



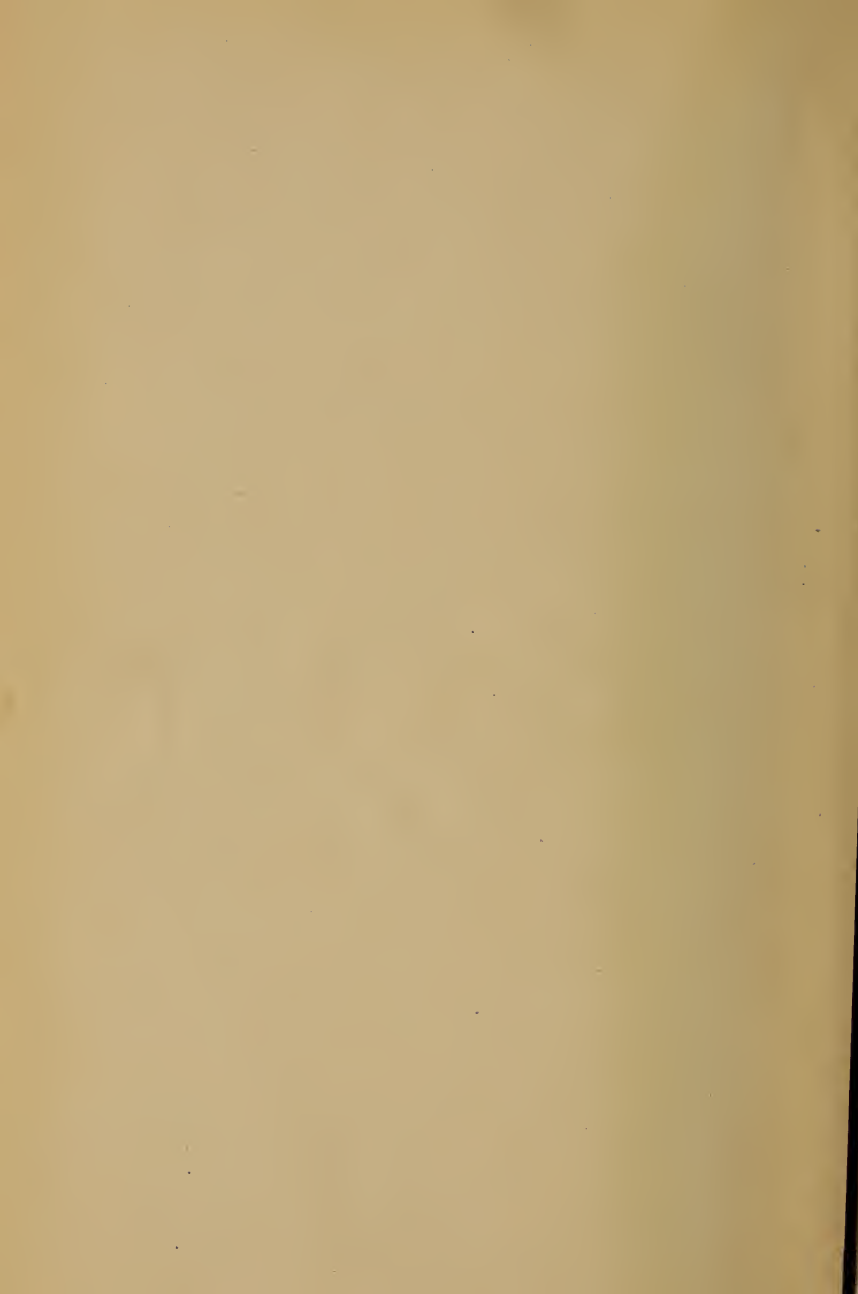
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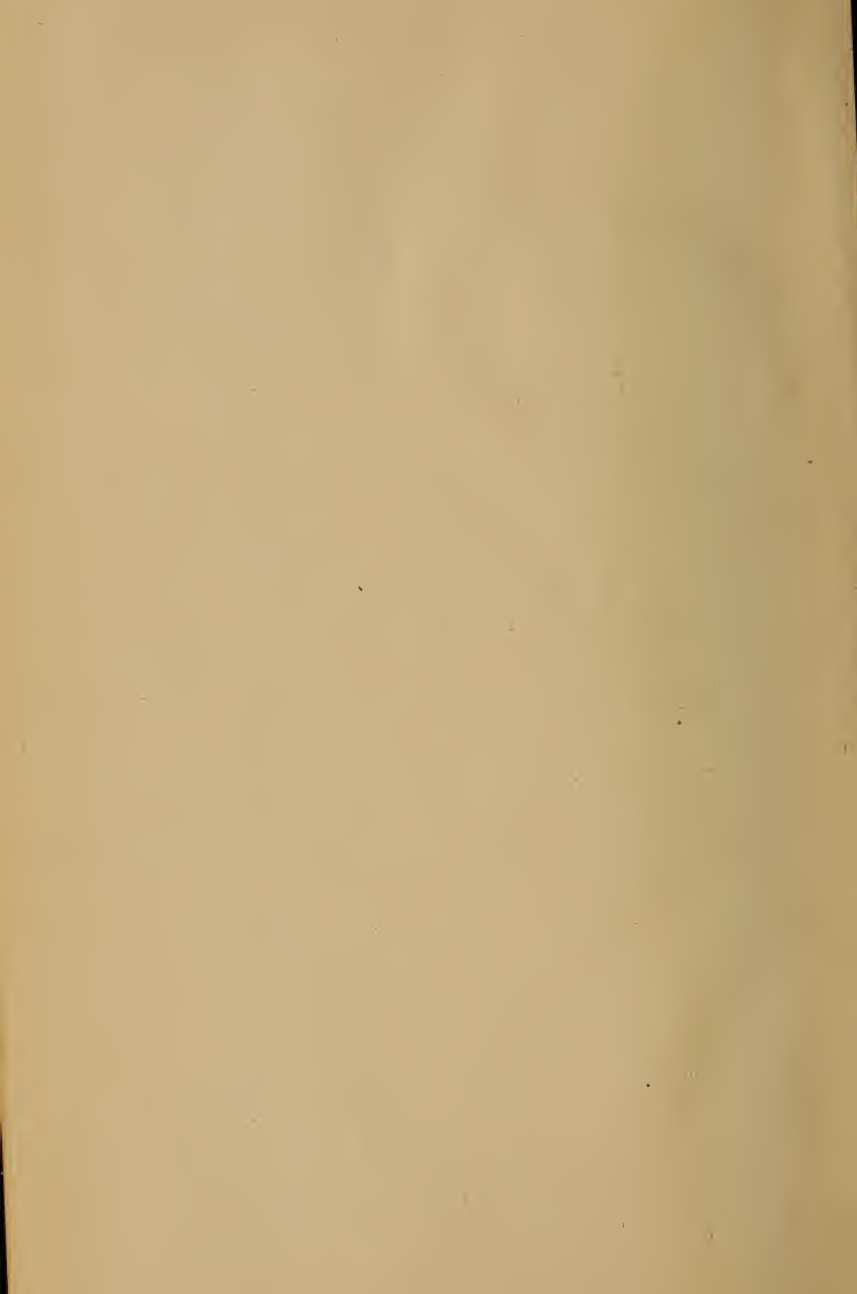
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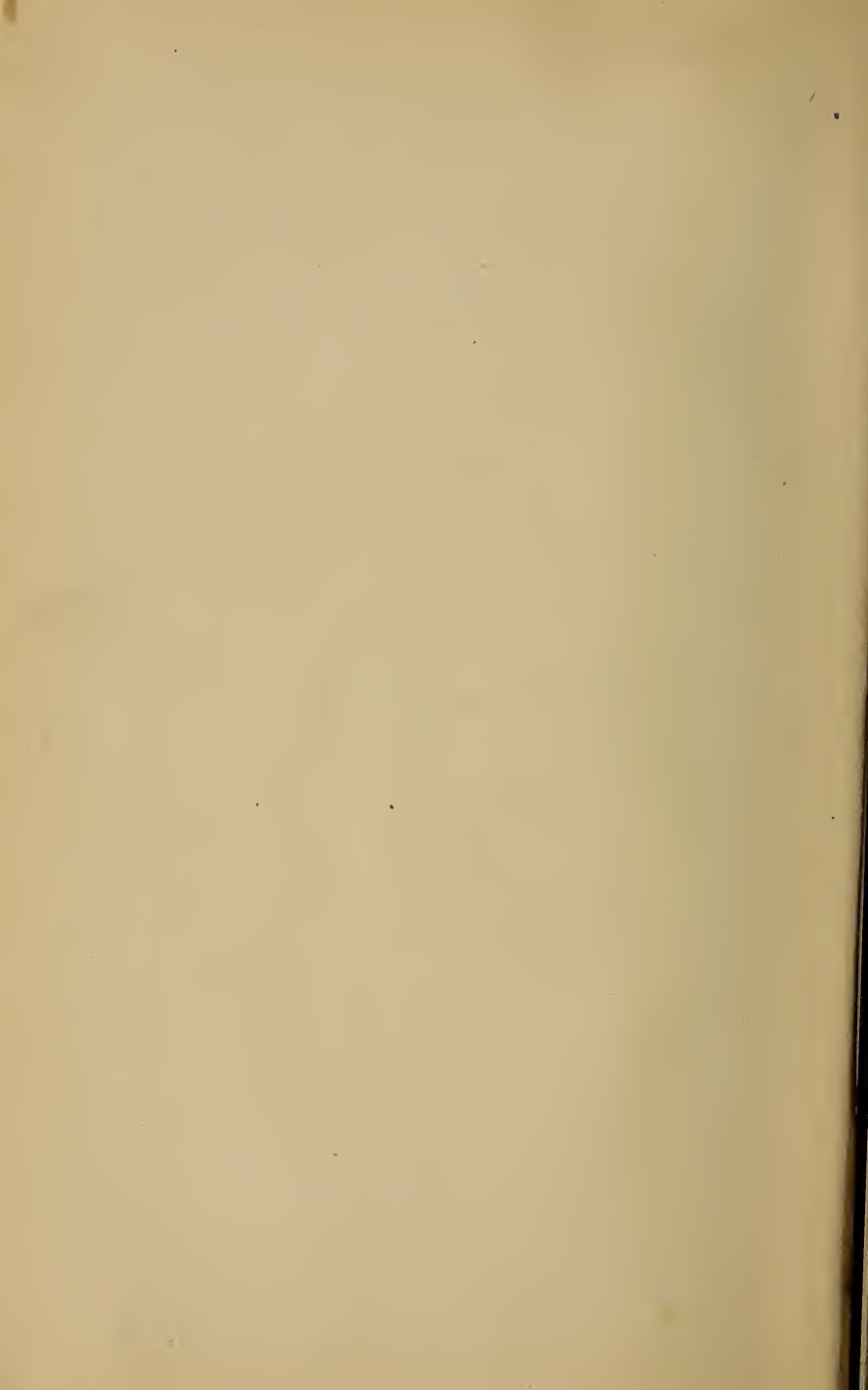
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TO

