the will itself: "I *would*," "I *would* not." It is in practical action he shows himself a slave: "I *do*," "I *do* not." Man's strong point is with St. Paul his power of choice, or rather, his want of all power to choose anything but the good. Paul's notion of moral freedom is different from some modern notions. He looks upon it not as a capacity, to weigh impartially the claims of virtue and of vice, but as a necessity to be swayed by the claims of virtue alone. Man's freedom of choice is the unrestrainedness of his choice, the absence of all hesitation in his choice. In so far as he hesitates, deliberates, weighs alternatives, he is not free. Perfect moral freedom is the perfect captivity of the life to goodness, or to what Paul calls, "the law written in the heart." True freedom is not liberation from law, but liberation from the sense of restraint. The sense of restraint will never be perfectly absent until our subjection to law is

* Cf. Kant, *Metaph. of Ethics*, pp. 70–73.

complete. A man only masters an art when the art has mastered him; he is then, as we say in common language at home in it. And this is his freedom. To be morally free is to have the moral nature dominated by a spirit of holiness; "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

Now we have admitted, St. Paul has admitted, that we see not yet all things subject to this spirit; there *is* an element of slavery in the nature of man. But what Paul says is, that the slavery does not extend to the will. There is one part of our nature which is free to choose good, which never hesitates for a moment in its preference for virtue; it is that power, call it by what name you will, which distinguishes between the right and the wrong. The very capacity to distinguish is itself a choice. The moment I have said—There is a right, and there is a wrong, I have declared virtue to be the stronger motive, I have decided in favour of goodness. That moment too I have become a responsible being. I can no longer plead that the motives of sin are too strong for my weak nature; by the very use of the word *right*, I have decided that goodness is, and ought to be, the most powerful influence. It is true I have only made this decision in the *will*, but, as Kant says, a man's will is his proper self.* The will is the man; the moral decision of the will is the moral decision of the man. That decision has made us responsible beings, for, wher-

* *Metaph. of Ethics*, p. 71.

ever the distinction of right from wrong is known, it is always on the side of good. The very fact of making such a distinction is itself a choice; it is a proof that the will has already been dominated by the influence of a mighty motive which has impelled the innermost life of man to call the moral law by the loftier name.

What, then, is the nature of this responsibility? Its ground lies in our choice, but what is the extent of its requirement? The answer must be clear. My will, that is to say, my innermost nature, has chosen the moral law, has declared the moral law to be the more excellent way, by giving it the name of right. I am responsible for the carrying out of that choice. I am bound to make that moral law, to which my will has already submitted, the governing force of my whole nature. There is no longer any excuse for disharmony when my highest life has decided that the right lies with moral law. Henceforth it must be my task to make my nature consistent with itself. As yet there is no such consistency. We have seen how in the conception of St. Paul the elements of our being are at war. There is a rupture in the life of man, a schism in the human soul. I always choose right; I tend to follow wrong. The question is, Why? Is it that when I come from the inner into the outer world a stronger motive assails me and compels me to reverse my choice. In point of fact I never do reverse my choice; even where I follow the wrong,

I still "see and approve better things." It is impossible, therefore, that the superior strength of a new motive can be my excuse. What is conscience itself but a protest against such a conclusion? What is it but the declaration that the first choice of the will remains unreversed, that the first motive of the will remains undimmed, and that the failure to execute the will remains unaccounted for and therefore unexcused.

It is this unanswered "Why" that constitutes man's sense of moral guilt. He feels that he ought to do more than he has done, that he has power to do more than he has done. His sense of duty is itself a sense of power—"I ought, therefore I can!" He has chosen the right, therefore the right cannot be beyond him. It is within the orbit of his aspirations, and so it must be within the range of his capacities. The mind's recognition of its slavery is itself its hope of redemption. What, as unfolded by Christianity, is the plan of its redemption? What are the steps of that process by which, in the view of the Christian system, the spirit of man is to rise from slavery into freedom? All doctrines of a purely dogmatic theology we here pass by on the other side, for the simple reason that in relation to our subject they are on the other side. In their own departments of study they have their legitimate place, but the department with which we have to do lies within the limits of human nature and normal experience. The question which

we have to determine is, To what extent do the doctrines of Christian theology admit of being translated into the principles of universal morality? Amid the many things which they profess to reveal, do they throw any light on the ethical life of man? Do they furnish any hint or suggestion or principle which may serve to light up the steps of that steep ascent by which the human soul must mount the heights of duty? The answer to that question is the problem that now lies before us.

VI.

THE MORAL PLACE OF FAITH.

We have now come to the great practical question, In what way is a human soul to justify itself, to set itself in harmony with the law of conscience? The question assumed originally a theological form, but its interests really lay in the appeal which it made to the moral struggles of the heart. We have seen that a part altogether from theology, nay, apart altogether from any definite form of religion, there is within the human soul the sense of a violated law. We have seen that in the heart of every man there is a dualism—a strife between two. Christianity neither created nor revealed that dualism; it only made the perception of it more vivid. The sense of a violated law belongs to no creed; it belongs to man as man. It takes its rise originally, not from the promulgation of a priestly mystery, but from the discovery of an actual discord. To man in every age there thunders a voice from the mount of his highest nature—*Thou shalt! Thou shalt not!*—a voice which ought to be supreme, and which claims to be omnipotent. But to man in every age there has come also one uniform experi-

ence—that of a tendency to resist the voice. It is the voice that wakens his sense of responsibility; it is his tendency to resist the voice that makes his sense of guilt. And it is from the conflict of both that the question comes—*What must I do to be saved?* Christianity did not start that problem, religion did not start that problem; it is, first and foremost, a problem dictated by the daily life and common needs of man. Christianity has added no new need to the soul; it has only flashed a fresh light upon the needs of nature. The starting-point of Christianity is the want of nature—the absence of a peace within the soul.

What, then, is the moral method by which Christianity meets this moral want of man? Its method is at once simple and profound. It proposes to begin the moral education of the soul by an appeal to the child-life. It proposes that man should enter on his training for the kingdom of heaven by a precisely analogous process to that which constitutes his tuition for the kingdom of earth. This is the deep thought which Christ means to suggest when He sets a little child in the midst of His disciples, the deep principle He designs to convey when He declares that the spirit of childhood is essential to participation in the life of God. For, let us consider what is the method by which the child first enters on the knowledge of this world. It is in some form or other the study of a picture-book. It sees in objects the symbols

of men; in men the symbols of thought. Unto the child, without a parable, life speaketh not. Its first idea of everything must be an embodied idea. It can only love virtue by loving the virtuous man. It cannot learn the maxims of the copy-book as long as they are not translated into experience. Before all things it must see the action, the form, the life. It must learn to admire the deed as the deed of an historical being, must long to emulate the act as the act of an heroic man. The birth of its virtue will coincide with the birth of its hero-worship; its reverence for greatness will be the reverence for a person. When we turn now to the childhood of Christianity we are confronted by a very similar spectacle. The entire aim of that religion is at the outset to draw back the mind of man into that mode of perceiving truth which characterised his early days. It calls him to behold moral truth in a parable, *i.e.*, in the picture of a human life. That which flashes before the view of infant Christendom is not an abstract idea, but the figure of a man—a man whose every word, whose every deed, is a professed appeal to the intuitions of the child-life. He acts by symbols, He speaks by parables, He wins by ministration to the common needs with which every child can sympathise. He meets the world as a world, in its daily toils and commonplace wants. He calls to Him those who labour and those who are heavy-laden. He breaks the bread to famished multitudes in the desert. He takes up

the cross of paralytics, lepers, demoniacs. He throws himself into contact with the weak ones of the earth, those who had proved themselves unfit for the battle of life, and He reveals to their hearts the glad assurance that life even for them has not lost all its glory. That is the form in which Christian morality first addresses itself to the Christian consciousness. It is the form in which all truth everywhere begins to speak—the form of a symbol. The child-life of humanity is placed in front of a sensuous stage, ostensibly to see, really to learn. It is attracted first only by the images of things, and it is through its admiration of the images that the things themselves enter in. Christianity has only followed the universal law of development when it says, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

But let us advance a step further. We have said that the child-life of humanity, while it is seemingly only a spectator, is in reality a learner, and this in the present instance is pre-eminently true. All the time the infant-life of Christendom was to outward appearance merely gazing on a human image, it was unconsciously imbibing a new moral nature, becoming the recipient of another and a higher life. Yet it is just here that for the first time we are confronted by that element in Christian morality which constitutes at once its special feature and its peculiar difficulty. Were you to ask a Jew what

use there is in looking on the vision of a good man's life, his answer would be, It will help you, by its example, to keep the moral law. But if you were to ask a Christian of the first century in what way a man is to receive good from the vision of Christ, his answer would be seemingly the opposite. He would not tell you in the first instance that the advantage of such a vision lay in the incentive it gave to moral practice; he would say, "We are justified by faith!" An answer so strange and paradoxical—an answer which by the earliest age of the Christian Church itself was felt to involve a grave and arduous problem—certainly demands our full and free consideration. That it is not a matter of purely theological import may be inferred from the fact that the principle which it involves is made to underlie all theology. For it is quite true what Dr. Stanley Leathes says, that the relation which Christ required of His disciples was above all others the relation of faith—the believing attitude of soul.* Not only does He require that attitude more prominently than all others, He asks it previous to all others. He will not even display His power until He has found faith in the man who desires to see it. He values faith, not as an evidence of theological training, but as a *preparation* for theological training. He looks upon the power to believe as a part of man's moral nature, and it is because He desires an approach from the

* *Religion of the Christ*, p. 229.

moral nature of man that He seeks before all things an evidence of faith.

And yet, after all, is faith a moral act? Such is the question which with ever-increasing power is pressing upon the nineteenth century. It would be a great mistake, however, to imagine that it is a purely modern question; it is as old as Christianity, and in one sense older.* It gave rise to a Jewish party in the Christian Church; it generated an intellectual schism in the Jewish Church; it has agitated human nature outside of all Churches. It is not merely that an intellectual belief in the historical facts of Christianity is to be found side by side with the most corrupt moral practices; St. James himself saw this when he cried, "The devils believe and tremble." But the question which chiefly presses upon the mind is concerned with a deeper difficulty. It does not so much ask whether men are living up to their belief, as whether their belief itself has any moral value. To the modern mind especially the inquiry presents itself as a matter of vital interest. It asks, Why do we call a man good? Is it for what he does, or is it for what he believes? If it is for what he believes, why is not all belief of equal value? If a man says, I believe in the accuracy of the narrative of Josephus, we should no more think of calling him virtuous than we should think of calling him discerning. Yet what is the difference between

* See Farrar's *Early Christianity*, II. p 79, *sq.*

the man who makes such an averment and the man who says, I believe in the narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John? Is not the one as much as the other expressing his conviction of the truth of an historical fact? Nevertheless the verdict of religious opinion treats these men very differently; it regards the belief of the first as a thing morally indifferent; it calls the faith of the second a proof of Divine grace. If the first man should at any time come to the conclusion that the narrative of Josephus is not accurate, he would not be esteemed morally either better or worse. If the second man were at any time to reach the conviction that a similar inaccuracy attached to the evangelical narrative, the verdict of religious opinion would pronounce upon him a sentence of condemnation; he would be called a sceptic. How are we to explain this seeming inconsistency? how are we to vindicate the morality of faith?

The first step towards such a vindication is to distinguish two things which the popular view is apt to confound—the scholastic and Scriptural meaning of the word *faith*. In the scholastic sense faith signifies merely an assent of the intellect. Now, we have no hesitation in saying that a merely intellectual assent can have only an intellectual value, and that the possession of such a faith does not render a man good or bad. It may be said indeed, Is not a man who believes in a future life more likely to lead a good life here than

a man who does not? To this we must answer, It depends entirely on the moral character of that future in which he believes. We can conceive circumstances in which such a man would be positively the worse for his belief. Let us suppose that his conception of future happiness is the Mohammedan one of a heaven of selfish indulgence and unrestrained libertinism; will any man say that his faith in the future is not an absolute hindrance to his moral development? Christian theology, indeed, has extruded from its heaven the element of libertinism, but has it always extruded the element of selfish indulgence? We shall not here discuss the point; we shall only say that if ever such an ingredient should enter into the conception of the Christian heaven, it would render the Christian's faith in immortality immoral—a barrier to his spiritual progress, and a death to his Divine aspirations.

The same may be said of any other dogma. If it be asked, for example, if a man's life is not likely to be better for believing in the Divinity of Christ, it must again be answered, that it depends solely on the moral sense he attaches to the word *Divine*. There have been men in pre-Christian religions who have worshipped physical power, brute force, ability to crush the weak. To such men these things were the essence of divinity; and for that very reason they were to them a source of immorality. Men followed that which they admired. They looked

upon physical oppression as an object of worship, and it was only natural they should look upon it as an object of emulation. If their notion of divinity had been merely an abstract or intellectual one, it would have made them neither better nor worse. But when their notion of divinity was an immoral one, it could not do otherwise than render them immoral. The vices of Roman Imperialism are the legitimate fruit of the worship of Roman paganism; where a man's treasure is there his heart will be. Nor has the Christian conception of the Divine been at all times free from the same reproach. The Christ of Mediævalism was too often but a pagan deity under a Christian name—a terrible figure in the air, brandishing the flaming sword of Judgment, and evoking vengeance upon the head of His enemies. And wherever in the Mediæval world that conception of the Christ prevailed, the hearts of men were proportionately hardened. It created the atrocities of the Crusades, it gave rise to the horrors of the Inquisition. If the God of Mediævalism had been but an intellectual abstraction, His influence would have been harmless. But when the God of Mediævalism was conceived as a despot in the sky, His influence became pernicious. Men received a bias in favour of despotism. They came to admire crushing power because it was crushing. They grew callous to the call of mercy and deaf to the voice of pity. The tenderness of the humanity within them would have

been utterly suppressed if the influence of the God of heaven had not been counteracted on earth by the reverence for the memory of the human Child, and the softening devotion to the virgin mother.

Now, let us suppose that the conception of Christ had been of an opposite nature. Let us imagine that the mediæval conception of Divinity had itself been that ideal assigned to the virgin mother. Conceive that, instead of a stern unbending sovereign wrapt up in the consciousness of his own majesty, and valuing beyond all things the material strength of his own dominion, the eye of the mediævalist had rested habitually on the form of a high priest in heaven, on the figure of a Divine Being whose Divinity lay in his sacrificial power, and the rod of whose empire was the sceptre of love—apart altogether from dogmatic considerations, is it possible to imagine a more salutary influence than such a conception would have exerted? It would have gone far to make the world of the middle ages in every sense the opposite of what it has actually been. Presenting a new object of worship, a new standard of the Divine, it would steadily and surely have conformed to that standard the lives and thoughts of men. Nay, that which a man worships is already in possession of his thoughts; it is only the life that needs to be conformed, and where the heart is the life shall soon be. If the mediæval world had assigned to its ideal of God in heaven a portion of that feminine

helpfulness which is found in the Virgin on earth, its ideal of priesthood would have been transformed from a conception of Papal power into a conception of ministering service.

Now, what we have here said hypothetically is in the New Testament exhibited actually. If we ask why it is that the New Testament requires faith we shall find the answer to be, that what the New Testament calls faith is itself a moral aspiration. The New Testament is quite well aware of the distinction between an intellectual and a moral assent, as the narrative of Nicodemus clearly shows. Nicodemus has all the faith of the most orthodox Scholastic; he has not only determined the measure of Christ's greatness, but he is able to give a reason for his belief. Yet this man, so correct in his theological convictions, is declared not to have even seen the kingdom of God. He is told that before he can see the form of God's kingdom he requires to be in possession of its spirit. From such a statement there can be but one inference, viz, that the faith which Christianity demands is not so much a persuasion of the intellect as an aspiration of the soul. To see the kingdom of God is to be already in possession of that kingdom, for it is only seen by that spiritual similarity which enables kindred minds to recognise each other's power.

If then it be asked, why is faith in Christ regarded by the New Testament as a valuable thing? the answer is not hard to find. If Christ

had been introduced into the world as a mere abstraction, or if He had demanded faith from man as a condition of revealing His character, the belief in Him would then have been a merely intellectual act, and could in no way have possessed a moral significance. But the case is entirely altered when, before demanding anything at all, Christ reveals the nature of His mind. He does not ask faith in Himself until He has shown Himself—"Believe Me for the work's sake." His first attitude is not one of receiving but of giving: He begins by manifesting His purity. The faith which He requires is a faith in this manifestation. To believe in Christ is a sign of moral goodness, because it is a belief in moral purity. It is the soul's assent to the beauty of holiness, it is the spirit's admiration of the loveliness of a stainless life. When a man looks at a portrait of moral perfection, and says, "I believe in that," he is already in participation of that which he admires. He could not admire it unless it were in him. If it were a mere physical gift it would be very different. A man may love to gaze on outward beauty though he himself be outwardly deformed. But he cannot admire spiritual beauty if he be altogether spiritually deformed; to say so is a contradiction in terms. The admiration of spiritual beauty is itself a feature of that beauty; it implies an adaptation between the seer and the thing which he sees. As surely as the love of poetry proves the presence of a poetic soul even in

him who has hitherto been mute, as certainly as the interest in a metaphysical problem shows the existence of a philosophic faculty even in a practical mind, so surely does the admiration for virtue show that he who admires is in germ already virtuous. That admiration is expressed in Christianity by the word *faith*. When a man said, I believe in Christ, he really said, and meant to say, I believe in the beauty of goodness, in the desirableness of purity, in the right of righteousness to be ultimately triumphant. He declared that Christ was his ideal of perfection, that to that ideal he was in thought at least loyal and true, and that he longed for the time to come when the actions of his life would be conformable to the thought of his soul.

And this leads us naturally to consider that problem which has always been specially associated with the subject of faith—the connection between the thought and the life. When it has been decided that Christian faith is itself a moral impulse, it still remains to ask, what is the relation of this impulse to the outward lives of men? To ask this is really to revive that crucial question of the First Christian century: Is a man justified by works or by faith only? For us indeed that question can have only an ethical significance; with its theological aspect we have here nothing to do. We believe, however, that as all widely accepted dogma has its root in some fact of human nature, the theological dogma of Justification can be illustrated by

the moral nature of man. Nay, we shall go further. We say that Paul's theological conception of faith is directly built upon the moral aspiration described in the previous paragraph. By faith in Christ, Paul means union with Christ. Now in every moral aspiration, by which one mind seeks to rise to the level of another mind, such an union is implied. The moment I have admired the spiritual beauty of another soul I am already in union with that soul. My aspiration towards him is only possible to me on account of the oneness of our minds. I cannot seek any spiritual good which I have not already begun to find. If I say, I believe in the name, *i.e.* in the character, of the Lord Jesus Christ, I only do so, I only can do so, by reason of a kindred spirit; I believe in Him through that which is common to Him and me—"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it unto thee, but My Father in heaven!"

The theological conception of faith being then not at variance with the moral one; but, on the contrary, the necessary inference and corollary from it, it remains to ask whether the theological effect attributed to faith be in any sense analogous to its moral effect in the actual world? Is there any moral sense in which it can be said that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law? There is; and it is one of the deepest experiences of the moral consciousness. It may be said with perfect truth that the measure of a man is, not what he

can do, but what he believes in. In every case the spiritual belief of a man outruns his actual capacity. We often point with sadness to the amount of hypocrisy that exists in the world. We hear men in their books and conversation giving utterance to the most pious and edifying sentiments, but when we meet them in the contact of life we experience a shock of contradiction. Yet there is no necessity to suppose that the contradiction has its root in hypocrisy. In a large number of cases it would be more correct to say that these men are "justified by faith." They have the sight of an *ideal*—the true definition of Christian faith. They see before them an image of what they would like to be. They have faith in it, that is to say, they believe it to be the only object worth following, and the only object which it will reward them to follow. But just as the natural eye can see further than the steps can travel, so the moral sight of these men penetrates to a distance which transcends their capacity for moral walking. They see like Balaam the Star that comes out of Judah, but while it speaks to their eye it lies beyond the reach of their feet. They have sight of the ideal, but their footsteps lag behind their sight. The new vision does not at once dispel the old nature any more than the morning sun at once dispels by its rising the clouds and shadows which the night has left behind. The charge of inconsistency would be much more easily substantiated than that of hypocrisy; only it is, at

the outset, an inevitable inconsistency, an inconsistency which springs from the constitution of human nature itself. It springs from the fact that the nature of man does not advance simultaneously to perfection, that there are powers of the human soul which seem to outrun the others and arrive more quickly at their destined goal. It arises from that law of moral growth by which, while it is yet winter in the world of action, the aspirations are bursting into the buds of spring, and while the limbs are yet paralysed with cold the heart is made aware that the time for the singing of birds is come.

We ask, then, as St. Paul asked, what is to be our measure of the man? Shall it be his works or his faith, his actual righteousness or his ideal righteousness? Two opposite solutions of the problem have been proposed. The first is that of the Jew. He decides in favour of works as the measure of a man. He proposes to estimate the moral power of a human being by that which at any given time he is able to do. But it is a law of the moral life that the more a man can do the more he feels his own impotence. His ideal seems to fly further from his sight just in proportion as his acts conform to it. Hence it was that the Jew of all men had a peculiar sense of moral unrest. The very effort to keep the law made him feel the impossibility of keeping it; his legal self-measurement ended in despair. But here the Christian stepped in with another and a very different solution. He

said to the Jew, what if your sense of impossibility be itself the mark and sign of your moral progress? Are you not altogether on the wrong track to find an inward source of justification? You think that you are less justified in proportion as the law appears to you too grand to be realised; it is the reverse that is true. It is only when the contrast appears between your moral ideal and your actual self that you are really on the road to justification. It is only when your heart feels itself in the presence of a righteousness, before which the deeds of its actual life seem poor and mean, that it truly enters into the hope of a moral and spiritual regeneration; it reaches nearest to perfection precisely at those points in which its distance from perfection is most vividly realised.

Now, between the claims of these two solutions there can be no difficulty to decide. That of Christianity is clearly the one which is most in harmony with human nature. As a matter of fact, no great work ever comes up to the greatness of its ideal. We may take it for granted that the *Paradise Lost*, as it appears in print, is not nearly so grand a creation as the *Paradise Lost* when it existed in the brain of Milton. We may consider it certain that the imitative acts of the child are of less value than the principle of imitation which prompted them. We may look upon it as beyond dispute that the spirit of religion which underlies any form of worship is of more importance than

that form or all other forms put together. What do these facts mean but this, that the main value of a deed lies in what it does not say, that the thing which makes it good and gives it value is not what it says but what it suggests of power beyond its own! It is true alike of the intellectual and of the moral hero, that the only sense of satisfaction he can experience in the completion of any actual work is just that sense of dissatisfaction which tells him he is beyond his work; he is justified by the sight of his ideal—by faith.