HERBERT SPENCER

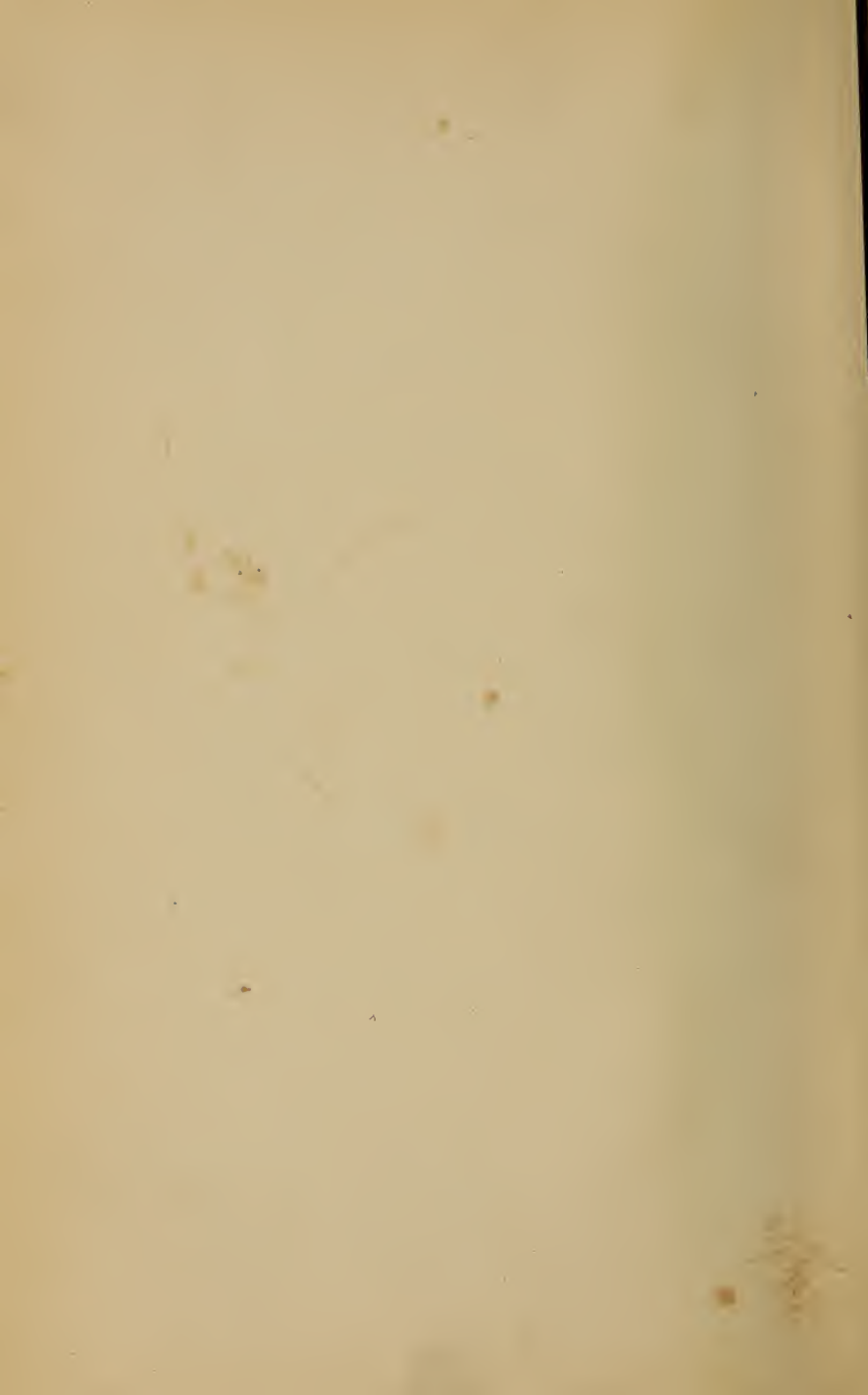
AND HIS FRIEND,

JOHN FISKE.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?	13
II. MORALITY AND RELIGION IN THE PAST,	24
III. THE ORIGIN OF GOODNESS,	38
IV. THE NATURE OF GOODNESS,	50
V. THE SENSE OF OBLIGATION,	69
VI. SELFISHNESS AND SACRIFICE,	83
VII. THE RELATIVITY OF DUTY,	98
VIII. REAL AND CONVENTIONAL VIRTUES AND VICES,	115
IX. MORALS AND KNOWLEDGE,	130
X. RIGHTS AND DUTIES IN MATTERS OF OPINION,	146
XI. MORAL SANCTIONS,	161
XII. MORALITY AND RELIGION IN THE FUTURE,	179



INTRODUCTION.

MR. TENNYSON speaks of one who tried to believe in love,—

“Though nature, red in tooth and claw,
With ravine, shrieked against his creed.”

And he adds to the horror of the picture by pointing us through the mists of the past to

“Dragons of the prime,
Who tore each other in their slime.”

And Mr. Goldwin Smith, in a recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, “On the Prospect of a Moral Interregnum,” supposing that the doctrines of evolution are going to prevail, asks anxiously, “What will become of the brotherhood of man and of the very idea of humanity?” As if “the brotherhood of man” were not one of the products of evolution!

These cases are referred to as illustrating a wide-spread misconception as to the moral—or immoral—significance of the doctrine of evolution. Its central principle is “the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest.” It is not strange, therefore, that the superficial and hasty thinker should see in it only a brutal struggle of brutal forces, and should regard the maxim, ‘Might makes right,’ as its logical outcome. To such a one, the *morals* of evolution seem something that do not exist: the phrase strikes him as a misnomer, an absurdity. And he asks, “How can you talk of morality as based on or coming out of an age-long

battle, where strength always wins and tramples weakness under its feet?"

But, while it is not strange that the superficial thinker should entertain such ideas, it *is* strange that their utter superficiality should not be more generally perceived by those who claim to lead the moral thought of the world. Let us look a moment, and see. "The struggle for life and the survival of the fittest,"—what does this come to in the life of the world? Though not divided from each other by any hard and fast lines,—any more than the dawning twilight, sunrise, and noon are so divided,—we can still perceive three great stages in the general progress of life on earth. In the first, physical force is supreme: this is the time when "dragons tore each other in their slime." You may draw as bloody a picture of this as you please. But, if death is to exist at all, it is difficult to see why it is any more cruel to have it come in this way than any other. Those who make out a fearful scene of suffering simply import their nervous systems and susceptibilities into a world where they did not exist. Would it have been any better, if the *weakest* had won, and the *unfit* had survived?

But, as the ages pass, the developing nervous system builds a brain, and the world has a new king. Physical force is dethroned; and thought—first as cunning, afterwards as intelligence—sits on the throne. Thought wins in "the struggle for life," and survives, because it is "fit."

But the progress does not stop here. As men live together in societies, a new force is born, grows slowly, and at last gains supremacy. Even thought is no longer first. Love wears the crown and holds the sceptre, while intelligence becomes her prime minister. The nations discover, in the stern school of experience, that the people which loves most, is most closely bound together, develops most of tenderness, pity, charity, and mutual help,—that this people wins, is mightiest, and so the fittest to survive. The time has already come when the moral force is stronger than either the

physical or the mental. This appears in the supremacy of such names as those of Gautama and Jesus. Their appearance and influence are not contradictions or reversions of the law of evolution; nor are they in any way anomalous. They are only its natural results.

Evolution, then, is no hard and cruel force: it is only the power and process by which, through the ages, the best is selected, preserved, and transmitted. Though, as one way of looking at human history, we may speak of

“Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne,”

yet, when we look more deeply, we are compelled to add:—

“Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.”

And this is only the natural course of human history. The “God within the shadow” is only the power the expression of whose life is the evolution of the world. The poet only sums up human experience, in the long-run, when he writes:—

“Forever the right comes uppermost,
And ever is justice done.”

Not long since I received a letter from an orthodox minister and old-time friend, in which he said, “If you are going to work out a theory of morals, taking no account of Christianity, I shall be interested to see what you will make of it.”

This is here quoted, to give an opportunity to notice another curious misconception of the working method of the philosophy of evolution. As though it were not of the very essence of evolution to take account of Christianity not only, but of all the past:

“Out of the heart of nature old
The burdens of the Bible rolled.”

And out of the same “heart of nature” has rolled the entire stream of human life and progress. And evolution only seeks after the law of it all. It recognizes Christianity, then, as a part of

itself, and no more leaves it out of account than the Mississippi River ignores the Missouri. All the great forces and movements of the past are parts of one grand system of confluents, whose total makes up "the river of life."

To avoid misconception, I wish to add one brief personal word. The twelve chapters which follow were originally Sunday morning addresses, spoken to my own people during the winter of 1879-80. They were not written, but are published from the stenographer's notes.

As I conceive it, the gospel—or good news—of God is his word that speaks to us, through whatever medium, teaching us how to live. When this is learned, the dying will take care of itself. No pretence is made to any originality of investigation. No new laws of righteousness can be discovered. We only need to understand the old and the eternal. The present attempt, then, is only this,—to translate into common language for common needs the best thought of the age concerning the greatest of all questions, *character and conduct*.

I cannot forbear adding one word touching the subject of the first chapter,—the value of life. Since this chapter was electrotyped, I have found—in *Scribner's Monthly*—an anecdote so much to the point that it must be quoted. George William Curtis one day asked Horace Greeley by what test he decided whether or not he had succeeded in any particular lecture. His reply was, "I think I have succeeded *when more people stay in than go out*." Isn't this a decisive test as to the value of life? The value of *anything* is determined always and everywhere by only one thing,—*human desire for it*. That the vast majority of men *desire* life—stay in instead of going out—turns the question, as to whether it is worth living, into an absurdity. The desire for it is the ultimate fact as to its value.

BOSTON, February, 1880.

PREFATORY.

“CONDUCT,” says Matthew Arnold, “is at least three-fourths of life.” It depends ultimately upon two things: what a man is in himself and the circumstances about him; or what he may fancy, or suppose, whether rightly or wrongly, to be the circumstances in which he stands,—his relations to God, to the universe, to his fellow-men. And since all that man is and all that he becomes ultimately issues in conduct, and this conduct determines the right and the wrong, the happiness or the misery, the good or the evil of life, of course we are ready to say that conduct is the most important of all subjects that can engage our attention. Religion, morality,—not only these high things, but government, philanthropy, education, all the institutions of the world,—are ultimately manifestations of what man is, so that human conduct is the flower of all the world,—a healthful and beautiful flower or a poisonous and ugly one. And yet, notwithstanding the fact that conduct is so large a part of life, there has never been in the past any universal, even any general, agreement as to its fundamental principles, as to wherein right and wrong consist, as to the authority on which they rest, as to what they would ultimate in when wrought out into practical details. Just as there has never been any agreement concerning the world’s religions, so there has never been any general agreement concerning principles of morality or human conduct. But now the course of human thought has been so largely studied, the world’s past customs are so widely known, the principles and laws of the external uni-