We have now vindicated the claim of Christian faith to a commanding place in the moral world; we have done so on the ground of a particular definition which we have assigned to that faith. We have defined it to be the sight of an ideal. We have to add, that if this definition be accepted it will go far to minimise, nay, to reduce into a unity, those seemingly various meanings which the word bears in the New Testament. It is often pointed out by theologians that the term *faith* is used in Scripture to denote different things. Sometimes it is the opposite of physical perception—"We walk by faith, not by sight." Sometimes it is the opposite of outward works—"By the deeds of the law can no man be justified." Sometimes it is a term that denotes a steadfast loyalty preserved in the midst of surrounding difficulties, the opposite of a wavering mind—"Thy faith hath made thee whole." Now, while in these senses of the word *faith* there

is admittedly a shade of difference, there is in our view a common root of agreement. Is there any similarity of meaning which belongs to the word in each of these senses? There is; the idea of outward incompleteness. When it is said that faith, and not sight, is the principle of a Christian's life, what does that mean? Is it not clearly this, that he believes in something which is not yet outwardly realised? When it is said that we are not justified by the deeds of the law, what is that but to say that we cannot realise our ideal of purity? When it is said, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,"—is not this but in other words to declare, that the highest of all trust is that which can believe in a promise which has lost all prospect of being realised on earth? In each and all of these cases faith has one and the same meaning. It is the sight of an ideal whose outward manifestation is not yet seen, the conviction of a truth whose proof lies beyond the eye and ear, the assurance of a result whose accomplishment seems belied by the actual facts of life.

There is still another sense of the word *faith* in the New Testament, in which it no longer represents a personal act, but stands for a body of collective doctrine, it is that sense in which Paul says to Timothy: "Hold fast the old faith once delivered to the saints." Yet even here it may be said with truth that the dogmas of the early Church were but the crystallisations of her ideals. Whatever the

dogmas of Christianity may have become in the hands of the mediæval world, there can at least be no doubt that with the Church of primitive Christendom they were but the embodiment of the heart's moral longings. To that Church the value of the dogma was the moral element to which it gave expression. It was good to believe in a divine Christ, because divinity was then something more than power; it was power working by love. It was good to believe in a Trinity, because trinity was then something more than dogma; it was grace, love, and communion. It was good to believe in heaven, because heaven was then something more than a place where men received physical rewards for duty done; it was a Temple in which men served God day and night. It was good to believe in atonement, because atonement was then not the mere means of a salvation from physical fire, but a mode of reconciliation between the ideal law of conscience and the actual life of man. We do not say, as an eminent English divine has tried to show, that the dogmas of Christianity were essential to the ethics of Christianity.* We neither affirm nor deny that; it lies outside of our province. But we do say, that the doctrines which to the mediævalist were precious on account of their intellectual mystery were prized by the early Church in view of their moral intelligibility. Whether to that primitive Christian

* Wace, *Christianity and Morality*—Boyle Lecture for 1878.

consciousness dogma was or was not deemed essential to morality may be left an open question, but there can be no question at all that morality was deemed essential to dogma. In the primitive gospel religion and morality were two halves of one whole—the Christian religion was the theory of Christian morals; Christian morality was the practice of the Christian religion. The word *doctrine* had always a practical sense; it meant something by which to *live*. Alike to Paul and to James, faith without works was dead, because faith was itself but a vision anticipative of the work completed. It was but the recognition by the inner eye of that which the outer eye could not see, and the realising already of that purity to reach which the actual life has still to travel far. The object of a man's faith was nothing less than the goal of his aspiration, the treasure which he sought and prayed for. Here we are brought to the gates of a new subject, to a phase of the Christian life much misunderstood and often misrepresented—the connection which subsists in Gospel morality between the value of a man's faith and the value of his prayer. A subject of such great moral significance, and one so distinctive of the ethics of Christian belief demands subjection to a separate study.

VII.

THE MORAL PLACE OF PRAYER.

In the previous chapter we arrived at the conclusion that Christian Faith is the sight of an ideal. That which immediately follows the sight of an ideal is the desire to realise it, and hence in the Christian system faith is the root of prayer. By the study of the one we are led by direct logical sequence to the contemplation of the other: "Whatsoever things ye have need of, believe that ye receive them, and ye have received them."

The moral place of prayer is one of the distinctive features of Christian ethics, and could not by any process be eliminated from a scientific view of the subject. And yet when we look at the matter from any standpoint outside of Christianity itself, it is not very easy to see what prayer has to do with morality. Prayer in its most elementary meaning signifies the expression of a wish, whether that wish be expressed to God or to man. A wish is itself the expression of a need; it is the proof that something is wanting to our nature. Is there, then, anything suggestive of virtue in the experience of

want, or in the expression of that want, if it be experienced? Or, can it be said that it makes any moral difference to the nature of a wish whether it be addressed to a human or to a Divine Intelligence? If I am hungry, I ask food from the first human being that passes by; in doing so I have proved myself a natural man, because I have followed the call of nature. But no one would say that the act proves me to be a moral man. I may or I may not be so; the deed leaves it still an open question. Now, suppose that in my physical distress, instead of appealing to the first human being who passed by, I utter my need aloud to a Being whom I believe to be Omnipotent, and in whose Divine power and sympathy I feel the most implicit confidence, in what respect does this act belong more to the moral sphere than the other? In the latter case, as in the former, am I not simply making an effort to realise my physical necessities, and appealing to such sources of help as seem to me to be most valuable?

Let us not imagine that the question here suggested is one either of pagan scepticism or of modern neology. So far as known to us, it is a question which never arose until it was proposed by the Christian Founder Himself. The question of the moral efficacy of prayer is a problem which may be said to owe its origin to the very ideal of goodness which Christ created. It is He Himself who first points out that the mere fact of prayer is

not a virtue, and that the virtue of prayer depends on something else than the asking. He declares that there are two kinds of prayer—that which He teaches, and that which is taught by the Gentiles. Let us mark carefully the distinction which, in the view of the Christian Founder, subsists between these two orders of petition. The instinct of prayer is universal; it is a part of natural religion. But Christ says that in Him, and in that system which He has come to inaugurate, the instinct of prayer has entered on a new departure. It has passed through a complete transformation, which has made it no more like the old instinct than the intuition of the man resembles the bias of the animal. Christ claims to have made this doctrine of natural theology a new and original doctrine, so new that the Gentiles would not recognise it, so original as to involve the entrance into humanity of a moral force which has linked the creature with the Uncreated, and changed an act of servile supplication into an experience of Divine communion. What has produced the change? Wherein lies the distinction between the prayer of the Gentile and the prayer of the Christian? What makes the difference between the act in the order of nature and the act in the order of grace?—that is the question we have now to consider.

To answer this question we must begin by asking, Wherein to the view of the Gentile world consisted the value of prayer? Now on this subject our

Gospels give us a very decided and a very explicit statement. They tell us that to the Gentiles the thing which made prayer valuable in the sight of God was the fact of supplication: "They think they will be heard for their much speaking." Their prayers are marked by the use of "vain repetition." They give emphasis to the fact that they are suppliants. They seek to intensify the labour of language. They feel that their prayer is more acceptable above, in proportion as it is disagreeable below, that God likes it in proportion as man finds it irksome. Hence the penance of words is multiplied, and the interest of words is minimised. The value lies not in them, but in that sense of prostration of which they are the unintelligent sign. The prayer is pleasing to God because it is a prayer.

It is here that Christianity steps in with a direct negative. It declares that the value of prayer lies not in the fact of the supplication, but in the nature of the thing supplicated. That which sanctifies the prayer in the Christian system is not its abjectness, nor its prolongedness, nor even, strictly speaking, its sincerity, but its *object;* the proof of this is that in Christianity there is a prayer which teaches to pray. Now, we think it will be found that within the compass of the New Testament there are three degrees of prayer—a prayer that is evil, a prayer that is natural or legitimate, and a prayer that is moral or saintly. Let us look at each of these.

"Ye ask and ye receive not, because ye ask amiss,

that ye may consume it upon your lusts." In these words of St. James there is adduced the startling statement that there may be an irreligious prayer—that a man may offer up to God a petition which is perfectly sincere, and which yet has no higher source than a disguised selfishness. We should doubt the possibility of such a thing in an act of professed religious worship, did we not remember that a man's notion of God is just the shadow of himself. He gives to the object of his worship, in an intensified degree, that element which to him constitutes the ideal of earthly happiness and of human greatness. If his ideal of these things be high, his thought of God will be sublime; if it be low, his thought of God will be ignoble. The selfish man cannot rise above his selfishness, even in his religion. His very conception of prayer is an image of himself. His God is pleased with prayer, because great kings love flattery and homage. If he were in God's place, he would like to be praised, he would feel it sweet to receive the plaudits of creation. Hence, when he is told that God does all things *for His own glory*, he has no hesitation in attaching to these words a purely personal or selfish meaning. He comes to persuade himself that the homage involved in his prayer is a kind of reward which God would miss if it were not given: "If Thou wilt keep me in the way in which I go, so that I have bread to eat, and raiment to put on, then wilt Thou be my God."

And the character of the prayer will be proportionate to the view entertained of its value. A selfish man, praying to a selfish God, cannot ask unselfish things. He will not consider the problem whether his prayer could be granted without injuring the interests of another; nay, he will not scruple to pray for the injury of another, provided that other be an enemy. Two armies, on the eve of battle, have often engaged in separate religious services, that each might petition the Deity for the extermination of its opponent. We have no hesitation in saying that the New Testament would not endorse such a form of prayer. The most it would authorise in such circumstances would be the petition: "Thy kingdom come"—let that cause triumph whose triumph would least disturb the balance of the empire of the King of Kings! If a man believes his cause to be the right, then, however erroneous his judgment may be, his desire for its prosperity is a moral desire; but he must not seek the extermination of an enemy as an enemy. Nay, there is a wider principle still; it is not enough that there be no enmity—there must be no isolation. Man must not ignore the interest of his brother-man. He cannot, with moral purity, view himself as an unit, or contemplate the universe as existing for himself alone. I have no right to offer up a prayer for universal rain, if I am cognisant of the fact that there is only a partial want of rain. The universal rain will indeed cover my want, but

it will intensify the want of others—the want of prolonged fair weather. Here, again, as in the case of the opposing armies, Christianity comes forward as a mediator. "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread" is the form of petition which it puts into the mouth of the farmer. It tells him to consider, not the want of his own district alone, but the want of his own district in its relation to the wants of the universe. It bids him seek such a distribution of good to him as will not detract from the good of all. It commands him to remember that his interest lies in the fact that he is not an isolated unit, but the member of a body corporate, to whose development his life is necessary, and whose united welfare is necessary to the development of his life. In a word, what Canon Liddon says is profoundly true—that in the ethics of Christian prayer all petitions for merely personal good must be conditioned by the three earliest petitions in the prayer of the Christian Founder—petitions which are themselves reducible to the one supplication for the whole universe: "Thy will be done." *

Here, then, is the first or lowest order of prayer enumerated in the New Testament. It is pointed out that we may avoid it, and that we may not imagine the mere fact of supplication to be in itself a sanctifying power. But there is a second and superior order of prayer suggested by Christianity. If the first class comprehends things which we are

* See Liddon's *Some Elements of Religion*, p. 197.

not to seek at all, the second includes things which we are not to "seek first," *i.e.*, not until we have sought something else. "Take no anxious thought what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed, for after all these things do the Gentiles seek; but seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you, for your Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." In these words we are introduced to an order of prayer which is neither immoral on the one hand, nor yet saintly on the other. It is not immoral, because it is admitted to be the expression of a natural and legitimate want: "Your Father knoweth that ye have *need* of these things." It is not saintly because the need which is felt is as yet only natural, and does not express the measure of the true wants of man. It is an order of prayer which is specifically described as *Gentile*—level with the height of heathendom. And indeed it may be said that in the pre-Christian or Gentile world the standpoint of the popular masses was an epicurean attitude. It was so both in their religion and in their want of religion. In their want of religion they lived for the gratification of their physical desires; in the exercise of their religion they prayed for that gratification. No one will say that they were immoral in doing so. They were sensible, they were prudent, they were duly impressed with the historical fact that no man has proved adequate to

the supply of his own wants, and to that extent they are worthy of commendation. But then that extent is very small, and does not nearly touch the boundaries of human nature. It is at best but a recognition of man's secular need and secular dependence, and to recognize these things there is wanted only a secular faculty. If the child ask his earthly father for a fish it would be malignant in the father to give him a stone, but so far as the child were concerned it could morally make no difference whether he had asked a fish or a stone. He might desire the fish to-day from hunger, and the stone to-morrow from curiosity. If it be asked, Which of these requests is the more legitimate? the answer is easy: they are both equally legitimate. If it be asked, Which of them is the more moral? the question is absolutely without meaning. They are neither of them either moral or immoral; they are simply non-moral. They have nothing to do with the sphere of duty; they belong exclusively to the region of secular desire. They are natural but not spiritual, legitimate but not saintly, evidences of healthy physical growth and normal mental development, but not yet the sign or prophecy of a growth beyond the physical, or of a development higher than the merely normal powers. Nor can the case in any sense be altered by transferring the scene of supplication from the house of an earthly father to the house of God. The character of a man's prayer is determined not by

whom he asks, but by what he asks. He may supplicate God day and night in sackcloth and ashes, and may repeat his request with endless reiterations; it will not bring him a step nearer towards saintship if his request itself be not saintly. If he ask God for a fish or a stone, he is no more to be praised than he is to be condemned; he has performed a secular act which, from a worldly point of view, may be prudent or imprudent, which in the result it achieves may be successful or unsuccessful, but which, in itself and by itself, has no reference to his moral character either in the past or in the future.

Now, let us understand why this second kind of prayer which Christ calls distinctively *Gentile* does not reach higher than the natural or legitimate. It is not because it deals with material things—what we shall eat or what we shall drink, or wherewithal we shall be clothed; it is the kind of thought given to these things that lessens the value of the prayer. It is quite possible, for instance, that such prosaic concerns as eating and drinking and clothing may be made the materials of a richly spiritual prayer. The prayer of a philanthropist, if it be complete and comprehensive, must embrace these things. He cannot desire the welfare of humanity without desiring its temporal or bodily comfort. His desire for the temporal comfort of humanity is one of the things which spiritualise his prayer, make it a Christian prayer. What is it that here constitutes the differ-

ence between the Gentile and the Christian supplication? What makes the one only legitimate, the other saintly? It cannot be the dwelling in the mind of material images, for in this case the two kinds of prayer are both concerned with such images. It lies in a difference of *thought*. In the one case the material image is an end; in the other it is only a means to an end. To the philanthropist the old earthly elements remain, but they are transfigured into chariots of helpfulness. He sees in them the instruments through which his own unselfishness may work, and he values them because they are instruments. If he has any personal care for the morrow, it is no longer an anxious care, for the very weight of the burden of others has caused his own burden to drop into the sea. The truth is, we are here on the lines of the grand transition which Christ Himself has indicated—the transition from the lower into the higher form of prayer: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you." It is as if He had said: I do not ask you to despise the things which the Gentiles seek; I ask you to value them more than they really do. You can never perfectly value them until you find their spiritual use, their power to help in the cause of humanity. Get first the spirit of unselfishness—the kingdom of the Father's righteousness, and then you will know how grand are these outward influences of the universe; all these things shall be added unto you.

In passing to this third and highest kind of prayer, we are called at once to notice the unqualified measure of certainty which is attached to it. In no respect does Christianity stand in a more marked contrast to Gentilism than in the confidence of its affirmations regarding the efficacy of prayer. The Pagan goes to his Oracle to learn the issue of a coming battle, and he commonly receives an answer so ambiguous as to point equally to either result. The Christian, on the other hand, claims for his prayer an unlimited promise of success, an answer of whose positive comfort there can exist no dubiety. "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do," "If ye ask anything in My name, I will do it," "All things are possible to him that believeth," "Ask, and ye shall receive," "Whatsoever things ye have need of, believe that ye receive them, and ye have received them." These are weighty words, and to many they have been as startling as they are weighty. They will only cease to be startling when we remember that the Christian Founder is there speaking of a distinctively Christian prayer—that new form of prayer which Himself had come to inaugurate. When He says, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name," He means whatsoever ye shall ask in My line of character. The name, with the Jew, was always meant to be descriptive of the nature; to ask in the name of Jesus was not only to ask in conformity with His nature, but to ask His nature itself. It was to aspire to the possession

of those things which appeared lovely in the Son of Man. It was to pray for holiness, justice, goodness, truth. It was to desire a clean heart and a right spirit. It was to petition God for a communication of His own will—not a communication of what He willed, but of His will itself. It was the request to be made able to desire nothing which God did not desire, to be empowered to wish everything which declared itself to be the will of God. Above all, it was the prayer to be made unselfishly human —the petition for humanity to man, and it was here that it came into contact again with those same material elements which stimulated the prayer of the Gentile world. The Christian was again authorised to take up these elements, but to take them up transfigured, glorified. He, like the Gentile, was permitted to take an interest in the physical wants of life—in the breaking of the daily bread, and the mitigation of the temporal pain. But then the breaking of the bread was no longer a merely personal act, the mitigation of the pain no longer a purely individual thing. The follower of Christ was to become impressed with a sense of universal hunger. He was to recognise himself as the member of a vast body whose every pain and want made itself felt within his own being. That sense of union with humanity, of participation in its joys, of identification with its sorrows, of sympathy with its wants in every sphere, whether of nature, mind, or spirit, is the true goal of

Christian aspiration, the true object of Christian prayer. The disciple of the Son of Man seeks the things of the Spirit, but he finds the things of the Spirit in the unselfish ministration of the things of the body. He puts no fence around the field of Gentile materialism; he claims the liberty to walk in that field at will. To him the outer man does not mean the material man, but the selfish man, and selfishness may exist as powerfully in the world of mind as in the world of matter. That which makes him free from the dominion of the Gentiles is not emancipation either from matter or spirit, but emancipation from self; to a Gentile community, which had realised this goal, a Christian Apostle was not afraid to say: "All things are yours."

Now, it is not difficult to see not only that such a prayer must be answered, but that in point of fact it is answered in the very act of asking—"Believe that you receive them, and ye have received them." If a man who is outwardly poor should offer up a prayer for outward riches and succeed in persuading himself that his petition will be granted it could not in any sense be said of him that his riches had already come. Of no material possession can it be affirmed, "Believe that ye receive it, and ye have received it." But the reason is obvious. If I desire any form of physical beauty, that does not prove me to be myself physically beautiful. But, as we have already pointed out, it is impossible

to desire any form of spiritual beauty unless the elements of that beauty are already to some extent present in my soul. He who prays to be made good, and upright, and true, is in germ even now possessed of goodness, truth, and uprightness. It is the possession of these things that itself has prompted his prayer. It is the possession of these things that gives a moral value to his prayer. A man can no more wish to be made religious without being religious in germ than he can desire to live to-morrow without having life to-day. It is only by the things of the Spirit that a man can seek the things of the Spirit, and it is that which in the Christian system has made the act of seeking an act of greatness. All spiritual search is spiritual aspiration, and all spiritual aspiration is spiritual life begun. We reverence the man of Christian prayer because we reverence the things that he prays for. We hold love, meekness, mercy, purity of heart, to be saintly things, and we feel that the spirit which desires them must already be in sympathy with them; the soul's ideal is the forecast shadow that predicts its coming self.

It will be seen from the foregoing explanations that Christian prayer is not an act, not even a series of acts; it is essentially an attitude of mind. To pray, in the Christian sense, is to aspire, and aspiration is not limited to times or seasons. In no case is a man's aspiration a separate deed of his life; it is a spirit which breathes through all his

deeds. It breaks out wherever he goes, involuntarily, spontaneously. It shows itself in his most commonplace action, in his every word, look, and gesture. It prompts whatever he does, it pervades whatever he says, it gives shape to his waking hours, it gives colour even to his dreams. It is in this light alone that the singular Christian precept, "Pray without ceasing," becomes clear, and how it can be uttered by the same religion which says, "Use not vain repetitions." In any other faith these commands would be mutual contradictories; the one would negative the other. But in Christianity there may be an unceasing prayer where there is a constant change of action, because in Christianity the prayer is not the action. Just as the same tune may subsist beneath endless variations, so the same Christian prayer may be breathed through endless acts, through periods of life infinitely varied, through circumstances of life infinitely diverse. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened," are the striking words in which that diversity is indicated. They tell us that, in the Christian system, the same prayer may be expressed either in devotion, in thought, or in practice, by asking, by seeking, or by knocking. It may be uttered by the mystical mind desirous only of being a passive recipient of the light of God; it may be breathed by the intellectual mind, whose very struggles are the voice of a prayer; last, and not least, it may be

expressed by the working mind in the very act of its practical working, its knocking at life's door. Every labour of the philanthropist in behalf of his fellow-men, every deed of charity, every act of love must, consciously or unconsciously, end in a prayer. We say *end*, because it is not till the work is done that the true philanthropist feels its inadequacy, becomes aware how little it can really do to mitigate the woes of humanity. The man's ideal of what ought to be done bursts into view just at that point where his actual work has failed. And the man's ideal is his prayer, his aspiration. It is at once his act of faith and his confession of impotence, his promise of help and his cry for succour. It expresses what he cannot do, what he would like to do if he could, what he hopes to do some day. It is from the daily toils of life that the aspiration grows. So far from being suspended until the burden and heat of the day be past, it is the burden and heat of the day that give it wings. It rises from the dust of death, from the weight of human cares, from the din of human strife. It is contemporaneous with all struggle, it is associated with all effort, it is compatible with all duty; if it exist at all it must exist persistently: it is a prayer without ceasing.

We have not here professed to do more than to vindicate the *moral* efficacy of Christian prayer—its efficacy for the heart of him who offers it. There is a vast region which remains untraversed—the

sphere of Christian prayer in its claim to exert an efficacy outside the soul of the petitioner. That region, however, is not to be traversed by us; it lies beyond our province. Our province is the domain of Christian morals, and that is the domain of Christian theology. It may be, as one of our leading scientists suggests, that there is a connection between the moral motive of the prayer in the heart, and its influence when it passes beyond the heart.* The study is one of great speculative interest, and of high theological value, but it touches a side of the Christian faith with which we have here no concern. It deals with the relation of Christianity to God; we are here only considering the relation of Christianity to man. No one who accepts the supernatural claim of Christianity can for a moment refuse his assent to the objective power of prayer; but it is equally true that he who admits that claim is bound to recognise the fact that the value of Christian prayer is not its objective power. The value of Christian prayer, from a moral point of view, is not the getting, but the asking, or rather, to speak more correctly, the power to ask is itself a getting—a good and perfect gift of the Spirit of Christ. "The prayer of faith shall save the sick," says St. James. That is a theological thesis, and must be established on theological premisses. It is the announcement of a physical effect in prayer. But that which makes such a prayer a subject for

* Alfred Wallace, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, p. 209.

our study is the element in it that is not physical, the thing which transcends the Gentiles. That which makes it a distinctively Christian prayer, is the spirit of unselfishness which it breathes—the fact that it *is* a prayer of faith. Nay, we shall go further. The highest effect of the petition would, in the eye of Christianity, be its moral effect. Should it lift up the man from a mere bed of physical sickness to resume an old life of sin, its success, in the view of Christ's religion, would indeed be small. But should it infect the man with its own spirit, should it touch him with somewhat of its own fire, should it wake within him some regret for a misspent past, and some resolve for a desired future, then, whether, physically speaking, he should live or die, the verdict of Christianity still would be that the prayer of the righteous man availed much.

VIII.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE.

In the two preceding chapters we contemplated the first conscious manifestations of a new vital movement—faith, the sight of a moral ideal, and prayer, the effort of the soul to reach it. We say, the first *conscious* manifestations; for in every vital movement there is something which lies behind consciousness. The first conscious breath of the infant is itself the product of a mystery. It comes from an underlying power of whose nature it has no knowledge. We say, *I* think, *I* speak, *I* feel; and in the very act of saying so, we have made a momentous declaration. We have expressed our conviction that behind the manifestations of thought and speech and feeling there dwells a mysterious "*I*"—the source and subject of them all; that these things are not the beginning of our life, but our life the beginning of these; that we ourselves are more than we see, or hear, or touch, more than we speak, or think, or feel—a power at the back of consciousness, a life in the rear of thought.

Now, though the discussion of the subject lies

outside of our province, it is a precisely analogous power which Christianity claims for the origin of that which is distinctive in her moral system. She maintains that the distinctive manifestation demands and requires a distinctive life behind it as surely as the colour of the rose demands the belief in an object. Christian faith, hope, charity, meekness, patience, mercy are only qualities; in themselves they are the colour without the rose—a mere abstraction of the thinking mind. To give them reality they must be *lived;* in other words, must have a life in which they inhere. Their very existence as ideas demands such an origin. Christian faith and Christian prayer are both professedly ideal; they seek that which is not yet attained by the human soul—moral perfection. None the less are they the evidence of a life behind themselves, a life to which they owe their life. I cannot believe in that which is good except through a power of goodness. I cannot pray for that which is spiritually fair except by the possession of a spiritual loveliness. I cannot ask, seek, strive for those things which are above me unless already I am "born from above;" unless even now there be in me a spirit equal to those things.

Now, this is precisely the claim which Christianity advances to the merit of originality. It professes to have brought a new force into the world. It declares that since its coming men have had new desires, new aspirations, new ideals of heroism;

old things are passed away, and all things have become new. It says that a renewing power must itself have novelty in it; that all things must proceed from sources that are like them in kind: "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit, is spirit." It affirms that the revelation of the Divine morality proclaimed by the Gospel is just one which flesh and blood could not give, but which must seek its origin in a cause commensurate with itself. That is the position of Christianity on this matter, and if you grant the premises, you will have to acknowledge it to be thoroughly philosophical. If this religion has brought into the world a new ideal, or if it has intensified to an extraordinary degree an old ideal, and diffused it from a few souls into the *mass* of humanity, it can only have done so either by the putting forth of a new force into the Universe, or by modifying and transforming the forces already there.

It is probable that the latter alternative will be conceded to Christianity even by modern science. If a pebble cast into the sea produces endless undulations, if a word spoken into the air leads to unceasing movements, if a foot struck upon the sand affects the whole physical frame of the world, what shall we say of a force which has changed the current of all history? Rising out of the silence and the solitude, coming with no carnal weapons, appearing with no gorgeous accompani-

ments, this power may be said to have filled the habitable world. It has touched every department of life, and everything it has touched has been transformed. It has given a new turn to ethics. It has given a new department to politics. It has inaugurated a second birth for the spirit of poetry. It has almost created painting. It has developed the institutions of modern charity. It has relaxed the bonds of despotism. It has tightened the bonds of family and home. All this, and an hundred things more, Christianity, we do not say has claimed to do, but has actually done! Its relation to the fabric of existing civilization is not a matter of religious belief, it is a matter of historical fact; its religious force has been a transforming secular power; what the man of science would call a subliming of energies. The question is, why? That which can transform other things must surely have itself a new or transforming element. It cannot work changes by means of the same old material which could work no changes. It must have a cause proportionate to its effect, a power adequate to explain its own actions. That which can effect a sublimation of the world's energies must itself surely be an energy transcendently sublime, a force which itself has been sublimated by the combined influences of universal nature.

We are able, then, even from the side of reason, in some measure to vindicate, and in still greater measure to sympathise with, the claim of Christianity

to be a new life. That claim it does certainly make. It declares its Founder to have been a New Man, a second Adam; the first-fruits of a Spirit that had grafted itself afresh on the old tree of human life. It declares that this Spirit, which in its fulness first lived in the Christian Founder, repeats itself from day to day in the lives and experiences of His followers. It declares that alike in the Church Universal, and in the solitudes of the individual soul, there is to be seen the evidence of a life higher than the natural life—a life involving changes complete, radical, permanent; itself incapable of explanation, yet capable of explaining all other things. It says that this life pursues in the Church Universal and in the solitudes of the individual soul, that identical order of evolution which it pursued in the experience of the Divine Founder—a growth in wisdom and in knowledge and in favour with God and man. The second Adam, whether in the world of history or in the world of the heart, is altogether unlike the first. He does not spring up at once, a finished manhood, a creation which is complete in the very act of being; He submits to the condition of human existence, the condition of development. The spirit of the new life accepts the law of the spirit of all life; it elects to grow. It chooses the path of sacrifice, the path of struggle, the path of patience. It begins in what may be called a spiritual germ-cell, in which life is hardly, if at all, distinguishable

from death. It passes into a child-life whose main characteristic is a sense of want it does not comprehend, a vague hungering and thirsting after an object which the sequel proves to be righteousness, but which as yet is formless, nameless. It takes up one by one the different spheres of human nature, beginning with the narrowest, and culminating in the widest. It starts with the individual life in its unity and in its isolation, and thence it spreads itself outward to embrace the world. It expands from sphere to sphere, from the unit to the member of a family, from the member of a family to the householder, from the householder to the citizen, from the citizen to the patriot, from the patriot to the cosmopolitan. In a word, this life proceeds, as all life proceeds, from within to without. It grows as the seed grows—from latency into manifestation, from weakness into strength, from a being of isolation and solitude into a life of companionship and union.

It may be asked, why do we speak of all this in a subject so prosaic as the principles of Christian morality? The reason is plain. If the spirit of Christianity be unfolded by evolution, it follows that the precepts of the New Testament, however prosaic, are something more than a catalogue or almanac. They can no longer be viewed as a mere set of beads tied together by a string. They are parts of a great unity. They too have a law of development in which they move, and an order of

arrangement in which they come. They exist, not as dislocated fragments, by as the symmetrical stones of a sacred temple whose places are definitely determined, and whose relations are mutually adjusted. The truth is, the Christian doctrine of the Holy Spirit has a literary as well as a religious significance. It has elevated Christian morality into a Christian philosophy, and given it a place among the sciences. It has caused that morality to be no longer a series of disconnected maxims, no longer a mere collection of proverbs and aphorisms, but the expression of an eternal law in its endless adaptations and its infinitely varied developments.

What, then, is the philosophy of Christian morality? the order of development in which its laws are revealed? We have said that the law of all life is a progress from within to without. In this respect, we should say, the law of life is the converse of the law of education, which is a progress from without to within. When the child begins to learn, it begins with the world of sense. Its first lesson is in the things it sees, hears, handles. It passes from the concrete to the abstract, from the form to the idea, from the image to the thought; and its education is complete when it has mastered the study of self; the goal of its knowledge is the germ-cell. But with the actual *life* of the child it is far otherwise. That begins within. It is at first a mere series of isolated individual feelings. Then it becomes able to connect its impressions, and refer

them to the fact of its own existence. By degrees it awakes to the knowledge of existences other than its own, and embraces that knowledge in ever-widening circles. It reaches its completeness when it is furthest removed from the germ-cell, when it comes into contact with all humanity, and touches the centre of universal life.

Now, the order of Christian morality, as depicted by the New Testament itself, follows the order of universal life; it is a process from within outwards. We see this even in a discourse so popular as the Sermon on the Mount. It traces the blessed life from its origin to its consummation. Is shows us that virtue in its rise is a purely individual thing, the struggle of the inner man against himself; it is poverty of spirit, mourning for sin, the restraint of passion, and the aspiration after good. Then comes a second stage. The individual enters into relation with other individuals. He comes out of his isolation, he emerges from his solitude. He is no longer merely the "poor in spirit;" he is the merciful spirit—the spirit that can bear the poverty of others. He is no longer simply the "meek;" he is the peacemaker—the man who can make others meek. He is no longer only a being who hungers and thirsts after righteousness; he is one who is able to be persecuted for righteousness' sake—to support the burdens of human duty in the midst of the conflict with the outward circumstances which environ him. At last the final stage arrives. The light of

virtue ceases to shine through clouds of struggle; it breaks forth spontaneously and just because it "cannot be hid." It ceases to be merely outward; it becomes cosmopolitan—the "light of the world." It is no more simply a moral power; it has become a moral ministrant, and it shines for the sake of ministration. It is no longer merely solicitous to be glorified through conflict; it seeks rather to glorify by contact, to make pure by being pure. Its final law is embodied in the great command, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in Heaven."

Here, then, is the general law that regulates the development of the Christian moral life. It proceeds from the inner to the outer, and from the outer to the outermost, while at the same time it is a progress from the unconscious to the struggling, and from the struggling to the spontaneous. But now, can we trace any more minutely this law of Christian development? We have seen its general operation: can we determine its process in detail: Does Christianity itself give any account of the moral order of its own precepts? There is one very remarkable passage of the New Testament in which it does—a passage in which, professedly, and in so many words, it declares the philosophic sequence in which its precepts move. We allude to 2 Peter i. 5, where it is said, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue,

knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." We need not say that the so much disputed Apostolic origin of the passage is here a matter of indifference. What we wish to find is not an authority, but a representation; not an evidence that Christian morality was inspired, but an exposition of what Christian morality was conceived to be. Here is a document belonging unquestionably to a very early age, and giving undoubted expression to the Christian consciousness of that age, in which there is unfolded a complete theory of development from the seed to the flower. A study of this earliest system of Christian ethics cannot be without interest. It can be verified by a surer test than any authority —the test of universal experience. If we should find that the earliest is also the latest consciousness, if we should arrive at the conviction that what was attested by the Christian experience of the first century is still attested by the Christian experience of the nineteenth, we shall have attained an incontestable guarantee that the New Testament order of moral development is an order based on the reality of things.

Let us look more in detail at this earliest effort to construct a philosophy of Christian morality. It will be observed that the *first* stage of the process is taken for granted; it is assumed that the

basis of the whole is "faith." We have already pointed out that faith, in the Christian sense, is the sight of an ideal—the vision of that which we would like to be. It is not difficult to see that in any moral system this stage must indeed be the first. The root of all moral being is moral aspiration; the wish is here the father, not only of the thought, but of the deed. The beginning of a man's holiness is in every case his admiration of holiness. The moment he has looked into the face of moral beauty and seen it to be beautiful, he has crossed the boundary line between good and evil. That look is what Christianity calls faith. It is that process by which an individual sees his deformity in the light of a pure mirror. It is at one and the same moment depression and exaltation. Man learns his nothingness in the glory of the new vision, and falls prostrate before its blaze. But the fall is in reality a rise. The light which strikes him down is a light already within his own soul. Saul of Tarsus could never have seen a Christ in the air; only an incipient Paul could do that. The vision was the effect, and not the cause, of a conversion. Faith—that sight of a moral ideal which for the first time reveals to the human soul the distance at which it lies from holiness, and the length of that journey it has still to travel—is, by reason of that very revelation, the beginning of that upward flight in which his youth is renewed as the eagle's.

The first breath, then, of the moral life is faith —the sense of the contrast between what we are and what we ought to be. It is impossible, however, that faith can be the *rest* of the soul. It is its very nature to be a state of unrest. The soul's vision of a moral beauty which as yet is not its own is, and can be, nothing else than an awakening to pain—the stimulation of that great hunger which cries for more. Hence it is that in this passage of 2 Peter, we find almost an immediate transition to a higher step in the process of development. "Add to your faith, virtue." We may remark at the outset that the word "add" in our Authorised Version is unfortunate. Addition is a process from without. It is the increase of a thing by something which originally had no connection with it. If I receive lessons in French one year, and in German another, I may be said to add German to French. This is certainly one mode of progress. It is not, however, the mode of progress suggested by the passage before us, nor the form of interpretation implied by the Greek of that passage. The progress of which St. Paul speaks is a development from within. It is not the impartation to a certain quality of a thing not originally there; it is the unfolding from it of a thing which is latently there. It is the bringing out into bloom that life of the flower which sleeps already in the bud; the expansion into meridian glory of the sunshine slumbering in the dawn. The literal rendering of the words is—"In your

faith supply virtue." It is an exhortation to expand the life of the germ, to remember what possibilities are folded within the germ. This faith, in itself so small a thing, is declared to be the seed of all other things. It contains within its tiny compass the first and last principles of all morality, the nucleus of a life whose goal is generic humanity. It hides within its bosom the treasures of all spiritual wisdom, and the sources of all spiritual acquirement; and that which in the sequel shall issue from the heart of the man will be only the outward evolving of what is there inwardly and unconsciously implied.

Let us now try to trace this evolution, this unfolding of the germ. Its first step is indicated in the words, "Add to your faith, virtue." Put into modern language this means to say: Carry out the ideal into the actual. The object of faith is at first seen only in the distant. It is its distance that makes it an object of faith; it is not yet realised, it is simply an ideal. But it is impossible that any ideal can take possession of the soul without struggling for realisation. We have seen that the birth of faith is the birth of aspiration, the entrance into the heart of a new desire. The moment such an event takes place the approach of war is heralded. Two lives exist in the human personality—one, old, the other, new; one, already in possession of human action, the other, in possession of the highest thoughts of the human heart;

one, strong from custom, the other, fresh with the glow of youth's enthusiasm. Here are the elements of a conflict, and of a conflict in which the new and higher life will be the aggressor. The ideal must prove itself to be the actual, and the effort of the ideal to prove itself the actual is what is called virtue. Virtue is not a different quality from faith; it is faith struggling. It is faith hardening itself into solidity by its own movement. It is faith losing its spontaneity, or child-like character, and becoming a force conscious of its own power. Faith in itself is simply Eden—the unclouded sight of an ideal glory. Faith resisting the Tempter of Eden is virtue. Its view of paradise is broken, and it seeks to restore it. Virtue is not so beautiful as faith, but that is because it is a higher stage of development without being yet the highest. All intermediate stages in the development of any life are less beautiful than the first and the last. The first has the wonder of miracle; the last has the wonder of completed law. The intermediate stages have neither the novelty nor the completeness; they exhibit the seeming confusion which belongs to every fabric in the act and process of construction. Therefore it is that virtue is less beautiful than faith. It is no longer the first breath of the morning, nor is it yet the glory of meridian day. It is essentially a life of transition, and so of necessity a life of struggle. Yet that which, in a comparison with faith dims its beauty, increases its

value. It is a descent from the top of the mountain into the squalor and confinement of the villages in the valley, and as such, from the side of sense it is a fall. But from the side of spirit it is a rise, and the only rise of which spirit is capable. It is an approach toward the life of humanity. The hum of human voices in the valley no longer suggests the freedom of the mountain breezes, but the very limit which they bring is to the spirit an enlargement. It is the promise of a new knowledge—the knowledge of Man; a knowledge which can only be purchased indeed by the loss of what the world calls freedom, but which, when it is purchased, is the entrance into a larger life than the highest flight of faith ever dared to compass.

And this is the transition to the *third* stage of Christian development—"Add to virtue, knowledge." Virtue, as we have said, is the *promise* of knowledge. It is in itself only a sentiment. It is the determination to do right in all cases and against all temptations; but it is not yet the knowledge of what in all cases will *be* the right. I may be animated by a horror of cruelty springing from my sight of the beautiful ideal, in other words, from my faith. Actuated by this horror, I may lay down the resolve that in no circumstances whatever shall I be induced to give another pain. Here is a sentiment which has its root in virtue. Yet it is clear that if such a sentiment were to be sent forth into the world without

any further development, it would defeat its own end. It is not too much to say that the infliction of pain is in many cases the absence of cruelty, and necessary to the soul's ultimate joy. What is the error, then, in my benevolent resolve? It lies, not in my virtue, but in the application of my virtue; it is a defect in knowledge, the quality which, St. Peter says, must be *added* to virtue. The feeling of virtue is a sentiment, but the act of virtue is a judgment. I may desire to make men happy, it is well; but if I have nothing more than the desire, I have no right to act upon it. How do I know that I am not making grave clothes for those I seek to benefit? To know that, I need something more than a heart, I want an intellect. That which is to be added to all virtue is intellectual sympathy—the power to know what another needs. Before I can minister to his wants I must put myself in his place; before I can put myself in his place I must learn what his place is. The kind of knowledge which is wanted to teach me that, is essentially a worldly knowledge—a knowledge of what is in man. It demands outward observation, keen scrutiny, long study of the human heart. Yet after all the main organ for its acquisition will be my own heart—the virtue I have already won. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see MAN, is an aphorism which is implied, though not expressed, in Christianity. My desire to make my brother happy is

my first step toward the unveiling of his nature, for the deepest veil that rests between me and him is just the weakness of my sympathy; the fulness of the sentiment of virtue is the dawn of sympathetic knowledge.

Let us resume the tracing of the golden chain. We have seen that virtue is not complete until it is supplemented by practical knowledge, *i.e.*, by a knowledge of the world of man. In this respect, and to this extent, the passage now under review agrees with the statement of Mr. G. H. Lewes: "There cannot be moral relations apart from society." * What now is the effect of this social element on the development of the spiritual life? That is the question which next arises, and that is the question, the answer to which forms the next link of the chain. The answer is given in the words: "Add to knowledge, temperance," *i.e.*, self-control. The word *temperance* has in modern times received a limited meaning. It is often used as a synonym for restraint in a special class of excesses. In the New Testament it has a larger acceptation. It refers to the restraint of any excess whatever in the principle of self-love. The idea here, therefore, is that a man's knowledge of the wants of men is a help to the control of his own individual wants. It was the doctrine of Stoicism that all knowledge had a calming effect on the mind. The Christian doctrine limits itself

* *Problems of Life and Mind*, vol. i. p. 173.

to a particular kind of knowledge. It says: Are you perturbed by inordinate desires—individual ambition, personal covetousness, selfish lust of appropriation? The best way to moderate these is to study the wants of humanity at large. The best cure for self-assertion is the remembrance that you are only one member of a vast body, every one of whose members has wants equal to your own. The true human calmness comes from the true human knowledge. If in the experience of sorrow I abandon myself to the impulse of a wild despair, I am in want of another fact of experience to make me calm—the fact that what happens to me has happened, and is happening, to all. The moment I have realised this, I have, in spite of myself, arrived at the grace of temperance, that grace which exists essentially in the restraint of self. I have no longer the sense of being wronged; I no longer feel as if I had been singled out for suffering from the great world of humanity; on the contrary, I know now that I am called to suffer just because I belong to that world. The contemplation which stills the individual mind is not the contemplation of stars and systems, but the study of the human soul in history and in life. It was this which really made the Stoic calm, though he mistook the cause of his composure. He thought it lay in his abstract philosophy; it lay, in truth, in his concrete experience, in his experience of the world of men. He felt his life to be only an unit

amid many lives, each regulated by the same law, each fulfilling the same destiny. He felt that he had no right to vociferate his complaints through the universe, to ask exemption from the common law of man. That which came to him, came to him as a member of the universal race; he bowed to the common destiny, and was calm. His own pulse grew still when he had measured the united beat of the pulse of humanity; his social knowledge taught him self-control.

Yet this self-control, or temperance of views, which even with the Stoics is fostered by knowledge of the world, passes, with the Christian, into something far more pronounced and specific. "Add to temperance, patience," is the next command. There may be a self-control where the self is not resigned. The sense that we are the subject of an inevitable law may serve to dull human effort, and even to lull the soul into a lethargic apathy. But this is not resignation; it is no more resignation than a captive's recognition of his chained hand is resignation. The production of a sense of calm is not peculiar to Christianity. There is the calm of Stoicism, which is purchased by the death of the old love; there is the calm of Cynicism, which is purchased by a scorn of the old love; there is the calm of Buddhism, which is purchased by the despair of the old love. In each and all of these the love of self, which is in itself a true function of the moral nature, is crucified by

the moral will; it is salvation by annihilation. But the calm which Christianity sends is not so purchased. Here, unlike Stoicism, Cynicism, and Buddhism, self-control does not pass into apathy, into scorn, nor into despair; it passes into something which preserves the new restraint, while yet keeping alive the old humanity; it merges into patience. Patience is no longer mere self-control; it is self-resignation. It is self not needing control, but resigned to the law of the Universe. So far from being identical with apathy, scorn, or despair, patience has an element of hope in it; it is a waiting for something. Suffering is accepted as an unseen good; the soul believes that somewhere, somehow, it will issue in a joy. It feels as if it were itself the subject of a grand problem, a problem which is being worked out in the inner chambers of its own nature, and to whose solution its experience and its life are unconsciously contributing. Faith, that sight of the Unseen which lies at the root of all its being, which has supported its struggles into virtue, which has aided its growth into the knowledge of man, is still the power which keeps it fresh and green amidst the winter cold, and for the realising of whose vision it is content to wait.