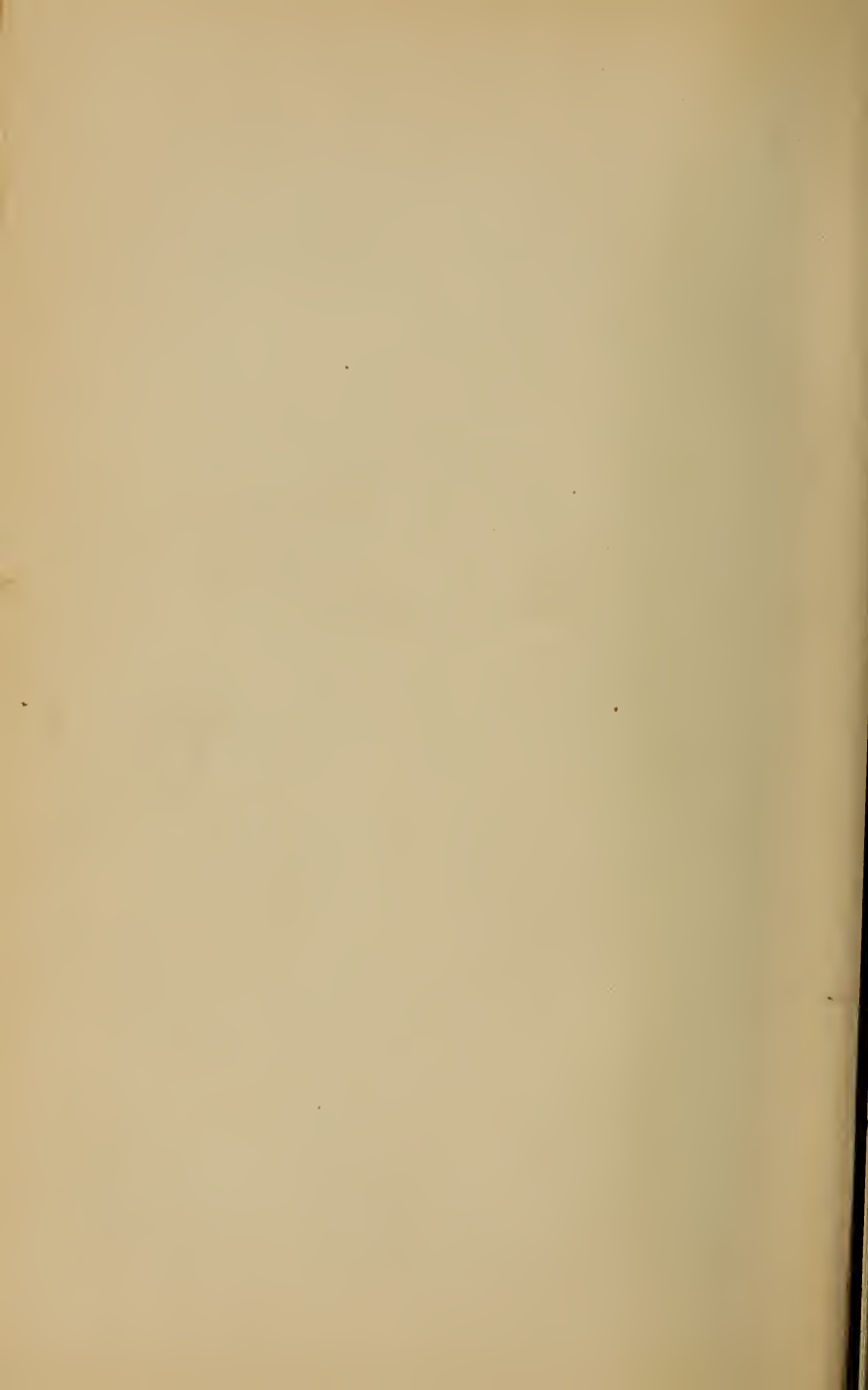
verse and the nature of human society are coming to be so clearly comprehended, that we must believe that the time is not far distant, even if it has not arrived already, when we may be able to agree as to what right and wrong mean, as to where they have come from, and what they shall ultimately come to when acted out in human character.

And there is another point that urges us on to this inquiry: there are thousands of people at the present time who have lost the fundamental reasons for their thinking in regard to these great questions of right and wrong,—persons who have been accustomed to think that right depended ultimately, perhaps, upon an institution called a church; that it depended ultimately upon some claimed revelation of God's will; that it depended ultimately upon some intuition of the human soul; that it depended upon some feeling or thing that the course of human thought is coming to discredit. While still a great many people are satisfied with Church or Book as reasons for following this course or that, on the other hand there are thousands and thousands of thoughtful, intelligent, cultivated people that no longer are satisfied with these reasons. They are coming to believe that it is at least a serious question as to whether there is any infallible church or any infallible book in the world. And if they have been taught from childhood up that the reason why they ought to follow this course of conduct rather than that, was because a church or a book says so, of course, now that they have come to doubt their authority, the reason for their character, the grandest motive of all for conduct to them, is gone, the foundations have crumbled, the moral standard is taken away.

There are a great many people that are glad because of the present confusion,—persons who do not want to be tied to any ultimate principles of right and wrong; who wish to be free to follow their own inclinations; do not care to know the laws, because they do not wish to obey them. On the other hand, there are others, a great multitude, who tremble in view of this taking away of the foundations of things, as

they have been accustomed to regard them, thinking that the world is to be deluged with evil because the old-time landmarks and barriers are broken down. These men tremble, and they are disposed, so far as these old beliefs can in any way bolster up human conduct and make it stronger and firmer, even though they have come to think them untrue, to do all they can to hold them up for the sake of those that are still influenced by them ; that is, they are in a contradictory attitude,—contradictory, if indeed this be a universe of truth and right,—thinking it is wise and safe and best to lead a man on to do right by the power of a delusion and a falsehood ; that though there be no church that is infallible, though there be no Bible that is infallible, still it is better that men should believe it, that thus they may be kept from going into ways that are wrong.

But believing as I do with my whole soul that the ultimate reasons why we ought to do this thing or that thing are not in book or in church or in human authority, but that they are grounded in the eternal and unchangeable nature of things, I believe that the highest welfare of men will be subserved when we cease to trust in delusions and dare to look God's great truths fairly and simply in the face. My purpose, then, in this course of lectures, or sermons, will be to enter upon the search after what are the ultimate fundamental principles of conduct, of right and wrong, and how they ought to be applied in our human lives.



IS LIFE WORTH LIVING?

Is THIS a good world? Is life worth living? At first sight, perhaps, the question may arise in your mind as to what this has to do with a course of sermons on conduct, on right and wrong. It has everything to do: it lies as the foundation stone of all. For if there be no order, no law, no righteousness, no truth at the heart of things, if the essential nature of the universe in all its long unfolding be not righteous, if human nature be not essentially righteous, then the world is evil, and the very nature of virtues and vices is simply reversed. If it is a bad world, if it is evil in its nature and outcome, then those things that are conducive to the life, the comfort, and the welfare of man, as we say, become the cardinal vices of the world; and those things that we have been accustomed to call cardinal virtues are evil and injurious. If this is a bad world and no life is worth living, then the sooner we have done with it the better; and the highest virtue attainable for us, on this theory, would be suicide and murder; and the man who should sacrifice himself to save the life of another would be committing a piece of folly, not only, but be guilty of a crime. Does it seem strange to you that any one should ever ask the question whether life is worth living? And yet it would seem to be the opinion of the author of this Psalm that I read as our lesson this morning. He says we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told; and if we live to be three-score and ten years old, or even fourscore, yet it is all labor and sorrow,—soon passes over and we are gone. And as a matter of fact, there are thousands, not only, there are millions, of people in this world to-day the very fundamental article of whose religious creed is that life is a curse, that

the world is evil, that life is not worth living. The great body of Hindoos and Buddhists, outnumbering by thousands and thousands the entire body of Christendom, hold it and teach it as a fundamental article of their belief, that the highest blessedness to which they can attain is unconsciousness—practical non-existence. To escape the weary burden of the days and the years, and enter into the eternal sleep of Brahm or the rest of Nirvana,—this is the highest dream of their happiness, the ultimate outcome of all their religious activity.