But even patience is not the goal of Christianity; there is a possession of the individual life, which is higher still, and whose presence is expressed in the words: "Add to patience, godli-

ness." Patience, as we have said, is the waiting for an unseen good; godliness is the unseen good become visible. The unseen good in fact is seen to be the waiting itself. Waiting on God is at first accepted for the sake of what it will bring, and this is patience; at last it is accepted for its own sake, and this is godliness. There comes a time when the attitude of leaning on the Divine will is felt to be the most delightful of all attitudes. It was once a duty, a necessity, perhaps even a pain. It becomes not only a pleasure, but the only pleasure—the state of mind without which there can be no happiness. Patience can say without murmuring, "Thy will be done;" godliness can say it, not only without murmuring, but with positive acquiescence—it does the Divine will on earth "as it is done in heaven." Patience leans on God for what He can give; godliness simply for what He is. The man of patience hopes, that if he trusts God, all things will work together for his good; to the man of godliness trust in God is itself the highest good. Patience, in a word, is passive; it is the individual will sinking into silence before the universal Will of God. Godliness is in the highest sense active; it is the individual will rising up to meet the universal, and by an act of determinate choice making the universal Will its own.

This stage of godliness marks what may be called the last phase of the purely individual Christian

life; it is here that, to use the language of philosophy, egoism ends and altruism begins. Hitherto the course of moral development has been simply a progress in the path of personal duty; it has contemplated only what a man owes to himself. But with the close of this period we have to witness the advent of another, in which the man is viewed no longer in what he owes to himself, but in what he owes to his fellow-man. The transition is marked by the words, "Add to godliness, brotherly kindness," or, as it ought to be rendered, "love of the brethren." The idea is, that when a man once feels the power of godliness in his own life he will see it in the lives of others. That which he knows to be good within himself he cannot fail to admire when it is presented to his outward eye. Hence it is, that when a man has reached the stage of personal godliness he has already potentially got beyond this stage. For godliness is not a mere personal possession, it is a possession which I share in common with hundreds besides. It introduces me into a brotherhood. I cannot love that which is manifested within, and not also love that which is manifested without. The picture which I see in my own soul is the identical picture which I find reflected in the souls of others. I must love that picture wherever I find it; the common possession of it must constitute a common bond of friendship. Have we not here the moral side of the table of Christian communion? That it has also a theo-

logical side we seek not to deny, but that which touches our province is its ethical aspect. And its ethical aspect is assuredly that of brotherhood. To one outside the Christian creed, the table of Christian communion presents the appearance of a number of individual beings united by one soul. It is the mutual love of men for that in others which they feel within themselves. It is essentially the love between brethren, for, brotherhood of thought and feeling is the condition of entrance within the sacred circle. It is a beautiful sentiment, but is it exhaustive of love's possibilities? Is there no higher goal conceivable for the spirit of man? Is this circle, sacred though it be, to be the limit out of which I cannot, dare not move? Has Christianity no wider sphere in which to display itself, no broader circle in which to manifest its power? Is there not a world outside the Christian world with which the Christian world has still to do? Are there not societies of men beyond the brethren to which the brethren are yet indissolubly related?

It is the answer to this question that has prompted the Apostolic writer to give expression to a final stage of Christian development, a stage which is indicated in the words, "To love of the brethren add charity." No words could more powerfully express at once the sense, and the supply, of the want still left by the mere love that springs from brotherhood. Put into a paraphrased

form their reading is this: You profess to be animated by a love to those who cherish a kindred faith; it is well, it is beautiful, but is it all? To sit down at a table of communion with those who hold a belief in harmony with your own is indeed an act which bespeaks the spirit of love. But it is not yet love in its meridian, in the splendour of its noonday. It is only the love of brotherhood, the love of that which has manifested its agreement with your own sentiments, and stands on a common level with your own perfections. Behold, I show you a more excellent way, because a way that enters deeper into the valley of Christian sacrifice. To the love of the brethren add charity. To your love of those who are like you add the love of those who are not like you—the love of the loveless. If you would reach the perfection of the Christian life, you must pass beyond the circle of Christian brotherhood. You must go down into that other circle which is not yet Christian. You must be able to see the ideal where there is not yet the actual, to hope where there is no room to realise, to cherish the *patience* of hope when fulfilment seems long delayed, to detect the promise in the bud and the dayspring in the dawn,—that is the completion of the Christian life.

We have thus traced those stages of ethical development through which, in the view of the New Testament itself, the disciple of Christ is called to pass. A life which has conquered all

these stages and reached the top of the hill, is, of course, a complete illustration of the law of gospel morality. We must remember, however, that between the first and the last stage there are *six* intermediate stages. We must remember that the transition of the mind through these is effected, not by a leap, but by a growth. The growth may be slow, or it may be rapid, according to the nature of the life and soil; but whether it be slow or rapid, it must accomplish its development by an experience of definite changes. Take the life at any one of these preliminary stages, and what do we find? An incomplete life, which from the standpoint of the finished whole, is an inconsistent life! No charge is so frequently adduced against Christian morality as the inconsistency of its professors. The common answer to this is to plead the frailty of human nature. The true answer we believe to lie in the nature of Christian morality. If Christian morality were simply a law of Judaism, the charge of a prevalent inconsistency would be a reproach, as it would seem to indicate that its precepts were impracticable. But the case is entirely different when Christianity is not a law, but a life. Every stage of a life's growth must in some sense be inconsistent with the completed whole. The life of the child would be highly inconsistent with humanity if it were lived by a man; that is to say, viewed from the top of the hill it is inconsistent. Why

then do we not call it so when it appears in the child? Because childhood is by definition just so much less manhood, and, therefore, only a stage on the road to manhood. That which is unnatural to the whole is the essence and virtue of the part.

One of the best illustrations of this as regards the present field of inquiry will be found in the origin of that remarkable phase of morals which from time to time has appeared in the Christian Church—asceticism. Whence has it come? Is it the legitimate fruit of the completed gospel principle? or is it the excrescence produced by another and foreign principle? It is neither. It belongs to Christianity, indeed, but not as a fruit; it is a stage in the growth of that tree from which the fruit has come. It has its necessary place in the growth of New Testament morality within the individual soul, and it is not difficult to determine that place; it lies in the transition expressed in the words, "Add to knowledge, temperance," *i.e.*, self-control. Christianity has its age of Stoicism, though it is modified by the light of another sun. Here, too, there is a time for individual repression, a repression whose end is indeed individual enlargement, but which none the less for the present is not joyous, but grievous. The stage of self-control which precedes even the strength of patience is, and can be, nothing less than a stage of pain. The first flush of faith is past; the final glow of love is not yet come. The conclusion is

inevitable: there *is* in the ethics of the gospel a place for self-denial. If we are asked—Is Christianity the religion of asceticism? we say, No! If we are asked—Does Christianity countenance asceticism? we say, Yes—for one of its stages. The goal of Christ's religion is not self-denial, but self-enjoyment; but the goal is won through the surrender of the individual soul. To him who stands at the foot of the mountain-pass the gate of the spiritual life must be straight, and the way must be narrow; only he who looks down on the scene from the summit of a completed love is able to recognise the truth that the yoke after all was easy, and the burden light.

To that summit of the spiritual life the course of our investigation has now led us. We have viewed, step by step, the stages of Christian development in the individual soul. We have traced, one by one, the phases of moral thought through which the human spirit passes in its progress from the isolation of faith to the companionship of love; from the struggle between the ideal and the actual to the time when the actual becomes itself our ideal. The progress has in every case been the course of the seed—a growth from within to without, from loneliness to social union, from the recesses of secrecy and silence to the voices of a great multitude. The consideration of this final and finishing stage is the subject which now lies before us.

IX.

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

The stage of the Christian life at which we have now arrived may be called the flower of New Testament morality. That morality, as we have seen, is essentially an evolution; it begins in a tiny germ, in a single act of faith; and thence, in ever-widening circles, it spreads from within to without. Its final stage, to which we have now come, is love. It is described by St. Paul as the most excellent of all ways, and is honoured by him with one of the most eloquent eulogiums in the whole range of sacred literature—the *thirteenth* chapter of 1st Corinthians. We intend to take this chapter as the basis of our present inquiry. Our object is to discover the distinctive nature of Christian love—that which separates the Christian idea of love from all other ideas of it. How can we better achieve that object than by consulting the testimony of a document, beyond all question genuine, which offers a direct description of Christian love from the experience of one contemporaneous with the birth of Christianity? If any man was qualified to speak

on such a subject, it was Paul. His was no one-sided mind. He had seen all the sides of the question, and had been impressed by each in turn. He had passed through the experience of the Jew; he had felt the influence of the Gentile; he professed himself indebted both to the civilised and to the barbarian. He had studied many minds, and he had seen some good in them all. When he broke out into an eulogium on the beauty of Christian love, he spoke from a standpoint of comparison. He knew in what respects it was like, and in what unlike, the love of surrounding religions. His description is therefore above all measure valuable: it is the voice of a witness on the spot, the testimony of an actor in the scene.

And the result of this comparison is that Paul is willing to peril the question of Christianity's religious permanence on the distinctive character of its final stage of moral evolution. It is in the nature of the conception it has formed of love that he finds the surest guarantee for its absolute dominion and its endless duration. He sees in Christianity itself something which is essential, and something which is only accidental. He is not blind to the fact that even in this religion there are elements whose functions are only temporary, and which in due season are destined to pass away. "Whether there be prophecies," he says, "they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it

shall vanish away." Nay; he would even seem to go further still. He appears to imply that all forms of merely intellectual activity are of necessity fleeting and changeful, and that the only absolute, unfleeting, changeless element in our nature is morality in the form of love. "We know in part, and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part is done away." It is a great mistake to imagine that by "that which is perfect" he means a future state of existence. He means *Christian love*, in whatever state of existence it may be found, present or future. What he designs to say is this: All mere systems of thought are, by their very nature, evanescent. None of them, nor all of them united, can express the whole truth; they can, at best, reveal only part of the ways of God, and God is more than they. But love is not a part of the ways of God; it is His essence; it is His Spirit; it is Himself. To reveal love is to reveal God; and the moment that revelation comes, we find that all previous revelations were but poor and inadequate expressions, mere fragments of the true. We are ushered into an atmosphere where the old measurements no longer apply, where the old language is no longer suitable. We are made aware that feeling is larger than thought. We learn that there is a religion of the heart which can remain unaffected by the transmutations of its intellectual forms, and which, in a single breath of its aspira-

tion, can express more than has been uttered by all the intellectual forms united—a religion which develops not with the future, and fades not with the past; but which, in the freshness of eternal youth, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; "love never faileth."

Paul, then, regards the Christian conception of love as that element in Christianity which is eternal and immutable. It is worth while to inquire—What is this conception of love? The greater number of religions have, in words at least, recognised some form of love; but in Christianity alone has the form of love survived the decay of the intellectual form. Why is this? Men who do not agree on a single article of faith are found to glory in the common name of Christian, and to glory in that name by reason of a special phase of moral life which the possession of Christianity involves. What is that phase of moral life? and where lies its speciality? We may be sure that its special feature is that which constitutes its power. If we would understand this power, we must try to see wherein the idea of love as revealed in Christianity differs from the idea of love as manifested in other faiths. If in doing so we should cast our eye on ground already traversed, it must be remembered that such a process is not of necessity a repetition. When seen from the top of the hill, the old ground has a different aspect from that which it presented in the act of climbing. When that which is per-

fect is come, that which is in part loses its partial character.

In the second chapter of this book, we pointed out that Judaism differs from Christianity, not in the extent, but in the quality of its love. We showed that the Jew was not only willing but eager to embrace the stranger within his fold. He wanted to love all the world, but he insisted that, in the first instance, all the world should love him —should agree with that system of doctrine which he held to be the only truth. The Jewish condition of love was equality of mind, union of sentiment, participation in a common ritual; outside of this there was recognised no room for fellowship. We have now to observe, however, that the statement we have made concerning the Jew is equally applicable to all pre-Christian religions in which the sentiment of love is found at all. The demand for an equality of standpoint as the basis of a mutual love is by no means peculiar to Judaism; it is only more conspicuous in Judaism from its historical contact with Christianity. Take, for example, the vast circle of Indian religions, and what do we find? We see immense communities of men united by a tie of brotherhood, but what is the ground of that brotherhood? It is caste—the common possession of a particular social status. The man who loses caste, who, as we should say in modern times, becomes an outcast, is thereby separated from the circle of earthly brotherhood. It

may be thought, it for a long time was thought, that Buddhism forms a grand exception to this rule. It is a popular opinion that the Buddhist had for his direct mission the abolition of caste. As Professor Kuenen, however, has pointed out, this is a grand mistake.* In point of fact, the Buddhist never did look upon himself as a revolutionary; he would have said at all times that he came not to destroy but to fulfil. He did not view himself as a man who came to overturn the traditions of his fathers; he was, in his own eyes at least, an orthodox disciple of Brahmanism in all that related to the present world. What distinguished him from the Brahman was his larger *hope* —hope for altered conditions outside the present world. He wanted caste to be abolished so far as to give to all an equal chance of salvation, *i.e.*, of admission into the Nirvana. Buddhism was at best, however, only a prospective brotherhood. It was the promise of a common share in things not belonging to the earth, but it guaranteed no community of earthly possessions. In all temporal concerns the principle of caste remained. The spirit of brotherhood was only theoretical and ideal; it had not learned to penetrate the institutions of the secular life.

The same may be said of the state religion of China. There is much in the doctrine of Confucius

* See the chapter on Buddhism in his Hibbert Lectures: "National Religions and Universal Religions." 1882.

which suggests the idea of brotherhood, but it is still the brotherhood of a caste. It is no longer, indeed, as with Brahman and Buddhist, the caste of a family, but it is the caste of a nation. It does not occur to the Chinaman that there is a world beyond the portals of his native soil; and if the thought of such a world did occur to him, he would treat it with contempt. With him the Empire is the world. All his legislation, moral and political, is made on the supposition that the Chinese form of civilisation is the only perfect form. So far as Confucian morality ever reached the standard of love, so far as it ever succeeded in rising above the influence of utilitarian motives, it only attained a brotherhood commensurate with its national limits. Its love was determined by the caste of a common patriotism; it was confined to the children of the great Celestial Empire. Outside the walls of that Empire was the Chaos—the world without form and void, for which no legislation as yet was possible; it would only become an object for love when it had become a subject of the Chinese commonwealth.

Passing now to the Western world, and especially to that portion of it whose philosophic era was contemporaneous with the dawn of Christianity, we find that the only two systems which challenge comparison with the principle of love in the new faith are the doctrines of the Stoic and the Platonist: the Epicurean may be left out of account, as his

principle is that of *self*-love. Let us begin, then, with the Stoic. We have pointed out in our opening chapter that Stoicism was by no means a negative creed; it really did contemplate the benefit of mankind. The peculiarity of Stoicism as a positive creed lay in the nature of that benefit which it wished to confer. It sought not so much the happiness as the dignity of man. It looked upon man outside its own system as a very undignified being—a being not to be loved, but despised. It saw him driven about with every wind of fortune, uplifted by the sunbeam and depressed by the shade; and it was unable either in the one case to congratulate, or in the other to condole. The Stoic pitied man for a state of mind which could lead to either of these experiences; but his pity was akin to contempt. He despised a human being who allowed himself to be overjoyed at fortune's smile, or sad at fortune's frown; and he sought to raise him up to his own standard —one of indifference to the lot of life. But the point for us is that until the process of raising was complete there was no brotherhood. The fellowship of Stoicism is a fellowship *within* the sect. Those who meet together in the Porch are the men who have reached a common feeling—shall we not rather say a common want of feeling. It is again a brotherhood constituted by caste, only the caste is not one of birth nor of nationality, but one that has its ground in an unity of philosophic sentiment.

The Stoic was in philosophy what the Jew was in religion—an advocate for mental uniformity. He too wanted to save all men and to call them brethren; he too refused to call them brethren until they had been saved. The most which an outlying humanity could claim from him was the promise of a love to come and a brotherhood to come; there was no room for a Stoic's sympathy beyond the limits of the Stoic faith.

When we turn to Platonism, we find a similar limit to the power of love. Platonism professes to deal with that which is essential, and not accidental, in the nature of man, and therefore we should expect that here, if anywhere, we should be brought into contact with an universal love. But the truth is, as we have indicated in our opening chapter, it is the very universalism of the Platonic creed that here constitutes its weakness. It tells man to love in man only his abstract ideas — those elements which he shares in common with the Mind of the Universe. It bids him not to love the man but his manhood; not the person but his personality; not the mind but its qualities. It makes the physical life an accident, a shadow, a dream, and against the wants of that life it seals its sympathy. It abstracts from the domain of love at least one half of human nature, and that the most indigent half. It is in our lower nature that we are most dependent. Our intellectual wants may carry with them a sense of pain, but it is a pain which itself

carries the joy of a revelation, the testimony that our present powers do not exhaust the possibilities of our being. But the wants of common life bear with them no prophecy; they speak only of defect and weakness. In hunger and thirst, in war and pestilence, in dangers of the land and perils of the sea, man feels himself in the truest sense to be a dependent being; it is here that specially he needs the humanity of his brother man. Yet, if the Platonic view be correct, it is here that specially the humanity of man is denied. In this creed there is no provision for the lower life, nor for the wants of the lower life. Love, whether it be divine or human, is limited to the sphere of the intellect, and it cannot be exercised on that which is suggestive only of defect. It is concerned with ideas but not with sensations. Sensations are but fleeting and transitory; therefore they are not divine, and not worthy of love. Privation, poverty, pain, weariness, are but shadows, and because they are but shadows they cannot waken any pity which is akin to immortal love. Love must have for its object something endowed with its own immortality, and it must find it, not in fugitive Feeling, but in permanent Thought.

Now, we do not criticise this theory; our object here is not criticism, but comparison. All we have to say is that this Platonic love, be it false or true, does not in any material sense differ from the form of love assumed by other faiths and philosophies

of the pre-Christian world. It does not really transcend the limits of caste. It is just as circumscribed in its horizon as is the religion of the Brahman or the creed of the Stoic. Unlike the Pauline charity, it is a love that "seeketh her own," that will only be united to those who are already in harmony with herself.

For this brings us back to the passage we selected as the basis of our present inquiry. If we examine the descriptions of Christian love in 1 Corinthians xiii., we shall find that there is one aspect in which it differs from all the other views here enumerated. In all these, as we have seen, the duty of love was limited to men of the same caste. The caste in some cases was physical; in others intellectual, and in others moral; but making allowance for this diversity, the principle was the same—a principle of exclusiveness. In this chapter of St. Paul, however, we have a love whose essential nature is power to pass outside the favoured circle. The distinctive power of the love depicted by St. Paul is a power to seek for objects and to lavish itself upon objects which are at present unworthy of it, and which it knows to be so. In truth, our English word *charity*, in its common use, however bad it may be as a translation of St. Paul's Greek, is in our opinion a thoroughly good rendering of his meaning. Charity, in its common English sense, means generosity to those in need, whether the need be bodily or spiritual: in either case the idea

of need is present. We never speak of being charitable to our father or mother considered as such; we profess to love them. But if our father or mother should sacrifice toward us the parental relation, if they should seem to act in a manner unbecoming a parent, and if in spite of that fact we should make such allowances for them as should enable us to love them still, we should be said to exercise charity. Charity always implies a bending down, a stooping from the height of our own caste. There is in it an element of resistance to the self-nature of a man, something which prompts him to do what another part of his nature would bid him refrain from doing. Take this chapter of St. Paul, and you will find at every line of his description that he regards Christian love as a love that can exist in spite of temptations to loveless-ness. It is a love which makes its way through barriers, a love which manifests itself in struggle. It "suffers long," "is not easily provoked," "envies not," "doth not behave itself unseemly," "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It "never faileth," not even when prophecies fail and tongues cease and knowledge vanishes away; it has in it the power to persist through all changes. In every one of these statements there is contained the same common idea—love battling against difficulties. It is no longer the Stoic embracing the followers of Stoicism, or the Platonist communing with the

disciples of Plato, or the Brahman enfolding the men of his own caste. It is the spirit of a human brotherhood grounded on the fact of humanity and disregarding every other fact. It is a religion passing by the power of love outside the gates of its own circle and its own creed in order to claim a fellowship, a kindred with a circle and a creed not its own. It does not merely look forward to claim such a fellowship in the future; it claims it now. It asserts the fact of a present brotherhood with the whole race of man—a brotherhood which exists by reason of humanity and irrespective of all beside. It loves, therefore, in spite of difference of sentiment, in defiance even of contradictions against itself; the spirit of Christian love is a spirit of *charity*.

It will be seen from all this that the Christian idea of love carries in the very heart of it an element of sacrifice. It cannot be said that the love of the Brahman or the love of the Stoic is sacrificial; in neither of these cases does the man in loving his brother man pass beyond the circle of his own opinions—the man whom he acknowledges to be a brother must himself be a Brahman or a Stoic. It would not, indeed, be far amiss to say that all pre-Christian brotherhood is a form of self-love. What a man sees in the object of his brotherly affection is, as it were, his own qualities reflected in a looking-glass. He is pleased with another because he is the shadow of his own soul. As long as that

other is not his shadow he is nothing to him; he may be an object of pity, but he is not a subject for brotherhood. In all this there is no sacrifice. The man does not give up anything in order to love. The pleasure of love is to him the pleasure of having a mirror wherein he can see and approve—himself. Far different is it with Christianity; there the foremost thought is brotherhood. Man looks out upon the world, and sees it lying in wickedness. He does not, however, say, If I could only lift the world out of its wickedness, then would I claim brotherhood with it. What he says in the Christian system is this: This world has gone all astray, but it is my brother. I have not one opinion in common with it, but I owe it my love; I love it because it is human, and I am human. I am angry with it on account of its impurity, and I am sorely tempted to recall my love, but love is stronger than I. It forces me to stoop from my own purity into contact with the world's impurity; at its bidding I have to leave my caste and to come down; my love is older than my caste, and it conquers it.