It is no wonder that thousands of human souls, crushed down under the burdens of life, struggling for a bare existence, should come to conceive that life is a curse, a gift not worth having. Though they may struggle on for the sake of warding off a heavier lot from those that are dear to them, yet there are thousands that to-day no doubt lie down at last with a grand sense of relief, happy that they can go to sleep, and that no morning sun is going to awaken them again to pick up their burden that has chafed the shoulder and crushed the heart so long. But, curiously enough, the other class of persons that we find taking this ground are precisely at the opposite extreme of the social scale. The men that are arguing it to-day in the English reviews and in the American magazines,—who are they? They are not the toilers and the strugglers of the world. Now and then they may belong to the literary class whose sympathies are excited by the toilers and the strugglers, and who, while they may believe that life is a good thing for themselves, seriously question whether it is a good thing for the poor and the weary and the worn. But the great body of them are the upper classes, the dilettanti, the aristocrats, the men who live for nothing but to find a new sensation; the men whose only search is after some new stimulus to tickle and thrill their nerves; the men who wake up in the morning asking how they shall kill the time for another day; with no burden, no cares, no labor, no end or object in life excepting to be amused. These are the men — and no wonder — who

become weary of life, and wonder whether it is worth living. If men like these should ask me the question as to whether life were worth living, I should say: "If you refer to lives such as these you are leading, then most certainly not."

But the great middle class of the world, though they have ever so heavy burdens to bear, though they have their hours of weeping and weariness and loss, yet, having something to live for, something to care for, these men take life as a precious boon, and are ready to live faithfully, to the best of their ability, and according to their ideas. That which makes men weary of life is not life itself: it is some condition attached to life, it is some burden they have to carry, it is some obstacle in the way they have to climb, it is some cloud above their heads that shuts out the sunlight of their peace and their joy. It is something besides life that makes men ask this question; for never were truer words spoken than those put into musical phrase by the laureate of England:—

"'Tis life whereof our nerves are scant;
Oh, life, not death for which we pant,—
More life, and fuller, that we want."

But these men that are arguing the question would say, We grant that; but it is just these very conditions of life that seem so inseparable from it that make us question whether it be not a burden that we would not care to bear. Let us, then, look the matter in the face, and see what kind of a universe this really is; see which way the balances will turn when we attempt impartially to weigh the good and the evil.

And the first thing that strikes us as we look out over the world with our modern eyes is that, whatever else is true, this universe is a system of order, governed by law. And order, if you think of it, is the very first principle of existence, the very first principle of right, the very first principle—the condition—of all happiness. And it means more than at first may appear to you. By it we are able to

assert that the universe is a cosmos ; not chaotic, not disordered, a universe of law. The heavens above tell it in their starry speech, and the gathering of the frost on our window-panes, arranging itself in its beautiful crystalline orders, utters the same grand truth concerning the microscopic world. Everywhere order, through telescope or microscope or spectroscope,—through whatever instrumentality, by whatever means, we look out on the universe, when we come to understand and see we find that this is a system of magnificent order. Order, then, whatever there may be of disorder, is in the majority, and controls this scheme of things.

Take one step further. The conditions of life exist in this universe of ours. And do you know how much that means? It means that there are more sensations of happiness in the universe than there are sensations of pain. For sensation is the very first quality and principle of life ; and always—those that are authorities in these matters tell us—the sensation of pain is the indication of a broken law, of a disregarded condition of life. If, then, there were more pain in the universe than pleasure, life itself would be extinguished ; for those customs and practices and functions of the race, and of all races, that conduce toward the production and development and increase of the fulness of life,—these are always pleasurable sensations and emotions ; and every pain is a step towards death.

Once more. The simple fact that society exists proves that there is more good in the world than there is evil. We are sometimes apt to think otherwise. We talk about how corrupt society is growing. The author of one of the Psalms exclaimed in his haste: "All men are liars." And modern men, echoing that idea, have been accustomed to say, "Every man has his price"; and they extend it, in the foulness and corruption of their thought, to every woman too. They talk about society's degenerating, about the world being base all through,—totally depraved. And yet, I say, The simple fact that there is any society in existence at all is an outright, simple, flat denial of these sweeping

charges against humanity. That we can live with any sort of comfort together as we do live in society, proves that there is more unselfishness than there is selfishness; proves that the activities that go to make up the welfare of men are more than those activities that go to their injury and harm. If this were not true, there would be no society at all.

Another thought. As we look back over the progress that the world has made hitherto from the earliest point of time that we can discover until to-day, we find that good has been on the increase. That is, there is more order, there is more happiness, more comfort, more unselfishness, more devotion to the welfare of others to-day than there ever was in the history of the world before. The progress of the world, then, is from poorer to better; and life is becoming more and more worth living every day because the disabilities are being gradually outgrown and removed.

And this thought should be reinforced in our minds by the further consideration that these things that make us think the world evil, a dark, hard place to live in, a vale of tears,—the larger part of them are not essential in the nature of things; they are not necessary evils. Humanity groans under and is burdened to-day by ten thousand evils that it has no right to carry. The majority of them are remediable evils, things that if we were only willing to touch with our hands and feel with our heart and to study with a will for truth, we could find ways of removing and leaving behind us in the track of the world's progress. Why, friends, just as there is enough sunlight shining for every man, woman, and child on earth; just as there is enough air to breathe; just as there are enough bird-songs to waken thrills of gladness in every listener on the face of the globe,—so there is enough of land to produce all that humanity needs. There is enough iron in the soil, there is enough coal, there are enough trees, there are enough waters; there is enough for every man to eat, for every man to drink,

for every man to wear. There is enough beauty to minister to the artistic sense of every human being ; there is enough truth known to inspire and lift up the life of all ; there is enough of good to crown with beneficent blessing every human soul on the face of the earth. And whose fault is it, then, that they be not crowned ? Not the fault of God ; not the fault of the system of things. So far as we are able to see these evils and remove them, it is our fault simply and purely, and no one's else. Our first and highest duty, then, should be to study the principles of human righteousness, the principles of human happiness ; not to find how we can destroy society, not to upset it, not to overthrow it, but to develop it into that better and higher form where there shall be the largest equable distribution of all the world's goods, so as to satisfy all the hungry world's needs. Just this is what we are seeking after. It is the point that I have in mind, to help in the solution of some of these problems, if I may, in this course of sermons.