Now, in all this we have the root of the idea of sacrifice—the passage out of self-life into the life of others. It is often said that sacrifice is the manifestation of Christian love; it would be more correct to say that Christian love is the fruit of the spirit of Christian sacrifice. The element of sacrifice here lies deeper than the act; it lies in the thought, in the feeling; it lies in the very power to extend our

sympathy beyond the limits of our caste, to give play to our hearts in a region which is not their own, to feel an interest in objects which are foreign to the soil of our being. That is the reason why Christ Himself begins His moral teaching by the proclamation of sacrifice. We might have expected it to have been otherwise. It seems at first view a strange thing that He should not at the outset have altogether hid the form of the cross, that in promising the advent of a kingdom of glory He should have coupled with the promise the condition that man should be poor in spirit and meekly self-restraining. Why does He not conceal the condition of sacrifice until the initial stage is past? The reason is plain. It is because the initial stage itself is one of sacrifice. It is quite true, indeed, as we have said, that men were brought at first to Christianity by motives of worldly advantage. But to be brought to Christianity is one thing—to embrace it is a very different thing. In order to learn what it was, they had to be driven to it by something other than itself, but the moment they came near to it they saw that it must be accepted or rejected for itself alone. And the object to be accepted or rejected was a sacrifice. The instant Christianity revealed itself, it revealed itself as a sacrificial life. It was not merely sacrificial in its consummation; it was so, nay, most of all so, in its beginning. It was here that the old love flashed into antagonism with the new. Not only was the

way narrow; the very gate which led to it was strait. The new love demanded a renouncement of the old self; it demanded it not as a pledge to be redeemed at the end of the way, but as the very condition of entering the gate. Sacrifice itself was the gate, therefore love alone could enter in.

It will be seen from this that Christian love is a sign of power. It is in the highest sense a spiritual force whose function is movement and struggle. It comes not to send peace, but a sword —and not peace, but a sword does it receive. We have seen that 1 Corinthians xiii. is a record of love's struggles, and it is on that account a description of love's powers. What are these powers? In what direction lies the strength of that energy which has proved so mighty to the pulling down of unspiritual strongholds? The answer to that question will be the subject of our next chapter.

X.

THE POWERS OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

THE powers of Christian love as delineated by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xiii. are classified under *four* heads—first, passive strength: "Love beareth all things;" second, intellectual charity: "Love believeth all things;" third, moral optimism: "Love hopeth all things;" and fourth, persistence in time: "Love endureth all things." To see the full range of the power of this love, we must consider each of these in turn.

We begin with the passive strength of Christian love: "Love beareth all things." The idea suggested by the original is that of an infinite capacity for silent suffering. Now it is hardly too much to say that the very idea of such a power was a new thought to the world. The notion of suffering was not new, and the notion of silence was not new; but the union of the two was a somewhat novel combination. The Jew suffered, but he cried out; the Stoic did not cry out, but he had ceased to suffer. It will be found that the whole ancient world had its type in one or other of these. It

either looked with horror on the prospect of pain, or it looked with contempt on the susceptibility to pain. There is a passage cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews which has always seemed to us to mark off the two opposite effects of sorrow on the old world: "Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by Him." To despise suffering, and to faint beneath suffering: these were the separate tendencies of separate minds. The mind of the Jew, and the popular mind of the Greek, though from different reasons, habitually fainted; the one from the sense of being a religious outlaw, the other from his abhorrence of aught but physical ease. The Buddhist, on the other hand, sought to crucify the very fact of sensation, and in this he was joined by the Stoic and the Platonist. Their aim was to despise sorrow. Their idea of moral perfection was a heart in which all feeling was dead, to which pleasure could bring no thrill, and pain no sting. They sought a life in which reason alone should rule, a life from which all emotion should be banished, and from whose borders should be excluded alike the sound of laughter and the sight of tears: their motto in the hour of calamity was—Be strong, and do not suffer.

Paul's motto, on the contrary, is—Suffer, and still be strong. His view is essentially different from either of the preceding extremes. On the one hand, he refuses to believe with the Jew that pain is an experience under which a man should

crouch; he sees in the ability to bear it a proof of the possession of divine love. On the other hand, he refuses with the Stoic and the Buddhist to believe that a man's patience is perfected in proportion as he feels little; rather would he say that the proof of patience is the strength of that suffering which it bears. And we must all feel that the Gentile Apostle has here the philosophic advantage over the Stoic and his allies. Stoicism professed to teach men how to bear calamity; it appeared in the sequel that it only taught them how to crucify calamity. It did not give them power to be strong in spite of sorrow; it simply administered an opiate which caused the sorrow to be forgotten. Paul saw clearly that such an opiate was no real victory. He saw that the only moral conquest of suffering was the power to bear suffering, and that the bearing of suffering implied its presence. He saw that the strong man was just the man who had not an opiate, who was alive to the pains of life, and yet did not succumb. That is the power he claims for Christian love.

Now it has been the experience of all men in all ages that personal depression is naturally unfavourable to the diffusion of our social affections. When a man is down in the world, he does not by nature look with much benevolence on those who are up. But if their being up has something to do with his being down, the sense of grievance is intensified tenfold. If he be a deformed slave like Epictetus,

and is conscious that the Roman world is either laughing at him or shrinking from him, it is very difficult indeed for him to cherish for that Roman world a feeling of warmth; if he does cherish such a feeling, we are justified in calling his love a power. Epictetus himself did not reach that state. He was free from all anger, but that was because he had freed himself from all desire. He, on his part, had as great a contempt for the world as the world had for him; and so far as the love is concerned, it is not very easy to see the difference between them. Each had a contempt for the other's gift, and therefore each was regardless of the other's scorn. This is a far preferable state to enmity, but it does not nearly attain the Christian power of love. What prevents it from attaining the level of that power is the absence of the bearing element. If Epictetus had been converted to Christianity, he would have lost his Stoicism, and therefore his refusal to hate the world would have meant the possession of power—power to bear through the power to love. His reticence would not then have been a mere negation, but the positive manifestation of a sublime spiritual force which had power not only to refrain from vengeance, but to return good for evil.

We have called this a *passive* strength to mark the fact that it is love subsisting under the support of a burden. We must carefully distinguish, however, between the word *passive* and the word *nega-*

tive. We are often told that Christianity differs from other religions in the prominence it gives to the passive virtues—poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, and the like. Such a statement may mislead unless we bear in mind that there are negative virtues which are called by the same name. There is a poverty of spirit which will be found in the creed of the Cynic, centuries before Christianity. There is a meekness which will be found in the doctrines of the Stoic long ere the Cross appeared. Yet we do not say that this humility, this meekness, was an anticipation of Christ's morality; it had the same effect, but it had a different cause. The meekness before the Cross was content to dwell in the valley, but only because it recognised the existence of no real mountain; it was the meekness of indifference which looked upon all life as on one common level of nothingness, and was therefore oblivious of the fact whether fortune smiled or frowned. The meekness of a Cynic or of a Stoic was not self-restraint; when he had reached that stage he had nothing to bear. But the meekness of Christianity had nothing in it either of Cynicism or of Stoicism; it was essentially a self-restraint, and its motive was love. It was not grounded on the belief that the pleasures of life were in themselves undesirable, or that the pains of life were in any case a matter of indifference. It was built upon something whose presence was felt to be better than pleasure, and

whose absence was believed to be worse than pain —the enthusiasm for humanity, the love of man as man: that was the secret of the Christian's meekness.

It is in this light that we come to understand what is meant by Christ's own precept: "Love your enemies." To a Stoic the fulfilment of that precept in a positive form would be impossible; the most that he could do would be to abstain from hating his enemies. There are two motives which may induce a man to abstain from hatred —indifference and love; the Stoic reached the first, the Christian alone attained to the second. The one became so indifferent to the outward concerns of life that the infliction of a personal injury produced no impression on him; the other had such a love for the man as man that the injury of the moment though felt was covered. The expression *as man* is to be especially emphasised. The command to love one's enemy as an enemy would be not only a paradox, but a contradiction in terms. It would be the command to fix our affections on that phase of a man's character which was most opposed to our own nature. The Christian sense of love towards an enemy is precisely the opposite of this; it is the remembrance that our enemy has a side of his nature which is not discordant with our own, that even if there be nothing more between us, he is at least human. The enmity is in every case borne as a cross, but

it is borne. The power which bears it is love; the object of love is the man in himself, the man because he is a man. The enmity is not a subject of indifference; it is ever a source of pain. The triumph of Christian love consists in the fact, not that it feels no obstacle, but that it has overcome the obstacle. It has not annihilated its cross; it has taken up its cross, and its power has been magnified and glorified in proportion to the weight it bears.

The second of the powers of love is that which we have called intellectual charity: "Love believeth all things." The idea is not that Christian love is able to believe wrong to be right, or incapable of seeing any fault in its object. It is not too much to say that the perception of a fault is quickened by Christian love. It is inevitable that it should be so. If the presence of the disease involves the danger of death, the eye of love will be quick to detect its presence, quicker a thousand times than the eye of indifference. Christianity professes to see in sin the presence of a disease which, if not arrested, must end in death; is it surprising that the first manifestation of that disorder should be made to the eyes of those who are most interested in its victim? Intellectual charity does not consist in believing all things we see to be right. It cannot be designed as a veil to hide from a man's observation the actual state of the facts around him; its province must lie in a very different sphere.

And, indeed, a little reflection will convince us that the sphere of intellectual charity is not the world of observation, but the world which a man does not see. To have intellectual charity, is, in plain terms, to think well of one's neighbour, to believe all things good of him in the absence of any proof of evil. It is clear that such a state of mind belongs not to the region of observation, but to the stage preceding observation. When I actually look upon a man's actions, I am at liberty to judge whether they be good or bad, and it is no charity to say they are good if I know them to be bad. But if I do not know, if I have had no direct observation of the man's life and conduct, then in the absence of any such evidence it is the duty of my Christian love to disregard any unsifted rumours to his disparagement, and to believe in the meantime all things in his favour. We say *in the meantime*. There is no obligation laid upon any Christian man of refusing to observe facts, or omitting to investigate facts. The man is only pledged to an act of faith so long as knowledge is not within his reach. The sphere of knowledge is the legitimate sphere of judgment. The moment I have come to know all the facts of the case I am in a position to give a verdict. It is when the facts of the case are not before me that I am asked to walk by faith towards my brother man. I am asked to occupy towards him an attitude of belief. I am bidden to preserve that attitude even in the

face of difficulties unless these difficulties amount to an absolute negation. Just as my faith in the universe is to be steadfast in spite of the clouds which environ it, so my faith in the integrity of my fellow-man is to remain undimmed in spite of the breath of calumny. Love by an act of faith is to impute its own righteousness to the suspected party as long as there hangs over him nothing more than suspicion. It is to cover him with its wings until the calamity be overpast, or until the obloquy be proved to be just. If the obloquy be proved to be just, love is not therefore to die; nevertheless in this case it will change its attitude; it will be no longer a love of charity, it will be a love of forgiveness. There can be no charity towards wrong as wrong; there may be an admission of extenuating circumstances, but that is simply a suspension of judgment in our ignorance of the amount of wrong. For wrong itself there can be no charity, but there may always be forgiveness. Forgiveness, however, belongs rather to the first than to the second power of love, rather to the bearing than the believing. We are at present only considering love's power of faith, its power to believe in human goodness as long as human goodness is not proved to be a dream. We have called this distinctively a stage of intellectual charity to indicate the fact that it belongs to the world of thought. What we say is, that it can only be expected to last as long as faith remains

faith, that when faith becomes knowledge love must take another form. If my brother is proved to be pure, charity becomes superfluous; love will not then say: I believe all things, but I know all things. If my brother is proved to be impure, charity towards his sin is improper; love will then say, not, I believe all things, but I forgive all things. The stage in which a man is bound to believe all good things of his brother—in other words, the stage of intellectual charity, belongs purely to that region of experience into which the light of his brother's life has not yet come. It belongs to the period in which there is no personal knowledge on which to build, to the time when facts are few and testimonies doubtful. It is then that the Apostle demands faith from love. He demands not so much a suspension of judgment as a continuance in the original judgment formed ere any cloud had come. He asks us to justify the man by our faith, to believe in him without knowing him, and before we have had an opportunity of testing him, to assume that he is true until the facts prove him to be false. That is Paul's description of the essence of Christian charity —the charity of thought by which in the absence of proved facts we lend to our maligned brother the gift of our faith, the charity which in the meantime "believeth all things."

The third of the powers of love is what we have called moral optimism: "Love hopeth all things."

This power is essentially distinct from either of the foregoing, and marks a higher phase of the strength of love. The logical order in which the possibilities of the human heart are unfolded, would have been best expressed by saying that love first believeth all things, then beareth or forgiveth all things, and in its third stage hopeth all things. It begins by disregarding the breath of suspicion, by refusing in the absence of definite knowledge to lose its faith in a man's virtue. If there should come a time when love can no longer retain its faith in a man's virtue, it has then a second phase of life to enter upon; it can no longer believe that all things are right, but it can forgive all things that have been wrong, can bear the sin. But when this has been done there awaits love a yet higher task; it has not only to cancel the past, it has to hope for the future. I may forgive an act where I have very little hope for the man, and I may continue to love him without having any hope of him. We presume it is this which is meant when it is said, I will forgive it, but I cannot forget it. You are willing to overlook the deed in itself, in so far as it is a past action, but you cannot ignore that present state of the man's mind which the action indicates; your love is unlit by joy. Now, St. Paul says that it is possible for love to reach not only forgiveness, but forgetfulness. He says that a perfect love will look upon its object with the eye of hope.

The old ideal you formed of the man was not true, is not true, but still may be true. Charity can no longer believe him to be what he is not, but hope can believe that he will be what he is not. Charity belongs to the sphere of faith, forgiveness belongs to the sphere of knowledge, hope belongs to the sphere in which faith and knowledge shall be reconciled, to a sphere in which that ideal of human life which is now proved to be an illusion shall become at last a great reality, and shall fulfil the highest expectations of our hours of charity.

Now, this moral optimism, this power of love to hope, is in the full extent of its range a phenomenon peculiar to Christianity. Buddhism was a religion of despair. Brahmanism was a religion of sadness. Parsism was a religion which limited the power of God. The Mythologies of the Old World did not lift their votaries above the impressions of the hour; the popular mind of Greece and Rome was too much occupied with the present to have either hope or fear. Even the sects of philosophy did not reach an universal hope for man. The Epicurean avoided all thought of questions which did not touch his own individual comfort. The Stoic longed for all men to think as he thought, but he did not dare to *hope* for it; it was his want of hope for mankind at large that pointed the edge of his contempt. The Platonist had the ideal of a great and glorious republic, but its glory was to be reached by lopping off one-half the

branches of the tree of human life. The only two regions in which an analogy to the Christian optimism is found are the ideal kingdom worshipped in the system of Confucius, and the Messianic kingdom contemplated by the children of Israel. But the ideal kingdom of Confucius is after all but an idealised China, not an empire of universal Man, and the Messianic kingdom of Israel is a kingdom which is to minister rather to the glory of Israel than to the glory of humanity.

Now, Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of hope—of hope for all men without distinction. The very first care of Christianity is to abolish distinctions in the claims of men to be objects of hope. It declares that all are by nature equally guilty before God. The earliest equality which the religion of Christ established among men was not a levelling up, but a levelling down. It appealed to the brotherhood of souls, not by a common sense of privilege, but by a common sense of impotence. Dean Merivale says that from a human point of view its essence consisted in the doctrine of the fundamental equality of men.* It is true, and therefore to teach them this equality it spoke to that which was the most fundamental element in their nature—their feeling of absolute dependence; it told them that, one and all, they were dead in trespasses and sin. And what we wish to point out here is that this common degra-

* *Hist. of the Romans*, I., p. 55.

dation was a common hope. If there was hope in a dead world for the life of one, there must be hope for the lives of all. There can be no degrees in death. If love had any sphere at all it must be an universal sphere. In every case there was the same barrier to be overcome; if that barrier could *ever* be broken, it could *always* be broken. If a single human soul had at any time, in any place, amid any circumstances, been raised from the bondage of corruption into the life of moral liberty, there was no reason in the nature of men why every human soul should not so rise, no reason in the nature of love which should prevent the command being given to it: "Hope all things!"

The fourth and last of the powers of love is that described in the words "endureth all things." It differs from the three foregoing powers, not in its quality, but in its quantity, and on this account it will not long detain us. It is not a separate power from the charity of love, or the forgiveness of love, or the hope of love; it is the persistence in time of any one of these, or all of these. It is the power of charity to retain its faith in man, however long that evidence is delayed which shall either clear or condemn him. It is the power of forgiveness to forgive seventy times seven; it is the power of hope to hope on to the end. In each and all of its phases it may be described as love's ability to wait. The ability to wait, the power to be permanent, the strength to keep its youth amid

the dilapidation and decay of that ideal structure which was the object of its early gaze, is a possession which has always been regarded as marking the boundary line between love sensuous and love spiritual. The affection of the animal for its offspring is shortlived; the affection of the voluptuary for his object fades with the fancy of the hour. Spiritual love is incapable of change and independent of change; spiritual love is the love of man as man, because he is man. It rests not on the form of humanity, not on the deeds of humanity, but on the fact of humanity. The form may be mutilated by accident or by age; the deeds may be sullied by calumny or by degeneracy; but even in ruins the man is still man. While that humanity remains the love of the spirit abides, for the love of the spirit is love for the spirit. It is the love, not for any present, or past, or future qualities, but for that which lies beneath all qualities, and makes all qualities possible—the fact of a human personality, the being of a conscious soul. What else than this is meant when it is said, "We love Him because He first loved us"? Divine love—love in its most ideal form—exists originally for the soul as a soul. It is anterior to all the qualities which yet may arise in its object; nay, it is itself instrumental in the production of the best of these. And as it is earlier than their origin, so it must, if necessary, be later than their decay. If the soul should fall from its goodness,

it will then but revert to that first position in which love found it. Love will take it up again in its emptiness, in its privation, in its want of all qualities which men call good or great. The soul itself is more than all that it contains, and a love that is founded on the soul will survive the dissolution of its possessions; heaven and earth may pass away, but that love will not pass away.

XI.

THE NEW HEROISM.

We found in the last chapter that Christianity brought into the world a new form of energy. We found that the old force men called love was here transformed so radically as almost to become a distinct creation. We found that in this form of Christian transformation it was the source of four new powers of the heart of man—a power of faith in human nature as long as human nature was not known to be false, a power of forgiveness when it was known to be false, a power of hope by which the first faith might be restored, and a power of permanence by which the realisation of the hope could be waited on long and patiently. We have now to see in what manner these new powers of the heart have influenced the world as a world, in other words, have moulded the secular life of men. That they have influenced and moulded the secular life of men is denied by none. That in point of fact they have transformed ancient thought into modern thought, is now one of the commonplaces of history. But it is by no means at first sight so

clear how the change has been effected. It is of course easy to say that it has been wrought by a spiritual regeneration. No doubt it has in what is called the Church, *i.e.*, the body of men that are spiritually regenerated. But what of the world, what of the masses that have not received what is called Christian regeneration? It cannot be denied that to some extent, at least, they have received Christian civilisation; it cannot be doubted that those who do not possess the powers of Christian love try to imitate their possession. The question is, what is that influence which has produced this tendency to imitate the product of a new culture, to simulate by artificial means the growth of a spirit which is as yet foreign to the nature?

To estimate this influence we must bear in mind the fact that the religion of Christ has addressed itself not merely to the heart but to the imagination. It has not only inaugurated a new life but a new heroism. It is to the transformation in the world's idea of glory that we chiefly owe the transition from the old culture into the new. Let us consider, at the outset, the effect of the mere discovery that the heart has powers. To the ancient standard of heroism the heart was a passive thing. Some despised it as a source of weakness, some tolerated it as a necessary evil; none looked upon it as an actual citadel of man. The most moral of all ancient systems—that of Buddhism, is itself the very best illustration; it sought the goal of per-

fection in the extinction of desire. If systems of religion and philosophy thought thus, it was much more natural that common men should think so. Religion and philosophy might affect to despise any love of glory, but common men could not. Some standard of glory they must have, and where were they to get it? The heights of the intellect were beyond them, the desires of the heart were said to be beneath them; there remained for them only the world of the senses. That world accordingly they chose. They laid their ideal of glory in the objects of sight and sound—in the glitter of arms and the thunders of war. The great man became to them identical with the strong man, and the strong man with the man of muscular force. That there was a strength which did not manifest itself by beating down, was a thought which had not yet entered their minds. That the softness of the human heart might itself attain the strength of adamant was an idea they could not comprehend. And so they wove the chaplet for the warrior's brow, and kept the laurel for him who slew the foe; the courage of the beast of the field became their type of heroic virtue.

At the very root of the type the new ideal struck. The religion of Christ declared that the greatest power in the world, the only power that never failed, was the power of love. Such a declaration ran right in the face of the old world's philosophy and practice. Love is a form of desire,

and the philosophy of the East counted desire a weakness. Love is a form of feeling, and the philosophy of the West had called feeling a defect. The religion of Christ opposed both. It declared love to be potentially divine, and in so doing it placed the highest possibilities of humanity in the desires and feelings of the heart.

The first and immediate effect of this was to magnify human life itself. In the old world the glory of a man's life lay in something outside itself. To the popular mind its glory lay in its material enrichment; to the philosopher and the religious devotee, its greatness consisted in its material impoverishment. To the faith of Christ the life of a man was valuable, neither on account of what it had, nor yet by reason of what it had not, but simply and solely in virtue of what it *was*. And the test of what it was, was the heart. The index to the man was the state of his desires; where his heart was, there his treasure was to be sought. Now the point for us to observe is that this was really an exaltation of the idea of life itself. Christianity neither advocated material aggrandisement on the one hand, nor material asceticism on the other; it merely said that man's true riches lay *within*, and in so saying it proclaimed to the world the inherent grandeur of being a living soul.

The most direct influence of this new revelation was that exerted upon the idea of suicide; it transformed it from a noble into an ignoble death.

To die by one's own hand was with the Roman an act of courage; it is with the Christian a deed of the deepest cowardice. The reason lies in the fact that to the Christian the greatest power is heart-power—power to bear. In his view it needs more courage to live than to die. The highest strength of which the Christian knows is the love which can support trial. The doctrine of the Cross itself is the proclamation of a new kind of glory. The heroism of the Son of Man is the heroism of one who has power to yield up his will to the Universal Will, to whom living and dying are alike forms of life—that life of love that bears the burdens of the universe. In such a standard of heroism there is no place for suicide. To die by the will of God, and in acceptance of the will of God, is a form of life because it is a form of love; it is a voluntary submission to the established order of the world; it is to say, Thy will be done. But to die by one's own hand is to resist the established order; it is to say, *My* will be done! It is to fly from a burden one fears to face; it is to confess one's inability to bear. It is thus that to the eye of Christianity that which was the greatest proof of courage has become the highest evidence of cowardice. The death of the suicide was once applauded; it is now mentioned with bated breath, and that which Pagan Rome referred to magnanimity of soul is explained by Christian charity as the result of mental weakness.

And the same principle which made it more heroic in a man to bear his own infirmities, made it more heroic in him to bear the infirmities of others. If Christianity threw a stigma over the idea of suicide, it cast a yet deeper stigma on the practice of infanticide. That practice originated in the Pagan ideal of greatness. If a man's life consisted in the abundance of the material things he possessed, a man was potentially great in proportion as he evinced the likelihood of possession. Hence the strongest lives were the most carefully preserved; it was to these the nation looked for the achievement of its conquests and of its glory. But the weak, the frail, the deformed, the lives that came into the world with a defect either of body or of mind, were from this point of view not worth preserving. They had no prospect of contributing anything to the national glory, no likelihood of ever being saluted as the conquerors of Rome's enemies. They were more likely to be themselves a burden on their country and a retardation of the nation's life. And so Rome thought that the best thing she could do with them was to destroy them at their birth. So far from being consciously inhumane in this act, she was prompted to the act to some extent by the very impulse of humanity. If a deformed Roman could have got his choice in infancy, whether he should die or live, he would without hesitation have preferred the former alternative; in condemning weak infants to exposure

he only did as he would have been done by, if in similar circumstances he had received the right to choose. The fault of the Roman was not his inhumanity; it was his false ideal of humanity. He thought he was doing good service both to the State and to the child by cutting short a life that should never develop into a fighting man.

But Christianity said, Let the child live. In so saying, it was not actuated merely by humanity; it was guided by a process of reasoning. It differed from Paganism, not so much in being more humane as in having a higher view of what constituted humanity. To Paganism, the most ignoble service in life was burden-bearing, and therefore to free a life from burden-bearing was the purest clemency. But to Christianity the service of burden-bearing was of all others the noblest. The very symbol of Christian glory was the carrying of a cross. It was a symbol not of weakness, but of power—the power of love. The great agent of power in the old world had been *hate;* it was this which had nerved men for the scenes of the battlefield. But here was a power that could enable men to be courageous without a battlefield. Here was a power which literally could make a man strong in the midst of weakness, which could give the life-long invalid a place among the heroes of the universe. The religion of Christ proclaimed that there was an order of heroism which the Roman Senate had

never yet honoured with a triumph—the heroism that belongs to the patience in tribulation; for those who had passed through this fiery furnace it claimed the laurel crown. And just because it deemed the bearing of weakness to be a field of glory, it would not rob the decrepit infant of its prospective triumph. It would not cut short at birth a life with such possibilities of heroism before it. It would not deprive the child of the chance of that golden crown which the new civilisation was to place on the brows of those who should be perfect through suffering.

A still wider social influence of the new heroism was the change it effected in the position of woman. Before the advent of the Cross the feminine nature, as a rule, was not appreciated. It had not sufficient power of abstraction for the Platonist; it had too much power of emotion for the Stoic; it had no point of contact with the materialistic tendencies of the popular mind. It is hardly too much to say that the women who obtained a position either in the Pantheon or in the State obtained it in proportion to the sacrifice of the typically feminine nature. But with the dawn of Christianity woman came to the front as woman. She had sometimes been at the front as something else than woman—as a minister to sensuous passions or a contributor to political intrigues. But in Christianity she appeared heroic in that which was her native garb. She came into prominence in virtue of the very type of

character which in the old world had constituted the ground of her repression—her gentleness, her meekness, her self-restraint. She derived her prominence from the fact that Christianity had taught men where the highest courage lay. It had taught them that the most arduous part of the soul's battle was its struggle with itself, its effort to restrain its own passions, its power to bear. It had made them feel that the only strength adequate to such a task was heart-strength, that in such a strife mere intellect was powerless, that love alone could support the strain. In this apotheosis of a new and passive heroism the soul of woman was glorified. The image of the feminine nature was lifted into the heights, and men worshipped it. Mariolatry is the earliest worship of woman to be found in the world's annals. Juno was not adored as woman, but as a female Jupiter; Venus was not adored as woman, but as sensuous loveliness. Mary was worshipped as virgin purity. And this historic act is at the same time symbolic; it marks an universal change in the attitude of the human mind towards the feminine spirit. It indicates that under the new regime the spirit of womanhood had become everywhere the object of reverence. In bending the knee to the Virgin Mother, men, under the guise of a very crude symbol, were expressing their adoration of that element in human nature which had been so long despised—the restraint of passion, the limitation of self-will, the power to acquiesce in

the surrender of sensuous aims, and to find a new joy in submission to the common good.

But perhaps the widest of all the influences exerted by the new heroism was that produced on the idea of government. The relation of Church and State has been in all Christian ages more or less a subject of controversy. Some have held that the State has a right to rule the Church; others that the Church has a right to dominate the State. With this controversy we have here happily no concern. The question with which we have to do is one that has not received so much attention: What is the relation between the *idea* of the Church and the *idea* of the State? We want to know—not why church-government has at any time dominated state-government, but why at all times since the Christian era the State itself has been gradually changing the model of its own government into closer approximation with the ideal of a Church. In this sense it will be found that Christianity has more really absorbed the State in modern times than she ever did in the days of Hildebrand. It is indeed no longer a physical but a moral absorption. The Church has not engulfed the State, but the church-idea of headship has become identical with the state-idea of kinghood. The State is more and more recognising that the true king is a servant—the servant of all. The old idea of kinghood was what was called an absolute monarchy—a monarchy in which the will of the ruler constitutes the will of

the people. The new thought, the thought to which every day the governments of the earth are approximating, is that of a monarchy in which the will of the people constitutes the will of the ruler. In the ancient regime the law descends from the heights to the valleys; in the modern it ascends from the valleys to the heights. In the former the king is great because he utters the earliest voice; in the latter he is great because he utters the latest voice of all, and sums up in his verdict the average sentiment of the nation.

Now, what we have to remark is, that this latter and more modern view of state-government is the Christian ideal of *church*-government. When St. Paul wishes to emphasise the fact that Christ is King over His Church, he calls Him the Head of the body. Why does he use this metaphor instead of the simple and direct title of king? It is because in the view of Paul Christ is king in a special way—by bearing the sorrows of His subjects. The head is king over the members of the body because it bears the pains of the members. The head of a human body is, so to speak, the latest voice of the physical constitution. It receives its impressions from the subordinate organs; it registers the movements of the common life. Its empire, in short, is constituted by its power to feel what the members feel; remove that power, and its reign is over. In the ideal of the Christian Church the metaphor is justified. Here the least

in the kingdom is always the greatest. "He that would be chief among you, let him be your minister," are the words in which is expressed the Christian view of sovereignty. The man who would be the head of the body of new believers must be the man who is most weighed down by the sins and sorrows of that body. He must be that man whose heart is most knit to the united membership, so knit that he feels its pains and struggles as if they were his own. That is the man who is in the Christian sense king. He is the king because he is the head, and he is the head because he bears the life-burden of all. The power by which he sways others is the power that first conquered his own soul—love.

Such is the idea which, after taking possession of the Christian consciousness, has gradually passed beyond the boundaries of the religious world and effected a lodgment in the sphere of political life. We need not say that the change it has produced and is producing within that sphere is radical. In a constitution where the king is the voice of the people, or, in Pauline phrase, the head of the body, it is clear that the starting-point of all development must be the individual man. The head is the sum of the bodily members, and the bodily members are the united sum of distinct individual lives. In such a government as this the all-important element is the unit. If the development is to begin from beneath, it must

begin with the one, for the mass is but a congeries of atoms, and the character of each atom must determine the nature of the mass. It follows that in the new civilisation there must rise into prominence the rights of the individual man. The new civilisation carries Protestantism in its very bosom. Each man feels himself to be essential to the whole movement of humanity. Need we say, however, that the fact of each being essential is inimical to the licence of any one. No individual can keep his individuality by living to himself alone. "He that loveth his life shall lose it," is an aphorism which experience has proved true. In the world of the human heart no man is a king until he has become a priest; he can never really say *I live*, until he is able to say *I am crucified*. The power of a human personality is in every case proportionate to its self-forgetfulness. The man who rises to distinction is the man whose being is absorbed in some great interest. If he would be great he must be lost in the love of something; his empire shall be the fruit of his sacrifice. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom," is no arbitrary beatitude; the spiritual king is ever the spiritual priest — the man of sacrifice. The life of an individual man is different from the individual drop of an ocean. The drop only reveals its identity when it is separate from the ocean; restore it to the bosom of the sea, and its distinctive being disappears. But the

life of the man only reveals its distinctiveness when it is cast into the bosom of humanity. In its isolation it has no qualities. To bring out its qualities it needs the contact with the lives of other men, and its character will only reach its fulness and its perfection when its self-life is absorbed and overshadowed by the interests of the universal whole.

But the Christian idea of a common membership not only applies to the individual man in each state; it has an application also to the individual states of each epoch. The religion of Christ contemplates as the goal of its morality the gathering of the nations. It has been said indeed that Christianity discouraged patriotism; so it did—that special kind of patriotism which was current at the time of its appearance. The main obstacle which the Gospel had to contend with was just the spirit of a false patriotism. The Jew loved his country so much that he could love no other country. His only conception of an universal love was an universal Judaism; he promised to love the whole world, when the whole world should become coextensive with the kingdom of David. It was impossible that the religion of Christ should regard such a spirit with complacency; it was inevitable that its precepts should take a reactionary tone. We can catch the echo of that reaction in the bold language of a Paul: "There is neither Jew nor Greek;" it is the utterance of a man who is wearied

with a false patriotism. Yet it would be erroneous to conclude that Christianity is opposed to nationality; it is no more opposed to nationality than it is opposed to individualism. It is in the interest of the individual that it desires him to forget his self-love, and it is in the interest of the nation that it desires the nation to forget its nationality. So far from being opposed to a collective national life, the attainment of such a life is the very goal of its morality. The prospective pæan which it chants over its final triumph is this: The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ. It contemplates not the abolition of national distinctions, but the interpenetration of national interests. It looks forward to the time when the political good of one shall be seen to be identical with the political good of all, when nation shall not rise against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom, but when principalities and powers shall be subject to one ideal—the example of the Prince of Peace.

Recurring now to the new idea of state-government—the identification of kinghood with headship—it is worth while to consider how St. Paul gives the thought a domestic as well as a national application. He makes it apply not only to the nation, but to the household. The relation of the parties in married life is a topic on which he descants with more than usual definiteness of detail, and it seems to us that nowhere has the tenor of his remarks

been more generally mistaken. He says in so many words that the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the Head of the Church, and that therefore the wife owes to her husband the obedience which the Church owes to Christ. What does St. Paul mean by this statement? Does he intend to emphasise the view that the position of woman in the household should be a subordinate one? If so, his teaching on this matter was a redundancy. No one in the world of his day would have denied such a thesis; it would have met the approval of Barbarian and Roman, bond and free. His precept would have been on the line of the universal practice, and would therefore have been acceptable to all. But Paul wrote his epistles to correct. He would not have deemed it worth while to pen a letter for the sake of endorsing the social customs of heathendom. He wished to exhibit Christian morality in those features in which it was distinctive with a view to illustrate his leading position that the cross of Christ had made all things new. Accordingly, when he delineates the Christian view of the married state, it can only be in order to show that it essentially differs from the heathen view, that woman, in respect of subordination, no longer occupies the same position in the new household which she occupied in the old. The question is, What is the difference? St. Paul is perfectly explicit in declaring that the wife is to be subordinate to the husband. So far as the

terms of expression are concerned, the Christian Apostle does not seem to have transcended the level of Pagan culture. Yet he connects this ordinance of marriage in a direct and immediate sense with the Person and work of that Christ for whom he claims distinct originality. Wherein lies the originality of a command which seems to leave the life of woman in the same condition of depression and servitude in which she had been placed by the world of heathen antiquity?

The originality consists in the new idea of the nature of subordination which Christianity itself introduced. Let us look again at this remarkable passage. We shall see that so far from being an unqualified assertion of the wife's subjection to the husband, it is really a revolt from that old doctrine. It affirms in words the law of the ancient regime, but it gives such a meaning to the ancient terms that the new command amounts to the contradiction of the old law. What St. Paul says is, that the husband is only head of the wife in a particular way—as Christ is Head of the Church. Now, how was Christ to Paul the Head of the Church? The answer to that question we have already seen. Christ, in the view of St. Paul, is the Head because He is the Servant, the King because He is the Priest, the Ruler because he is the Bearer. He wields the sceptre over the members just because He bears the burdens of the members; the sceptre is itself the burden. It is in this sense, and in no

other, that St. Paul declares the husband to be the head of the wife. The headship which he assigns to him is the headship of ministration. He tells him to bear the burdens of the woman, to carry her crosses, to protect her interests. He bids him consider that she is a member of his own body, a part of his own life, a sharer in his own being, that it is impossible to separate her interest from his interest, or her burden from his burden. "He that loveth his wife loveth himself," are the striking words in which St. Paul expresses his sense of that essential equality which unites the parties in the marriage contract; the head is only head because it possesses within itself the life and power of ministration. So, too, when he turns to the woman and says, "Submit yourself unto your husband as unto the Lord," his sentence is not an endorsement but a qualification of the old regime.

The submission "unto the Lord" is not an abject submission; it is a self-surrender, a joyous and voluntary service. It is an allegiance which a member of the body gives to the head of the body, an allegiance not dictated by craven fear, but by an inward necessity of being which makes life impossible without the giving up of self. That phrase, "as unto the Lord," instead of being an intensification of the woman's bondage, is the Magna Charta of her Christian freedom, the inscription which, for all time to come, distinguishes

service from servitude, and marks the radical difference between ministry and slavery.

Let it be observed, however, that the difference is purely a mental one. Ministration may submit to work outwardly more menial than that which the slave performs. The contrast lies in the *mind.* Slavery springs from command, and is therefore bondage; ministration springs from love, and is therefore free. The immediate aim of the religion of Christ was not so much to abolish any form of slavery from without as to transfigure it from within. In dealing with any depressed caste, whether it were the wife or the nominal servant of a household, the first design of Christianity was to convert slavery into ministration. Accordingly it did not inaugurate its coming by demanding that the slave should be set free; it attached too much importance to the cross to proclaim at the outset the abolition of the cross. It proposed not so much to lift the burdens of life from the labouring and heavy-laden as to give the labouring and the heavy-laden the power to work and to endure. It proposed to effect such a change on the *idea* of labour, such a transformation on the *thought* of burden-bearing, that men would come to feel the yoke not only light, but glorious. It had a voice alike for the master and for the slave, but it was as yet only an inward voice. It told the slave that in the very discharge of his servile duties he might enter into the life of freedom, the freedom

of a heart that has accepted its burden and its toil. It told the master that in the very act of ruling he should feel that he was not free—that his rule was itself a headship, and therefore the bearing of a yoke. When St. Paul sent back Onesimus to Philemon, he sent him back, from his point of view, a free man. Onesimus, in the voluntary return to the duties of his master's service, was in St. Paul's sight a grander illustration of the liberating power of the Gospel than would have been presented by the spectacle of his mere bodily enfranchisement; that would have been only a freedom of the flesh, this was a liberty of the spirit. And let it be remembered that it was through this liberty of the spirit that the bondage of the flesh itself was broken. Voluntary service brought the dignity of labour, and a sense of the dignity of labour dignified toiling men. It is the new thought that has broken the old chain. Not by might, not by power, but by spirit, has the slave been set free—the spirit of that new heroism which, by revealing the majesty of self-restraint and the divinity of self-surrender, has placed on an equal ideal level the lives and lots of men.

XII.

THE SPHERE OF CHRISTIAN MANIFESTATION.

It will be seen from the last chapter that the new heroism inaugurated by the Gospel is of very wide application, extending to fields of study which seem at first view to have no connection with it. This leads us to consider the general question, What are the boundaries of the Christian sphere? We are in the habit of dividing the pursuits of life into the secular and the sacred; where does the sacred end and the secular begin? In a work on New Testament ethics the question cannot be answered on abstract principles, nor even by an appeal to modern experience. We must ask what the original Christian record has itself to say upon the subject. Let us go back, therefore, to the beginning of Christianity's moral teaching—the Sermon on the Mount. It is evident that there were present to the mind of Christ on that occasion two opposite schools of moral thought—the Pharisees and the Essenes. The sphere of Pharisaic morality was the world; the sphere of

Essene morality was the desert. The aim of the Pharisee was to "shine before men;" the aim of the Essene was so to hide his "lamp under a bushel" that it might shine only before God. To the Pharisee the value of virtue lay only in its being seen; to the Essene the value of virtue lay in its being felt, in its being hid within the breast as a perpetual sacrifice of the outward man.

Now, the view of Christianity as to the sphere of the moral life is in relation to these two schools at once reconciliatory and destructive; it finds a meeting-place for both by destroying the distinctive elements of each. Christ says that the important feature in *His* morality is not the place where it shines, but the manner of its shining: "Let your light *so* shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." The sphere of Christianity is here said to be one not of place, but of motive. Christ says that in the system *He* is about to inaugurate, the Pharisee and the Essene, the life of self-manifestation and the life of self-crucifixion, can meet side by side, so that a man may shine in being crucified, and be crucified in the act of shining. He says in effect, Do not imagine that there is any contradiction between self-forgetfulness and self-manifestation; it is only when you have forgotten yourself that you will really display yourself. Would you be able to shine before men? So shine that you may glorify another. Would you

have men see your good works? Let your good works be to you not an end, but a means—the means of glorifying your Father in Heaven. You will only become a true Pharisee when you have become a true Essene. Your personality will only wake into real power when it has felt its own nothingness in the presence of a power of all-excelling glory. Let your motive be to radiate light for others, and the light which you radiate for others shall play around your own person and make it bright and beautiful; he that shines for God shines also for man.

Here, then, we have a very definite principle announced on the very threshold of the Christian temple, a principle which determines beyond all possibility of dispute the boundary-line that divided the secular from the sacred. That boundary-line it declares to be not geographical, but mental. The same locality, the same outward act, the same scene of human occupation, may at one and the same moment be secular to me and sacred to you. The difference between the sphere of the Pharisee and the sphere of the Christian is not one that can be indicated on a map. Outwardly their sphere is identical; they both manifest their light "before men." The difference lies in their mental attitude; the shining of the Pharisee was conscious and artificial; the shining of the Christian is unconscious and spontaneous.

It will be seen that on this view the relation

which subsists between the secular and the sacred bears a very marked resemblance to the relation which pertains between the prosaic and the poetical. It is not correct to say that the physical world consists of two classes of objects; one prosaic and the other poetical. To a really prosaic mind, all the scenes in the world are prosaic; to a truly poetic soul, all the scenes in the world are poetical. You cannot tell the true poet that God made the country and man made the town; he would not believe you. He would tell you that in the meanest objects of the town—in busy street, and dusty lane, and squalid alley—he can find suggestions as full of Divine inspiration as ever were yielded by ancient mountain or forest primeval. Whatsoever the spirit of the poet touches it turns straightway into gold. Even so is it with the spirit of Christianity. It claims the blessing of *inheriting the earth—i.e.*, of being limited to no special sphere for its manifestation. It says in language to the same effect, that it has the world, life, death, things present and things to come, that he who is spiritual "ruleth all things." Nay, it is this, and nothing less than this, that is meant by the liberty of the spirit. The liberty of the spirit of Christianity is its power to roam at will into spots apparently opposed to it—to enter the commonplace, the prosaic, the secular haunts of men and receive not a stain upon its wings. It is the power to transfigure the world into its own

brightness, to make its clay gold, to turn its water into wine, until, its secular element being lost, it shall be changed into the Spirit's own image from glory to glory.

Now, this is just one of the points in which the religion of Christ is distinguished from all other religions. It may be said of all other religions that they curtail the sphere of human liberty, and nearly all curtail that sphere in the same way—by drawing a fence between God and the world, between the temple of worship and the scene of common toil. To prove this we need not go to the Brahman or the Buddhist, whose faith is professedly founded on a despair of actual things. Let us keep to a region where the natural conditions would seem to have been more favourable to a reconciliation of religion and common life—the faith of Judaism. It might have been thought that if any class of men would recognise the liberty of the spirit, it would have been the Pharisees; their object was actually to shine *before* men. But the very fact that this was their object made them separatists from the world. It was the sense of their own superiority that made them wish to display themselves. It was their conviction that the world, as a world, moved in a lower sphere than theirs that impelled them to show how great was the gulf fixed between them; their effort to shine was made in the interest of separatism. The Essene, on the other hand, made no effort to shine

at all so far as the world was concerned; he hid his light under a bushel in order the better to realise his own humility. But what caused the Essene to feel humble was not so much his sense of sin as his sense of materialism. He believed that the flesh, as such, was the antagonist of the spirit; and therefore he, as well as the Pharisee, was in heart a separatist. The two opposite sects of Judaism were thus ultimately joined in one conclusion; both by different roads arrived at the same conviction—that to become religious men is to manifest the decrease of one's right to individual liberty.

In contradistinction to these views, the religion of Christ claims for its followers an extension of the right-of-way. "Ye are the salt of the earth," are the words in which it inaugurates this claim. It declares in these words that, apart from the Christian spirit, the earthly or secular element is a source of corruption. It does not by nature contain that *salt*, or preserving material, which arrests the progress of decay, and keeps alive the substance in which it dwells. Accordingly, there is in it by nature no element of life, and therefore no source of permanent joy. But when the Christian spirit enters into this secular mass of corruption, it brings into it the preserving material; it becomes "the salt of the earth." Henceforth the secular world is no longer a dead world; it is full of life and spirituality. The flesh does not any

more lust against the spirit, nor do the pursuits of the flesh tend any longer to corrupt the spirit; the spirit gives them its own saline property, its own principle of life. The man will cease to get harm from those things which were formerly pernicious to his interests; he will tread upon scorpions, and they will do him no hurt. The food which was poison to the child shall nourish the man. His liberty of diet shall increase in proportion to the growth of his constitution. He will have a passport into regions of the world which are morally barred to the worldling himself, for that which degraded the unspiritual shall exalt the man of the spirit.