The world, then, is worth living in. But now they come, representatives of some of the popular phases of modern thought, and tell us that science—this very science that I am trying as well as I can to represent—is taking out of life that which is best worth our living for in all its wide range of wealth and beauty. They say science has discredited the doctrine of immortality, and unless this be retained the principles of human action will be subverted ; men will run wild into evil ; they will act on the motto, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." They will care neither for their own welfare nor for right relations to their fellow-men. This is the charge that has been made in a recent book—that has become quite famous in these modern days—by Mr. Mallock, of England. He says unless life be supplemented by faith in the Catholic Church as a Divine revelation of God, an institution all-powerful and wise and fit to control human life, then life is a failure and disaster. Mr. Moody told us, when he was here in Boston, that infidelity was cruel ; that it came to the mother

who had just lost her babe, to whisper to her a doubt as to whether she should ever see the little one again. Science is cruel because it asks questions. Mr. Moody, then, and Mr. Mallock, tell us, with all the emphasis of authority that they are capable of putting into their words, that life is not worth living, and that the world is a failure, unless we take their eternity as a supplement to the life we are living here.

In the first place, let me remark on this point that I believe there is not a healthy man, woman, or child on earth who will not join me in saying that life is worth living simply for its own sake, to-day, whether there ever was a yesterday or ever will be a to-morrow. Have you ever stood, as I have, on a mountain summit, with the broad ocean spread out at your feet on the one side, a magnificent lake or bay on the other, the valley dotted with towns, with growing fields of greenness, or turning brown with the harvest? Have you ever looked up at the sky at night, thick with its stars, glorious with the moon walking in her brightness? Have you listened to the bird-song some summer morning? Have you stood by the sea and felt the breeze fan your weary brow, and watched the breakers curling and tumbling in upon the shore? Have you looked into the faces of little children, seen the joy and delight that they experience simply in breathing and living, beheld the love-light in their eyes, heard their daily prattle, their laughter, their shouts of joy and play? Have you, in fact, ever tasted what life means? Have you realized that, with a healthy body, in the midst of this universe you are an instrument, finely attuned, on which all the million fingers of the universe do play, every nerve a chord to be touched, every sense thrilling with ecstasy and joy? Have you ever tasted what it means simply to live,—simply to open your eyes and look out on this wondrous world,—and have you not been ready to say at such a moment, This is unspeakably good? No matter where I came from, no matter where I am going to, I live an eternity in this instant of time. Is it not a mis-

take, in the face of facts like these, to say that life is not worth living unless it is supplemented by a heaven not only, but, as these great authorities I have quoted also say, a hell? Friends, I am ready, so far as my words may be able to reach, to turn the tables upon the doctrine of these men that is being rung through our modern world as a warning to frighten freethought back into the crumbling citadels of the old-time belief. I say that as grand, as glorious, as life seems to me simply for its own sake, I do not believe it is worth living if it is to be supplemented as these men say. I had rather never have been born,—though I am unspeakably thankful that I have been permitted to open my eyes upon the blue of heaven, upon the magnificence of mountains and seas, upon the faces of friends and little children; though, I say, I am unspeakably thankful that I have been permitted to live if only for one hour, and though I feel what it means to be a man only for one hour, yet, if life is to be supplemented as Mr. Mallock and Mr. Moody say it must be to make it worth living, by their eternity, I had rather never have been born. Not, however, because I fear the future. And I fully believe, that by as much as a man possesses the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, by so much he would rather lie down to sleep forever rather than wake up to find himself standing by the banks of the river of life, to find the golden streets and the magnificent walls of the New Jerusalem beneath and about him, if, as the price of all this, the music of heaven must have as an echo the far-off discord of hell. As expressing in beautiful words this thought that seems to me to lie at the very heart of the gospel, let me read to you two or three brief verses that I have found, written by a Scottish doctor of divinity,—strange as it may seem. It is called “The Self-Exiled.”

“Now open the gate, and let her in,
And fling it wide,
For she hath been cleansed from stain of sin,
St. Peter cried.
And the angels all were silent.

“‘Though I am cleansed from stain of sin,’
She answered low,
‘I came not hither to enter in,
Nor may I go.’
And the angels all were silent.

* * * * *

“‘But I may not enter there,’ she said;
‘For I must go
Across the gulf where the guilty dead
Lie in their woe.’
And the angels all were silent.

“‘If I enter heaven, I may not speak
My soul’s desire
For them that are lying distraught and weak
In flaming fire.’
And the angels all were silent.

“‘Should I be nearer Christ,’ she said,
‘By pitying less
The sinful living or woful dead
In their helplessness?’
And the angels all were silent.

“‘Should I be liker Christ, were I
To love no more
The loved, who in their anguish lie
Outside the door?’
And the angels all were silent.

* * * * *

“‘Should I be liker, nearer Him,
Forgetting this,—
Singing all day with the seraphim
In selfish bliss?’
And the angels all were silent.”

Eternity, as a supplement to this present life, coupled with these conditions, is a thing for a brave, true, loving, Christ-like man to fling away. Should God open the door of heaven to me on this condition, I would say: No, Lord; if I may not wipe away the tears, if I may not extinguish

the flame, at least, if it be possible, let me sleep forever, that I may not know it or hear the anguish of their groans.

Life, then, is worth living for itself alone. But we also cherish the magnificent hope of immortality. For, friends, do not be deceived by the cry that because you throw away the kind of eternal life that these men offer you in the name of God, therefore you are of necessity flinging away the only hope of the future. Men believed in eternal life before ever book was written, before ever priest elaborated religion. Men will believe it even if every book were blotted out, and every religious institution on the face of the earth were crumbled back to dust. It is a hope that springs from the human heart; and it does not rest on the authority of Mr. Moody or Mr. Mallock. It rests on the intuitions and the hopes of the human soul. Whatever reason is good and sufficient for any one is good and sufficient for us. So that this hope as the supplement of the life we lead here still remains to us, whatever be our theological theories or ideas.

And then, if, as I believe, the universe is a righteous universe; if it be a system of law and order and truth; and if, as we know by the experience of the race thus far, good and peace and happiness mean the discovery of God's laws in the universe and obedience to them,—then, by entering upon the search that we begin to-day, we are doing two things. We are preparing intelligently, so far as we are concerned, to lay the foundations of the kingdom of God and of human welfare right here, where we are, on solid ground beneath our feet. And if this be a cosmos, with the same God, the same law, the same order, the same principle in all worlds, then, if there be for us another life, by laying the foundations of the kingdom of God here we are laying the foundations of the eternal city up yonder. For righteousness and truth and goodness and love and human helpfulness,—these are the things, my friends, out of which heaven is made. There are no better things than intelligent, loving appreciation of the laws of God's universe and obedience to them. The angels can do no finer thing than that.

By searching, then, most humbly, in the dust beneath our feet and in the stars over our head, or in the physical members of these bodies for the conditions of true living,—by searching for these laws and seeking to obey them, we are paving the streets of heaven, we are rearing its walls, we are building its homes, we are preparing for its highest service of joy and bliss, we are attuning our hearts and lives to that perfect song that shall be the echo of joy and peace forevermore.

Morality and Religion in the Past.

WHEN a prominent Sunday-school superintendent puts on the market a poor or worthless quality of goods, branded and advertised as being the best that is to be found; or when a leading pew-holder or deacon in a prominent church turns out to be a defaulter for a large amount; or when a minister of the gospel is guilty of some flagrant breach of the ten commandments, the whole community is shocked. For they say: "We expected better things of these men. Whoever else shall be false, these men, according to their profession, we demand shall be true." Did you ever stop to raise the question as to how it happens that the popular mind at the present time immediately and necessarily associates religion and morality, as though they not only belonged together now, but always had belonged together? Did you ever ask yourself where this public sentiment, that demands character of those that claim to be pious, has come from? It was not always so. The thought that religion and character necessarily go together is comparatively a modern idea. If you go back far enough in the history of the world, you will come to a time when the two were not only separate in the theories and the thinking of the people, but utterly dissociated in practice. Let us take a few illustrations, so that you may see what I mean.