This idea, which, as we have said, is inaugurated in the Sermon on the Mount, runs like a thread of gold through every part of the New Testament. It is the keynote alike of St. Paul and of St. James —the Apostle of the Gentiles and the leader of Judaic Christianity. Nay, is not this the idea which St. Peter has in view when he says that God in Christ has begotten us "to an inheritance that is incorruptible"? He says in effect, The new inheritance to which we are begotten is altogether unlike the inheritance of Judaism. There we could only avoid corruption by avoiding contact; here we are incorruptible by any contact. There we were kept pure by the mandate, "Touch not, taste not, handle not;" here we may touch and taste and handle without receiv-

ing a stain. There our prohibitions were multiplied in proportion to our religious zeal; here the spirit of religion within us has annulled all prohibitions. We have reached a truth that has made us free.

But now, we have to remark that it is just in its spirit of liberty that Christianity receives its spirit of sacrifice. Of all the powers it possesses, that which it prizes most is its power to deny itself the exercise of its full freedom. "All things are lawful to me," says St. Paul, "but all things are not expedient," *i.e.*, not good for others. He himself was able with a clear conscience to eat flesh offered to an idol. He knew that an idol was nothing, and therefore he would allow no man in this question to deny his right to liberty of action. But while he claimed the right, he claimed also the power to sacrifice his right. He claimed the power to exercise an act of grace analogous to that act of grace by which his Lord had "emptied Himself," to say of his liberty as Christ had said, "I have power to lay it down." The act of grace or emptying process consisted in an ability to put himself in the place of his weak brother, to think with his heart, to see with his eyes. It consisted in an act of substitution, by which he forgot his own opinion of the idol, and lived only in that view of the subject entertained by his weak brother. He took upon himself *his* folly, he became poor to make him rich.

That abstinence from bread for the sake of his weak brother was itself a sacrament; it showed the broken body and shed blood. It grandly illustrated the sacrificial power of the Christian spirit. Paul had cast himself down from an eminence—the eminence of his own spiritual culture; he had thrown himself into a form of belief which he had long surmounted, and into sympathy with a stage of development which he had far passed by. In so doing he had in the highest sense exhibited the nature of the Christian sacrifice. He had emptied himself, had poured out, so to speak, a portion of his own consciousness. He had tried to substitute himself for another who was inferior to himself, to think with his mind, to suffer in his experience. He himself looked upon his act as nothing less than a repetition of his Master's cross within his own soul. What does he mean when he says, "I am crucified with Christ," "Buried in baptism unto His death," "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus"? What does he mean when he cries, "I protest I die daily," "We who live are alway delivered unto death"? What, in fine, is the thought in his mind when he declares that he has fellowship in the sufferings of Christ, and that he has been "made conformable unto His death"? Is it not clear from such words as these that he believed the principle of the Cross of Christ to be applicable not merely

to the martyrdom of physical dying, but equally so to the daily and hourly sacrifice of living. He felt that the spirit of the Christian sacrifice in all its forms was the spirit of self-forgetfulness. He saw that the root of the whole matter was that intellectual sympathy which, by the emptying out of its own glory, could put itself in another's place, and minister to another's needs. He perceived that the necessity for such a spirit was not limited to great events, but was felt even more in the commonplaces of life, and hence in the very humblest of daily acts he beheld the possibility of a Christian sacrifice: "Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

Singularly enough, it is in relation to these commonplace elements of life that the problem of Christian sacrifice has in our days again presented itself. It is in the question of temperance that modern life is again raising the issue as to the moral rights of man. With the exception of the fact that the modern issue is a social, while the ancient was a religious one, the point in dispute is very much the same. You, let us say, have never been under any temptation to exceed in the use of stimulants. You do not need to abstain; you have never in any respect been hurt either morally or physically by what you have imbibed, and therefore you deny any man's right to force upon you a pledge of abstinence. But

then there is a member of your household who is subject to the temptation from which you are free. Here the question arises: Is it right that you should use your freedom to enslave another? Is it right that you, being unaffected by this special temptation, should yet put the temptation before an inmate of your dwelling whom you know to be affected by it? From a Christian point of view the answer cannot be doubtful. Paul would certainly say: Empty yourself of your freedom in the presence of your weak brother. Come down to his state while you are with him. Make yourself a slave for his sake, that you may lead his captivity captive. Become for the time poor, to give him the chance of being eternally rich!

But the argument is by many pushed much further. It is said that as humanity is itself an united membership, the strong should in every case resign their freedom in the interest of their weak brethren. The decision of that question is not within our present province. We shall only remark that it depends on the decision of another—Would the total abstinence of the strong produce the cure of the weak? Are the weak the slaves to a habit, or are they the slaves merely to a fashion? If the latter, the conclusion is easy; if the former, it is difficult to see how the sacrifice of freedom would avail. Christianity gives us the law, but not the fact. It tells us that our freedom must not

enchain our brother, but it does not tell us whether in this case our freedom does enchain. No system of morality can give us that information; it must be tested by another sphere than that of ethics. It must be learned by observation, by experiment, by a study of human nature, by a comparison of statistics, by a knowledge of the facts of history. Paul did not pretend to be inspired in such subjects as these, and he would probably have said of this, as he said of another matter of detail: "Let every man be persuaded in his own mind."

Turning then from this special application of the Christian law of freedom, let us look for a moment at the law itself. What is the principle on which a man at any time should consent to surrender his right to a possession? Many will answer, that by his profession of the religion of the Cross he becomes an heir to the spirit of sacrifice, and should henceforth count it a glory to give up whatever is his own. A more complete delusion or a more entire misconception it would, we believe, be difficult to imagine. Christianity is not ultimately the religion of the Cross at all, but the religion of the crown. At no time does it proclaim its end to be the sacrifice of the individual man; sacrifice is never its end, but always its means to an end. The end of Christianity is not the pain, but the profit of the individual (Matt. v. 29). It only demands the sacrifice for the sake of the profit: "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and

not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." The plucking out of the right eye, and the cutting off of the right hand, are both processes of pain, but in the Christian system it is not their pain that makes them valuable; if by the law of nature the end could be achieved without the pain it would please Christianity better. The entire design of the immolating process is to have the diseased member separated from those parts of the body which are as yet unaffected by disease. The pain is necessary, but it is only incidentally necessary; it is necessary as the fulfilment of a physical law, but not as the execution of a moral requirement. The moral aim of Christianity is to promote the well-being of all human souls, and it would attach no value to any cross which did not tend to the enlargement of mankind.

If it be so it follows that there is no good to be derived from sacrificing for the sake of sacrifice. St. Paul has a clear perception of this truth when he says: "Though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." It profits him nothing because it profits others nothing. A sacrifice whose glory centres in itself has not a Christian glory. The Christian glory is love, and sacrifice is only valuable as an instrument of love. Moreover, as St. Paul says, our love must "abound in all judgment." It must not be a love that will sacrifice its own on a mere possibility; it must be a love that has measured the needs of its

object and knows exactly what is required. Christian morality, no less than Christian theology, is thus dependent on the advance of secular knowledge. Its sphere is circumscribed, not widened, by ignorance of the world. Its field of ministration is narrowed in proportion as it ministers in the dark. Human freedom only gains a right to sacrifice itself when it gains a vision of that for which it dies. Such a vision is not gained easily. If I would know whether I am ministering to a mind diseased or only to the disease of a mind, I must study in all its fulness the nature of man. I cannot prescribe the remedy till I have made the diagnosis; I cannot make the diagnosis till I have learned the constitution of the patient. The same self-sacrifice which in one case has cured the sickness may in another only feed the distemper, for humanity varies with its conditions, and the food of one age may be the poison of the next. Therefore it is that Christianity does not prescribe any food; it reveals the laws of moral health and leaves the spirit of man to adapt itself to these. Of all the secondary causes for the permanence of Christianity this reticence as to matters of detail has been the most conspicuous and the most powerful. Why is it that this religion has been able to subsist through civilisations so diverse, through times so dissimilar in their modes of life and action? It is because this religion has in all ages made its appeal to that which underlies every mode and

forms the basis of every action. It has made its appeal to that element in human nature which never varies—the sympathy of man with man. It has not defined the form which human sympathy in any age shall assume; it has allowed every age to choose its own form. It has not laid down the limits of what does or does not constitute the sacrificial well-being of our brother man; it allows these limits to be fixed by society itself. But it is its very gentleness in this respect that has made it great. Refusing to identify itself with the special aspects of any era, and holding fast by the abstract principle which binds all eras into one, it has preserved its unity amid the changes, and retained its empire amid the vanishings, of earthly power. We shall look more fully in the next chapter at the secret of this absolute dominion.

XIII.

CHRIST, THE ABSOLUTE MORALITY.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." "For verily I say unto you, until heaven and earth shall pass, one jot nor one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law until all be fulfilled." Such is the striking claim put forth by the Founder of Christianity Himself in behalf of the moral system He came to inaugurate. We say "the moral system," for it is of morality that these words are spoken. Christ claims for the new ethical code, which He declares to have been all along at the root of the old ethical code, a permanent duration through all changes and all times. He declares its permanence to rest upon a firmer basis than does the stability of the material universe. Heaven and earth seem to be of all things the least affected by the march of time; we speak of the everlasting hills and the eternal stars, of the unwearied sun, and the brook that goes on for ever. But Christ says that all this is only a metaphorical permanence, and as if in anticipation of the science of our own age, He declares

that heaven and earth shall pass away. They rest upon something which is contingent, which might have been otherwise, and which, therefore, may be otherwise again. The law of nature gives no promise of its own continuance, no pledge beyond analogy that it will repeat itself to-morrow. But Christ says that there is a law which rests upon no such contingency—the law of the moral life. The thought He suggests is this: You can imagine that a time may come when other systems shall circle other suns, when the laws which now bind the material masses of creation shall be replaced by new laws, when the very elements of this present constitution shall melt with fervid heat. But you can never imagine a time when the laws of My spiritual kingdom shall be other than they now are. You can never imagine a time in which justice shall be other than just, truth less than true, love the reverse of lovely. No circling of new systems can alter that. No change in the old laws can ever make right cease to be right, or wrong be else than wrong. The physical law *is* true, but the moral *must* be true; its contrary is unthinkable, its denial is death. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away."

The expression on which our attention fastens is the phrase, "My word." We said at the close of the last chapter that the abstract character of the Christian morality has been one great cause

of its permanence. We are here called upon to supplement, and in some sense to qualify that statement. The Christian morality is here said to be, not simply an abstract law, but an abstract law announced and illustrated in a human life; that which in Judaism was "*the* law" becomes in Christianity "*My* word." The permanence of Christian morality is the permanence of a *person*. It is the fadelessness of a concrete image—the image of a man. It is the power of a moral personality to continue undimmed when all the associations of his earthly existence have passed away, when a new heaven and a new earth have risen upon the eyes of men, and a contrary mode of science has reversed the conclusions of the olden time. Through all these changes the form of Him whom Christians call the Son of Man is found sitting unharmed, His eye undimmed, and His natural strength unabated. This is the distinctive feature of the moral permanence of Christianity, the fact to be recognised and the problem to be explained.

Let us try first to recognise the *fact*. Let us understand wherein lies the peculiarity of the Christian position. It is not that a certain system of morality is habitually associated with the name of an individual life; the same would hold true of the systems of Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed. The difference lies here: Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed are associated by name with their

systems; Christ *is* his system. If Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed were forgotten, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Mohammedanism would still survive; if Christ were forgotten, Christianity as such would cease to be. The result of the difference appears in a fact of history. The personalities of Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed have not kept pace even with their respective systems. We can still describe minutely the rules which they taught and the doctrines which they propounded, but the men themselves are little more than phantoms. We cannot tell whether Buddha existed. We cannot see what made Confucius interesting even to his own age. We cannot decide whether Mohammed were a devotee or an impostor. The moral streams of Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed are no longer modern streams, yet they are modern in comparison with the lives that profess to be their fountain-heads. Far otherwise has it been with the stream of morality we are here considering. It retains its early freshness, it keeps its ancient fulness, it preserves an unbroken connection with the Fountain whence it flowed. If it looks less modern in one place than in another, it is precisely in those regions where it has left the Fountain-head behind. The nearer we go to the source the more do we find ourselves in harmony with our present environment, and when we have reached the source itself our harmony is complete. The person

of Christ is no anachronism to the nineteenth century. It is as youthful to-day as it was on the shores of the Galilean lake. It is more adapted to the civilisation of our age than it was to the culture of that age in which it first appeared. The powers which opposed it have become anachronisms; the spirit of Judaism is obsolete, and the forces of Paganism are superseded; but the personality of the Christian Founder has impressed itself upon the heart of the world and been borne along by the progress of the world's culture; this power has not passed away.

There is one very remarkable circumstance to be taken account of in estimating the force of this argument; and it is this: our vision of the person of Christ is now independent of His original historical surroundings. It is no longer necessary to associate Him with a special country; He has risen "far above all principalities and powers." The peculiarity of this position will be made evident by contrast. Try to think of Mohammed apart from Arabia, or of Buddha apart from India, and you will find your thought reduced to a negation. The personality will not be transplanted into a modern soil; if you would render it visible at all, you must lift it along with its surroundings. But it is altogether otherwise with the personality of Christ. The land of His nativity has virtually passed away. The special forms of culture in which He moved are far more effete than are those

forms of culture in which moved the lives of Mohammed and Buddha. Yet it is not too much to say that the vividness of Christ's personality has rather gained than lost by the removal of His local associations. The facts of history have singularly illustrated the words ascribed to Him by the fourth Evangelist: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." All the scenes of the earthly life of Jesus have to the modern mind attained an universal character. The mountain on which He was tempted, the lake on which He taught, the desert where He fed the multitude, are no longer a Palestinian mountain, lake, or desert; they are found in nature everywhere. The scene of His domestic affections is no longer a room in the house of Bethany; it is seen wherever the altar of family love is reared. The Cross on which He suffered is no longer the wooden Cross of Calvary; it is felt in every sacrifice of will made in the cause of duty. These are weighty facts, which speak for themselves and challenge observation. The Christ after the flesh is as much an Asiatic as either Mohammed, or Buddha, or Confucius; yet the moral personality of that Christ remains undimmed in a civilisation which has eclipsed theirs. Many have come from the West as well as from the East to sit down in His kingdom; He has had other sheep not of His own fold. What are the elements in this life which have given it such an absolute dominion? We do not ask for an

explanation of these elements; to do so would be to assume the human origin of Christianity. It is not explanation, but analysis we seek. We want to know what are the features of that moral portraiture which have contributed to make it a portrait for all time, which have left upon the canvas of history an impress so indelible as to become the perpetual mark of boundary between the annals which men call ancient and the events which they rank as modern.

It will be remembered that in the opening chapter of this volume we showed that the originality of the Christian religion lies not in its absolute novelty, but in its absolute power of uniting and of reconciling things that before its coming were already old; that which makes it new is its discovery of a harmony between systems of ancient antagonism. We have now to remark that the key to the absoluteness of Christ's person will be found in the same direction as lay the key to the originality of His religion. It seems to us that in strict speaking we should not say that the life of Christ reveals a type of character; it would be more correct to say that it combines all types. The moral glory of Christ's person is no more an eccentric kind of goodness than the intellectual glory of His person is an eccentric kind of truth. We have seen the truth which He taught to have been a combination into harmony of those types and symbols of human

thought which before His time had been the watchwords of opposing schools. We are now to see that the goodness which He exhibited was not a superhuman goodness in the sense of having no analogy to any moral type in man, but that it was superhuman just for the contrary reason—because it united in a single life those moral schools of humanity which, for want of a common basis, had mutually proscribed each other as schools of error.

To one who reads the life of Christ for the first time, the immediate impression produced is that of a Being whose goal was self-restraint. We feel, looking on the surface, that the most comprehensive description of Him is that given by the Apostle of the Gentiles: "He pleased not Himself." We see a life dedicated from its birth to a service of sorrow —its infancy, persecution, its childhood, obscurity, its youth, toil. We see that life from the hour of its maturity taking upon itself voluntarily that destiny which hitherto had followed it, claiming the Cross as its peculiar mission, and crucifixion as the end of its being. In every utterance of that life we hear the breathing of a self-denying spirit. He who would be in communion with it is commanded to become partaker of its Cross, to renounce itself, to be meek and lowly in heart, to turn his cheek to the smiter, to go two miles with him who insists on one, to surrender an additional garment to that which the litigant claims. All this seems

to point to one conclusion—that the Spirit of Him whom we call the Son of Man was essentially the spirit of Stoicism, a revival of that individual extinction which had enabled the philosophers of an earlier day to treat things that are as if they were not.

Is this, then, a true impression of the moral life of Jesus? Yes; so far as it goes it is perfectly true. But deeper study shows us that it is not the whole truth; it only describes one hemisphere of the Christian life. The Son of Man had in Him an element of Stoicism—the element which constitutes *the truth* of Stoicism; He did not make His own personal advantage the end of His being, "He pleased not Himself." But now we are forced to look on another side of the picture, and a side which singularly enough is furnished by the writer to the Hebrews in the very same passage where he seems to eulogise the Stoicism of the Son of Man: "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame." The point which arrests attention is the suggested motive of the suffering: "For the joy that was set before Him." We are made aware by these words that in the view of the first Christians, Christ, in spite of His voluntary Cross, was not a Stoic, that though He sought not personal advantage, He did seek personal joy. If the Cross is the end of His being, it is only because the Cross is itself contemplated, not as an evil, but as a possible good, a potential source

of blessing. Here is a new and seemingly contrary aspect in the life of the Christian Founder. He appears all at once to exhibit an opposite proclivity. He has made a transition from the type called Stoic, Buddhist, Brahmin, to the type named Epicurean, Confucian, Jew, Mohammedan. The Christ, who at first view stood before us in the attitude of an Asiatic, stands before us now in the attitude of one who sees something good in life, who believes in the rewards of life, who hopes for the joy of life. Has He not here passed over from the camp of the mystic to the camp of the utilitarian and the Hedonist?

And when we come to the recorded life of Christ we find that His words and acts are capable of being read in this new light. When, for example, in Matthew v. He deprecates the retaliation of physical injuries, and discourages the contention for physical possessions, are we sure that His sole, or even His main, motive is a sense of the value of self-restraint? If we look at His words in the light of future utterances, we may be quite sure that it was not. When He says, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight," He expresses in the plainest terms the principle on which He lived and acted. He says that the Christian must consider what is worth striving for. It will be the duty of the Christian at all times to fight for his Master's Kingdom, but let him be sure what

his Master's Kingdom is. If the Kingdom of Christ were meat and drink, houses and lands, it would be the duty of the Christian to fight for these things. But the Kingdom of Christ is not meat and drink, not houses and lands, not anything visible and tangible; it is the reign of righteousness. Can it, then, be said that a Christian soldier is restraining himself in not fighting for that which is no part of His Kingdom? Is it not clear that in Christ's view the injuries contemplated in Matthew v. do not even touch the true self of the man? They are to be borne not because they give pain, but because they do not affect the well-spring of Christian joy. They have no power to hurt on account of the presence of an inward glory—a peace that passeth understanding.

Let us pass now to a still more remarkable passage, relating, as it does, not to a mere bearing, but to an actual selection of the Cross. In Matt. xi. 29 we read: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The words may be viewed in many connections, but the standpoint from which we here survey them is somewhat unusual. Christ here presents Himself to us in the aspect of what in modern times would be called an utilitarian moralist speaking from his own experience of life. He declares as a matter which He has proved experientially that the Cross is valuable, not because it is painful, but

because it is useful. He says that the value of His own suffering has been its power to make Him calm amid storm, peaceful amid war, untroubled amid perplexity, and He asks all mankind to make trial of His method with the view of obtaining His result. Let us observe, too, that if the method be utilitarian, the goal is Epicurean, in the first and purest days of that philosophy. So far from seeking to sacrifice the individual, as the Stoic does, He declares His leading aim to be identical with the aim of the first followers of Epicurus—the production of calm in the individual soul, the fostering of a quiet repose amid the cares and solicitudes of a world of sorrow. "Ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Here, then, is an anomaly. In one and the same life, and in the same acts of that life, there are seen two types of morality which in the previous history of the world had been deemed incompatible types. What is the connection between these types? What is that bridge in the life of the Son of Man which has united two hitherto incompatible ideas—the idea of an individual crucifixion and the thought of an individual joy? The first of these was once the badge of the Stoic, and the second was once the goal of the Epicurean; Christ has claimed and appropriated both. We want to know what is that element in the nature of Christ which has made such an union possible. Wherein consists that

reconciling medium which has bridged the distance between the two moral worlds and made the life of self-surrender identical with the life of joy?

It consists in the fact that the life of Christ embraces yet a third type of character capable of uniting the other two. That type is not to be found either in Stoic or in Epicurean or in any of the philosophers as such. If we would see the germ of it we must go down to the domestic life of the masses, or to the philosophers become men. It may be best described as the type of the *heart*. It is the ideal which Plato sought to reach intellectually, and which for that reason he failed to reach. It is the life which constitutes the life of home, which lights and consecrates the domestic altar, which makes fatherhood, motherhood, and brotherhood, possible realities. Its nature is most clearly indicated in a single word—love.

Now, we can readily see how a perfect and unobstructed love would at one and the same moment be both an individual joy and an individual sacrifice. Love, where it is unobstructed, is always a joy. It is the deepest of all joys—the joy of the heart. And yet who can fail to see that this love is a species of death? It only exists by reason of a complete surrender of the very thought of self; the man loses himself in the being of another. The joy of love is the actual fruit of sacrifice, and would have no being apart from sacrifice. It is the joy of a spirit that has ceased

to behold *itself* in the glass of consciousness. It is the joy of a spirit which has lost its personal care in taking up the care of another, and which has found its own burden to fall in the lifting of a burden which is not its own.

When we have grasped this principle we have learned the secret of that marvellous balance of extremes which meet us in the character of the Son of Man, we have arrived at the explanation of the Christian paradox: "Take My yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest." The yoke which He asked His followers to take was the burden of humanity. He told them to enter into His own spirit of universal love. He did not conceal from them that this yoke would bring a load of universal care, but He said that the universal care would destroy the individual care and to the personal life bring rest; the new yoke would be easy and the new burden light. He said that He did not advance this doctrine as a speculative theory, but as a practical experience: "Learn of *Me*." He had tried it, He had proved it, and therefore He was able confidently to commend it. It is the same thought which pervades the valedictory utterances ascribed to Him in the Fourth Gospel:—"These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full." "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world gives give I unto you." The last clause expresses His own sense of the

paradox involved in His words. His lot in life was not certainly what the world would consider peace, or bequeath as a heritage of peace. He spoke these words under the very shadow of a Cross. How are we to explain them? Shall we say that He was simply looking forward to the crown of a future world? To say so is to affirm that He bequeathed to His followers a peace which as yet He did not Himself possess. Christ's peace was *in* the Cross, and it was in it for this reason, that His Cross was made, not of wood, but of *love*. The cause of His suffering was the source of His individual rest. He had become oblivious of all personal pain, because love had given Him a pain that was impersonal; the throbbing of the pulse of humanity stilled His own.

Here, then, we have the first exhibition of a new power—a power of universal love, of love for man as man. Its earliest manifestation consists in making the subject of it a king; it brings him a cross of humanity, and in so doing it frees him from his own. Hence it is that in this third aspect the Son of Man appears before us more in the attitude of the Platonist than in that of either the Epicurean or the Stoic; at least He here effects what the Platonist tried in vain to accomplish—the founding of a great republic in which each man would be free. We have already seen why, in the case of the Platonist, the effort was in vain: he, like all the rest of the Old World, approached,

not humanity, but a Caste of humanity—the Caste of the intellectual. The power of love, as we have seen, was here a very limited power; it could only promote sympathy amongst those already equals; it was a sympathy, not of persons, but of ideas, and therefore it did not demand sacrifice. But the object of Christ's love was humanity itself; not intellectual humanity, not aristocratic humanity, but suffering humanity, in every grade and of every order. The class to which *He* appealed was that of the labouring and the heavy-laden, a category which, comprehending as it does the whole family both of active and of passive sufferers, is absolutely coextensive with the universal life of man. Here is a field for a republic of which Plato never dreamed. To every man of every shade of mental endowment Christ offers a sense of kinghood. He offers it to all who shall follow His own method—the sacrifice of self by love. He says that priesthood is the true road to kinghood. He claims to be Himself a king on the ground of His sacrifice, and not in spite of it. "Art *Thou* a king?" asks Pilate, struck apparently with the outward meanness of His condition. The answer is striking and graphic: "For this cause was I born, and to this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth," *i.e.*, by martyrdom. It is as if He had said: You think that My kinghood is disproved by the burdens that I bear. I tell you that it is the bearing of these

burdens that makes Me a king. The new power which I bring into the world is a power of love, and therefore a power of sacrifice. This cross which I carry, so far from being an obstruction to the realisation of My kingdom, is itself the very sceptre of that kingdom. That which I have won, that which I offer to My followers, is not the power to *avoid* the calamities of life, but the power to lift these calamities. I offer to make each man king in proportion as he becomes a priest, bears witness in his own life to the truth of sacrifice. He shall be free and fearless and independent in proportion as he has died to self-interest, lost the thought of self in the thought of another, succumbed to the burden of love; that is the power which has made *Me* a king!

These, then, are the facts of the case; let us try to gather them up into one inference. The thought which must strike us above all others in the enumeration of these facts is the number and variety of those human instincts to which this life appeals. Within its brief compass there are comprehended impulses of human nature which apart from this life are converse. Here are reconciled the love of life and the desire of death, and man is taught the truth, that to die unto himself is in the truest sense to live. Here are united the gift of ministration and the thirst for power, and man is made to know that the service of love is the greatest empire. Here are joined the streams of

pleasure-seeking and asceticism, and man has the fact revealed to him that there may be a joy in sacrifice. Here, in a word, we have the meeting of duty and interest, law and liberty, weakness and strength, dependence and rule. Is it surprising that the result should have been what it is? Is it strange that a life combining so many types of human nature should have been capable of outlasting so many human changes? It is not the fact that this life contains different types of character that has made it universal; every man's life does that. To say so is only to say in other words that we are all more or less inconsistent with ourselves. There is no man that does not at times reveal features at variance with the natural bent of his character. The strongest men have some weak moments; the weakest have moments when they are strong. But we do not say at such times that either of these classes has illustrated the union of contrary types; they have illustrated only the inconsistency of human nature. Their action presents itself as an incongruity, and we experience the sensation of beholding two lives in one body. In Christ the phenomenon is altogether different in kind. The difference lies in the fact that when in Him two types meet they at once unite. There is not borne in upon the mind the faintest sense of inconsistency in looking at the diverse types exhibited by the Son of Man. We feel that somehow, somewhere, there has been a combination, a

fusion, a reconciliation of once antagonistic elements into a consistent and harmonious whole. The impression on the eye of the spectator is not one of incongruity, but of symmetry, of melody, of proportioned beauty. Within this life of the Son of Man all the great types of the sons of men are as perfectly fused as are the minor and major notes in a piece of music. We ask again, Is it surprising that its influence should have been abiding; surely humanity itself must pass ere this life can become an anachronism? There is nothing local about the ministry of Jesus. It is wider in aim than the scenes through which it moved. It addresses no circle more limited than humanity, and therefore humanity has heard it, and will continue to hear it. The absolute nature of that message which it brings will in the next chapter engage our attention.

XIV.

CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE DEMAND.

The ultimate test of an absolute religion is the demand it makes on its followers. If that demand be local and temporary, or if it be such as after events prove to have been local and temporary, the religion is shown to have been only one of the many forms of public opinion which originate and end with the conditions of a certain time. Mohammedanism is now rapidly fading from the face of Europe, because the demand of Mohammedanism is for Europe an anachronism. Mohammed may have been the Prophet of God for the Middle Ages; for the Europe of the nineteenth century he can be so no more. The inability of the moral requirement to reach the conditions of our own day furnishes an incontrovertible proof of the special and transitory circumstances to which it owed its origin.

Of all religions the most absolute in its demand is Christianity; it expresses itself from the outset without compromise and without qualification We say "from the outset," because this is a

remarkable circumstance. It might naturally be expected that the founder of a new faith would in the hour of its foundation be lenient. We should expect him to present the new faith to his disciples in the fairest possible light; to soften down its difficulties, to smooth its asperities, to make it seem easier than it really was. With Christ it is all the reverse. That which *He* reveals to His followers before all other things is the vastness of His own claim upon them, the greatness of that moral demand which He has to make on their conscience. He does not cloak nor dissemble it. He does not say that it may be averted or avoided by any system of Jewish ceremonialism. He sums up the requirements of the Sermon on the Mount —requirements which seem already to be superhuman enough—in one tremendous precept which comprehends and transcends them all: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

It may seem strange that a faith which made its followers so humble as did the Christian religion should for a moment have encouraged so exalted an aim. It appears at first view an inconsistency in men impressed above all things with their own nothingness to set before themselves an object of imitation so unspeakable and so transcendent as the Supreme Being. But the paradox is altogether removed when we remember that principle of the Christian morality to which in another connection

we have already alluded—the humbling power of a great ideal. We have seen that in this morality the sense of darkness only begins when the light has come. The impression of moral depravity is here deeper in proportion as the standard of morality is high. If it be so, then the humility of the Christian disciple is the direct result of his lofty aim. It is just because his standard of morals is an absolute standard that his life is a humble life. It is his boundless view of the distance between what he is and what he ought to be, that makes him refuse to see the steps of his own progress. If his view were more contracted his self-confidence would be more strong; his humility lies in the fact that the law imposed on him is this: *Be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

Passing, however, from this point, we come to the more important question. Is this demand of Christ within the reach of man's compliance; is it something which humanity can perform? The charge of impracticableness has sometimes been urged against the Christian law; it has been said that it asks from man more than he can do. And we must confess that there is a sense in which this is true. No individual man could keep the Christian law any more than he could keep the Jewish law. Not only so; but we hold such an impracticableness in the Christian demand to be essential to the individual Christian. His weakness is his

strength. His humility springs from his perception of an ideal above his head. If that ideal can be lowered to him, or, which is the same thing, if he can be raised up so as to reach it, he shall thereby enter on another type of morals than that marked by the earthly form of Christianity; in Pauline phrase, he will henceforth be justified by works and not by faith.

In this sense, then, we may admit the charge. We may admit that when Christ says, *Be ye perfect*, He asks something which the individual soul cannot give. It does not follow, however, that it cannot be given by *humanity*. The greatest philosophic dogma, perhaps the only philosophic dogma, which Christianity has incorporated with its moral system, is the existence of a life in man beyond the individual life—a life to which the individual life bears the same relation as a member of the body does to the body. We hold that when Christ demands perfection it is the perfection of the Christian *organism* that He demands. You and I can never be more than individual members of that organism. We are not the whole body; we are only a hand, a foot, an eye, or an ear. No perfection as members could make us perfect as a body; the most beautiful eye could not say to the hand: I have no need of thee. The perfection of the body is reached through the mutual supply by each member of that which is lacking in the other. This we understand to be the substance of the

earliest and ablest commentary on Christ's demand for perfection—the commentary of St. Paul. Why does he say: "Till we all come unto the unity of the faith, unto the measure of the stature of the perfect man?" Would it not have been more natural to have said: of perfect *men?* Certainly, if that had been his meaning. But that clearly was not his meaning. He did not mean to say that each of us would some day be a model of perfection independently of any light and support from the other, but, on the contrary, through the light and support which each lent to the other he had a hope that one day the many men would constitute together *one perfection*, that those diversities of gifts which in themselves indicated incompleteness would form in their combination one great spirit comprehending the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

That this is St. Paul's meaning is put beyond doubt by his own express declaration. In speaking of Christ under the metaphor of the head of the body, he says, "Ye are complete in Him." It is as if he had said, In yourselves ye are each of you but fragments. Not one of you, taken apart, has more than a single spark of the Divine life. In your isolation you are all miserably incomplete. But in your union the incompleteness shall vanish. As members of a common organism united in one head the fragmentary nature of your lives and characters shall disappear, and in the combination

of each part with its counterpart you will receive the symmetry of the finished whole.

This same view is taken by a somewhat later expositor of the Christian system—the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In Hebrews xi. 39, 40, he says, "These all having obtained a good report through faith received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The thought here is very suggestive. The writer is speaking of the good and great men of the old world. He is telling how they had only an imperfect light to guide them. He holds up their victories as an example to his own days, because they had fought under disadvantages. He speaks of them as having been imperfect men, and as having died in their imperfection. Yet, strange to say, he looks upon them as having been "made perfect" after death, not as we should expect by the fact of sublimation in a future state, but by the revelation of a new fact in the world of time. That new revelation is the exhibition of humanity in Christ, no longer as a mere disconnected series of individual lives, but as the connected members of a complete organism, penetrating each other, supplementing each other, and justifying the existence of each other. The character of these old worthies was not justified until we of later days appeared; without us they were not perfected—*i.e.*, the ground of their perfection was not revealed.

But when we of the Christian age appeared—in other words, when the entire bodily organism of humanity came into view, the lower organs were seen to be as essential as the higher to the maintenance of the universal life, and the men of ancient days claimed their necessary share in the production of that completeness which belonged to the great whole.

Such is the Christian doctrine of human perfection. We have called it a philosophic doctrine. It seems to us to form the single bridge between Christianity and ancient philosophy on the one hand, and between Christianity and modern science on the other. It was held contemporaneously with St. Paul by Seneca and the later Stoics, and it is probable that the Apostle of the Gentiles rather adapted than suggested it. Here, however, its form was more intellectual than moral, more speculative than practical. It is when we turn to our own days—the days when philosophy has assumed the garb of science—that the real analogy appears between Christian doctrine and secular thought. For this doctrine of St. Paul is the belief of a school which is generally reckoned the reverse of Pauline. The doctrine that humanity is not merely a series of individuals, but the life of a connected organism, is the leading ethical idea of the nineteenth century. It is the one positive element in the negations of Auguste Comte. It is the one ideal feature in the empiricism of

Mr. Herbert Spencer, of Mr. Leslie Stephen, and of Mr. G. H. Lewes. It is, indeed, this element which gives to the doctrine of evolution its main charm. Its attraction lies in the message which it brings, that we are not moving in isolation, but in masses, that no man's life is in itself a perfect whole, that the being of each is linked by an iron chain to the being of all, that our virtues, such as they are, have had their origin in the development of the past, and shall receive their finishing touch only in the indefinite future. This, we say, is that doctrine in the gospel of evolution which has made it to all minds attractive, to some minds divine. Yet let us remember that this doctrine is not peculiar to the gospel of evolution; it is in it, but it is not exclusively of it. It belongs to an earlier gospel than science; it is the central thought in the teaching of St. Paul. It is no disparagement to the science of the nineteenth century that it has borrowed such an idea, nor does it tend in any sense to weaken her conclusions. The fact, however remains that the leading principle of the modern science of ethics is identical with the leading principle of Pauline morality: the vision of human nature, not as a collection of units, but as the effluence of an ideally perfect life, of which the individual units are but the fragmentary forms and members.

Recurring now to this Pauline doctrine of perfection, we are disposed to give it an absolute

sense. We do not understand it merely to mean that in this sublunary sphere of things the individual man cannot hope to be perfect. We understand it to mean that in no sphere of things, sublunary or otherwise, could the individual as an individual ever be perfect, that a perfection of self-sufficiency would end in the destruction of morality, that, in short, the only hope for the perfectibility of the whole is that the individual should consent to be simply a part. We take St. Paul, in fact, to be here not describing the present state of human morality, but enunciating that universal and eternal law which must apply to all moral beings throughout all creation—that the perfection of the organism as a whole is made up of the mutual supply which the members give to one another of their varied and diverse gifts.

If this be St. Paul's view, it throws a curious light upon the Christian conception of a future life—a light in which it comes strangely near to the modern doctrine called corporate immortality. As this doctrine has of late engrossed a large share of literary and scientific notice, and as it really belongs to the sphere of morals more than to that of theology, we shall endeavour briefly to state on what grounds and to what extent we should be prepared to accept it.

Stated in round terms, the doctrine of corporate immortality is the belief that the individual will only live in the race. On this formula St. Paul

and modern science are at one. So far then there is no difference of opinion, that is to say, to the signing of the formula. The disciple of Christianity and the disciple of Comtism are alike prepared to subscribe to the doctrine of a corporate immortality, and are ready to subscribe to that doctrine in the same words: "The individual will only live in the race." But when we turn from the sound to the sense of the formula we find that it is being read in two different ways, whose difference amounts to a direct contradiction of meaning. Let us begin with the interpretation of the Comtist and those who in this respect are his followers. What he means by the life of the individual in the race is the annihilation of the individual. In his view all that survives death is the *race*. The individuals of each age are but as drops in a stream. They pass away to make room for new drops, and their place is found no more. But the stream itself goes on, not in spite of, but by reason of, this transitoriness; it lives by the death of its constituent elements. In the interest of morality the Comtist calls upon the individual to realise this fact. He calls upon him to fix his eye upon the continuance of the stream, and to consider that its continuance is purchased by the successive coming and going of such drops of being as his own. He tells him that he ought to be content to die in order that the race may live. Let him give up the petty personality which he

calls himself. Let him seek corporate immortality —the immortality of the collective life of man. Let it be enough for him that when he has had his little day, and has ceased to be, his life shall yet have done something to further the continuance of that great organic whole of which his own being was but a passing phase.

Now this is a form of the doctrine of corporate immortality which, for our part, we cannot accept. We reject it, not in the interest of self-love, nor yet in the interest of a theological system, but in the interest of that very morality to which this doctrine specially claims to appeal. It professes to evoke our spirit of self-sacrifice. It is because we believe that such a doctrine would interfere with the spirit of self-sacrifice that we are impelled to deny it. Let us understand the position. I am to hold lightly my own life; on what ground? Not because it is mine, not because it is bad, but simply and solely because it is individual. Be it observed, that logically I cannot stop here. If I am to hold my own life in contempt by reason of its mere individuality, it is evident that the same reason must lead me to hold lightly all other lives. Is this the spirit of sacrifice? I am content that I should die, and I am content that others should die; I am satisfied that all concrete life should perish in order that an abstraction may live. This may be Stoic heroism, but it is not Christian sacrifice.

But there is a second form of the doctrine of a corporate immortality—that form in which we believe it to be held by St. Paul in particular, and by the writers of the New Testament in general. According to this reading the formula that the individual will only live in the race has been framed, not in the interest of the race, but in the interest of the individual. What it is taken to say is this: Our great hope in the immortality of our individual lives lies in the conviction that each of us is bound to the other, and therefore that none of us shall ever be alone. We hope that in the future we shall not be less, but more, individually strong than in the present, but our expectation rests on our belief that in the future we shall feel, not less, but more, our need of one another. And a moment's reflection will convince us that this view of the subject is at all events a true reading of human nature. For, let us only ask, wherein consists our difficulty of conceiving the state called heaven? We shall find that it lies in our inability to imagine a state in which the individual shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. It is not the *perfection* that appals our judgment; it is the effect of that perfection upon the moral life. I am told to think of heaven as a place of unselfishness, and of its inhabitants as ministering spirits. What is unselfishness? What is ministration? These words have a meaning in the present world, where men are not equal, and

where the fulness of one has to supply the want of another. But what meaning can they have in a world in which by supposition neither you nor I have any need of each other, and there is no room for helpfulness on either side? Surely in such a state of things as this the existence of ministering spirits is like the existence of useless organs in a physical body, or the manifestation by a human mind of faculties for which there is no sphere of action.

Now, it is just here that St. Paul steps in with his doctrine of corporate perfection—a doctrine which in a moment makes the moral life of the Christian heaven intelligible to the spirit of man. He tells us that the unity and perfection of the Divine Life will always lie in the fact that each of its members will always have its own special gift and its own special need. I shall always have something which is not possessed by you; you will always have something which is not possessed by me. I shall always get support from you in that wherein you are superior to me; you will always get help from me in that wherein I am superior to you. Our perfection will be our union; our imperfection will be our need of union, but the imperfection shall itself be golden. We shall be unable any longer to be selfish, for the very reason that we shall have ceased to be self-sufficient; the body of humanity shall be perfected by the mutual support of its members.

Need we say that this conception of the corporate immortality opens up a new view of the future life of man—a view which for the first time brings that future within the circle of the moral philosopher. For it must be confessed that the popular conception of the Christian heaven is one that defies all ethics. Professing to describe a state of saintship, it only delineates a scene of self-sufficiency in which each man sits upon his own throne, and none has aught to ask of his brother. We say that such a conception sets ethics at defiance, for it describes as a state of saintship a world where no man gives or receives. But the Pauline view of a corporate immortality, which, old as it is, is only now receiving recognition, reveals a new heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness. It shows us that the idea of a future world without individual want is a dangerous dream, because a dream born of selfishness. It tells us that the time shall never come when the individual man shall have no more to desire; that every one of us shall have sufficient poverty in his nature to afford to one another the luxury of ministration. It says that in no future of the soul shall the Sermon on the Mount be obsolete; that in no region of the universe shall mercy and love be anachronisms; that in no sphere of creation shall benevolence lose its right or beneficence forfeit its power. In the light of this doctrine we learn for the first time why it is that to the ministrant souls

of the world it is said: "Inherit the kingdom." It is because from the foundation of the world the kingdom is *prepared* for *them*. In the eye of the Christian Founder the true city of God is a city of spiritual commerce. Each is weak where his brother is strong; each is strong where his brother is weak. Each gives to the other that special kind of riches in which the other is poor; and from the mutual interchange of strength there at length emerges a perfect Divine Republic—a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Here, in the recognition of a point where Christian morality becomes an eternal necessity, these studies may fitly close. Perhaps at the end of our journey the strongest impression left on our mind is the permanent character of the ideas we have been considering. We are made to feel irresistibly that in whatever departments the religion of Christ needs renewal, here, at least, it keeps its morning glow. The advance of Biblical criticism may have torn many texts from their context and robbed many books of their reputed authors. The advance of modern science may have made impossible many forms of thought which once were held identical with the laws of truth itself. But neither the advance of Biblical criticism nor the progress of modern science has contributed in the least degree to modify our conception of Christian ethics. The morality of the New Testament is unopposed

either from without or from within. It excites no sense of incongruity with the modern aspects of the universe. Its main positions are accepted by the evolutionist as parts of his own system, and its leading precepts are still the standard by which men of every school judge the deeds of their brothers. The morality of the Christian religion has retained its youth to our days.

Such, we say, is the first and strongest impression left on the mind by a survey like this in which we have been engaged. There is, however, a second, which, if less strong, is not less suggestive, and it is this: the possibility that out of this unshaken element the things which have been shaken may be reconstructed. There is one fact which must often have struck us throughout these studies, and that is the ease with which the moral shades into the theological. Abstaining, as we have done, from all doctrinal discussion, we have yet at every step seen the precept illustrating the dogma. Justification by faith, the Christian principle of prayer, the regenerating work of the Spirit, the kinghood and priesthood of the Son of Man, the membership in the divine body, the existence of a future life in which the saints shall rule—all have received an exposition from the interpretation of the moral nature of man. We do not say that this moral exposition has exhausted the meaning of any formula. The sight, the scent, and the touch combined do not exhaust the meaning of the flower. Every man

who thinks knows that behind all that he has seen and felt there is yet sleeping in the flower a world of undiscovered beauty, undiscovered for want of the appropriate sense to discern it. Even so, if we believe any system to be a divine system, we shall, in proportion to the strength of that belief, expect that its symbols shall conceal more than they manifest. But if the moral exposition cannot claim to be exhaustive, it claims within its limits to be true. It has a guarantee for its truth which is superior to testimony and higher than miracle; it is seen by its own light, and it is seen from within. Its evidence is perceived at once as a fact of human experience, and it is legible by its own light. So far as it goes, therefore, it is reliable; the only question is—How far does it go? Is it capable of reconstructing in its own form, and in a consistent symmetry, the stones of that temple of Christian theology which have been shattered by storm and worn down by time? Is it capable of raising from its ashes that life of enthusiastic faith which made the martyrs of the first Christian age? We believe that it is; and our belief is grounded on the persuasion that the faith of the first Christian age was itself not intellectual, but moral. It is built upon the conviction that St. Paul, the greatest and almost the earliest Christian martyr, approached the problems of theology from the standpoint of morality, approached them from the side of his own sense

of sin, his own moral struggle, his own aspiring conscience. In the revival of that primitive conscience, in a regress to the days of the moral instinct of humanity, we see the promise and potence of the Christ that is to be.

THE END.

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