Go far enough back into antiquity to come to the time when large numbers of men were fetish-worshippers; when the object of their adoration, their reverence or fear, is a stick, or a stone, or a reptile. Of course you will understand in a moment that the worship of an object

like this cannot be associated in the mind of a worshipper with any necessity for telling the truth, with any necessity for being pure, with any necessity for being charitable and kind toward his fellows. Take another phase, that of the North American Indian on this continent,—the snake-worshippers, for example. Large tribes of them have believed that the serpents inhabiting that part of the wilderness where they found their home were in some mysterious way connected with the weather on which their crops depended. And their principal worship has been to propitiate these gliding and subtle forces that they supposed to be connected with the Divine,—that they might send them showers, or sunshine, or whatever was needed. Of course you will very readily see that there could be no possible connection between a worship like this and what we now regard as moral character. Take the case of those tribes that have been accustomed, under the influence of religion, to put their fathers and mothers to death after they had reached a certain age, doing it as a religious duty. You will see at once that this religion is not only inconsistent with, but contradicts and makes impossible, the very first principles of morality. Or, take that other type of religion still existing in our own time in India. See the mother coming with her little babe in her arms to the great Ganges to cast her child to the mysterious and worshipped monster of the river. Here again the very first principle of morality is contradicted by the highest duty of their religion. Take the Indian devotee, found by hundreds and thousands all over Hindostan. His highest conception of religion is that, by a series of fasts and penances and tortures, he shall be able to—what? Benefit his fellow-men? Not at all: gain power and control over the gods. And they carry their idea so far that they represent the gods themselves, sometimes, as trembling lest these men become so mighty that they shall not be able to deal with them. Their fasts were magic powers that controlled the forces of the heavens themselves. Or, take the worship of the sun, as it

was developed among the ancient races on this continent,—among the Mexicans, for instance. The principal feature of that worship was the sacrifice every year of hundreds and thousands of men; and the government encouraged great campaigns and engaged in warfare, that they might capture persons enough to sacrifice to the insatiable God, that thus their own people might be spared. Of course you can see that in things like these there is no connection between religion and morality.

Let us come to the highest manifestation in the Pagan world,—to Greece and Rome. What were the gods here that men worshipped? Never in the whole history of these great religions, of these great peoples, until the downfall of Paganism before the young and rising Christianity,—never, I say, throughout their whole history, was morality conceived of as an essential part of their religious worship. The people did not love the gods. It never entered into their thought that the gods loved the people. Juno might, for example, take it into her head to patronize the city of Carthage, and Venus might take it into her head to patronize the city of Troy, and afterward Rome as the successor to Troy; but it was personal conflict and jealousy between the goddesses more than it was regard for the people or inhabitants of those cities themselves. And these gods or goddesses engaged in conflicts among themselves just precisely as the politicians of Athens or Rome, and they attempted bribery and intimidation and every force that they could bring upon the people to carry out their purposes. The gods were irritable, the gods were jealous, the gods were insatiable, the gods desired simply that their altars should smoke with sacrifices, that their temples and shrines should become rich with offerings, that their names should be upon the lips of the people, that vast processions should be formed in their honor. They cared not a whit as to what was the character or moral condition of the people. The religion was simply an institution of ceremonies, rites, and services. A particular form of words, for example, that a priest had used in

prayer had been followed with a success in battle. It was immediately supposed that that special form had some power over the gods, and had compelled their assistance, and therefore it became impious to change the formula in the slightest degree. The hymns must always be chanted, not only word for word, but with precisely the same inflections and tones of the voice. The very dresses which the priests used in their services were fixed and unchangeable from generation to generation; the quality and shape of the knife used in sacrifices, the kind of altars, the color and age of the animals, the very kind of wood with which the sacrifice must be burned. But sometimes these prayers lost their efficacy unless the priest at the end of it pirouetted on one foot in a particular way from left to right. I give these illustrations as showing to you in a simple, graphic way what religion meant to the ancient world. It had no sort of connection with moral character at all. It meant simply a system of rites and ceremonies by which the gods were to be influenced, by which their wrath was to be warded off, by which their favor was to be won.

But these, you say, were Pagan religions. Is anything parallel to this true of the Hebrew or of our own? We are accustomed to read back into these olden times our modern thoughts and ideals, and to think that when Joshua or Jephtha used the word Jehovah he meant by it what we mean to-day. Nothing can be further from the truth. The Hebrew god at the first was never conceived of as a moral being at all. He was originally a sun-god,—a flaming, scorching fire, intimately connected with the Syrian Moloch; and the trace of that is still to be found in our New Testament, where he is spoken of as “a consuming fire.” Think for a moment of some of the characteristics that he manifested. He taught Jacob to steal by fraud and falsehood the birthright from his elder brother. This birthright depended on the blessing of an old and blind father; and the people of the time considered this blessing so important as to suppose that the gods of heaven and the authorities of earth were

bound by it. What kind of a god was it that led Joshua to the conquest of Canaan, directing that he slaughter without mercy man, woman, and child of city after city; that they rob and take possession of the whole country? And what kind of a god was it that directed one of those old warriors on a certain occasion to kill all the men and all the married women and all the children, and distribute the maidens among the soldiery? This, you will find in your Old Testament, is a part of the moral or immoral character of the god of the Old Testament. What kind of a god is it that is represented in his court in heaven as seeking some way by which he can get Ahab to fight a battle where he is to be defeated? A spirit comes into the presence of God and says, "Send me, and I will entice him." And God asks him how, and he says, "I will become a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets"; and God says, "Go," and sends him forth to lie by the lips of those that claim to be his prophets and under his instruction? What kind of a god is it into whose presence Samuel, the old prophet, comes with Agag, that ancient king that he had captured, and in the presence of the altar, as a sacrifice to Jehovah, hews him in pieces — as the phrase is, "before Jehovah"? What kind of a god is it to whom David sacrificed the seven sons of Saul? What kind of a god is it who says that David is a man after his own heart? And when we search after what kind of a man David was, we find him to be a barbarous king, cruel, treacherous, false to every principle of morality such as we have developed in our modern times, making a child of murder and adultery heir to his throne and kingdom. What kind of a god could the people have thought he was, to suppose that such a man was after his own heart? What kind of god is it to whom a hymn is written like that old psalm that was sung in the services of the people, where the prayer is sent up that the enemies of the writer may always be wanderers and vagabonds in the earth, and beg for their bread, and that pronounces a blessing upon those that take his little ones and dash their brains out upon the stones?

Are these moral conceptions? Is this a moral religion of which such things as these are a consistent part?

Come down to the condition of the Jews when Jesus himself was born. I have read to you this morning some of the fiery words of his denunciation, in which he has pictured that time. Is the religion of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus a moral religion? Does not Jesus himself say that they have made the temple a den of thieves? Does not he say that the Pharisees, the most religious people of the age, bound broad phylacteries, Scripture texts, across their foreheads, said long prayers, and wore wide borders on their robes, and stood in the market-places uttering their devotions? that this was their religion, and that their practical life was a falsehood, was a deception, was the devouring of widows' houses? This is the kind of a picture that Jesus draws for us of the Hebrew religion at its culmination at the time when Christianity was born. But has there been any divorce between religion and morality in Christianity? The question, as you well know, answers itself. Who was the model and ideal Christian in the early ages of the Church, and throughout the Middle Ages until modern times? Who was he? Was he a man who was honest, a man who was right in his relations with his fellow-men, a man who did all that he could to build up human society, a man who illustrated the essential, fundamental principles of morality? Not at all. This whole side of his character was left out of account. He was a man that lashed himself, a man that repeated so many aves, a man who said so many prayers, a man who fasted so many times a week, a man who devoted himself to the ritual and ascetic side of life, being of no use whatever to the world, and only being religious that he thus might gain power with heaven and secure his own selfish felicity in another world. What was the condition of the Church itself at the time of its mightiest power through Europe? Look at the papacy of Alexander the Sixth, the infamous Borgia. Open licentiousness, open bribery, unblushing murder,—these were matters of notorious occur-

rence in Rome, and on the part of the papal family itself. The popes, until Alexander, had had the decency to call their own children nephews. Alexander unblushingly called them his own children, and rode out bravely equipped in the crowd to meet and welcome his own mistresses as they returned to Rome from a journey abroad.

This was the condition of the papacy at a time when it ruled Europe. During these ages,—for they were the ages when the people were in the lowest depths of ignorance and immorality,—what did the people suppose constituted religion, that made it the condition of reconciliation with God and of getting to heaven? Lucrezia Borgia, after a life of unblushing shame and crime of every kind,—when she comes to die, what does she do? Simply sends a letter to the Pope, asking his blessing, and when the blessing comes dies peacefully, in the full expectation of a happy immortality. That was the religion of Europe at this time. Look at the lives that the barons and noblemen led,—lives of robbery, lives of drunkenness, lives of rapine, lives of perpetual warfare. What did they do when they came to die—repent? No. Forgive their enemies? One of them on a certain occasion, when the confessor came to him and said, “Now before you die you must forgive your enemies,” said: “I haven’t any.” And the confessor said: “Haven’t any—a man who has lived a war-like life like you?” “No,” he says; “I haven’t any, for I have killed them all.” After lives like this, what did they suppose it necessary to do that they might enter the presence of God and the joy of heaven? Simply that the consecrated wafer might be placed to their lips; that they might receive extreme unction from the hands of the priest,—and this was the magic touch that opened the gate of heaven and let them in.

In Europe to-day, how is it? Those countries that are under the power and influence of the Church to the greatest extent, are the countries where you find most of ignorance and vice. It is those countries that have been invaded by

the modern spirit of science, the protest of freethought and earnest endeavor after truth, and the moral principles that underly the progress of the world,—it is these countries that stand highest, and where religion itself is freest from those blots and blemishes that disfigure and defame it. Now how, friends, has this come about? How has it happened that, as I said, we to-day are shocked by the connecting together of religion and immorality in the same person, while in these olden times they were unblushingly immoral, and considered themselves none the less religious for that? Tetzels, as he went over Europe selling indulgences, did not consider himself irreligious. The robber, when he came to offer a part of his booty at the shrine of the Church, did not consider that he was doing anything strange. How does it happen, then, that there has come this tremendous change over the world? How does it happen that religion and morality in the past have been so divergent from each other, and that now they are coming together? We have been told, friends, and are being told perpetually, that there cannot be any true moral life apart from the religious life of the time; that it all rests on the Church; and that if you touch the Church, all touch the inspiration of the Bible, or touch Sunday, or touch any of the institutions that have come down as distinctively religious, you are the enemy of the morality of the people, and are doing what you can to overthrow the foundations of society.

The principle that you are to have in mind is this: Religion and morality were totally distinct and separate in their origin. At the first, they had nothing to do with each other. Religion was simply an arrangement between man and his gods, by which he was to gain their favor or ward off their wrath. Morality, on the other hand, is a matter of behavior between man and man. The relation, as just or unjust, pure or impure, true or false, in which we stand to each other,—the manner of our life together,—that is morality. And religion originally, I say, was simply the means by which man attempted to reach and deal with this mysterious and

mighty power outside of and above us. And you will see, of course, that the question as to whether a religion should be moral or not depended entirely upon the conception of a man as to whether his god was moral or not, — purely and simply on that.

On the other hand, I must call your attention to certain survivals of this old immoral conception of religion, still to be seen in the highest development of the Christian life of the nineteenth century. We have not yet outgrown and sloughed off all these evils, these excrescences that have attached themselves to the religious life of the ages. Only a little while ago we were made familiar with the fact that men standing very high in the Church in Scotland, — men who considered it wicked and wrong to infringe in the slightest degree the ceremonials of their religion, — men who so revered Sunday that they would not read a Sunday paper, were capable of deliberately mismanaging the affairs of a bank, wrecking the welfare and prosperity of hundreds and thousands of people dependent upon them, — an utter breach between morality and their practical every-day life. We are face to face to-day with the fact that the great masses of the Church in England and America are not the ones that are leading in matters of reform; that they are many and many times led to engage, and become aroused even to enthusiasm, in the prosecution of some war that has no moral principle underlying it whatever. Witness the condition of the English people in regard to the Zulus and the Afghans. Remember that Bishop Coxe, of New York, only a little while ago wrote a war-song to inflame the wrath of the people against the Turks. Mr. Gladstone has said, in brief words that I must read to you, something that bears directly on this point. He says: —

“To my great pain and disappointment, I have found during the last three years that thousands of churchmen [he himself is a churchman] supplied the great mass of those who have gone lamentably wrong upon questions involving deeply the interests of truth, justice, and humanity. I

should hear with much comfort any satisfactory explanation of this very painful circumstance."

We have learned in the history of our own country, that it was not the religion of the time that led in such a work as the great anti-slavery reform. The Church was engaged in rivetting the fetters of the slaves and reading to them lessons of pious patience from the Bible, when Mr. Garrison, in a hall of infidels here in Boston, uttered the first words, the last echo of which is their song of deliverance. And this grows very naturally out of the fact that religion becomes in a little while an institution, and men are attached to it, and they think it is right and covers all the right there is, or need be covered by anything. Of course, if it is an infallible revelation from God, it must include all that is necessary for man; and those that believe it make it the ground of their piety,—not only trust in it themselves, but regard as impious and blasphemous any attack upon it such as the assertion that anything more than this needs to be done.

Now, friends, as opposed to the statement so frequently made, that we owe all the morality that we have in the world to the Church, to the religious institutions of the world, I wish simply to reverse that statement, however startling or strange it may seem, and to assert that it is the morality of the world that has made the religions as good as they are. Visit any clime, any people, any creed of civilization that you please in the past history of the world, and you will find that the religion of that people is simply the reflection of its moral ideals. The gods in heaven speak the words of the people on earth. The bibles write down the precepts that the experience of the time has proved as best and good. The religious institutions take shape from the moral life of the time. And farther than that, and as confirming it all and giving it added emphasis, the Church,—and in that word I include every religion on the face of the earth,—the Church never yet started the work of reforming itself—never. Every grand onward movement of the religious life of the world has been started as a moral

protest. Look at the condition of the religion of Israel when the prophets arose,— a religion of ritual and sacrifice and ceremony pure and simple. The prophets,— what were they? Not new religionists: great moral reformers who demanded that the religion should be re-shaped into the image of their own higher ideals. And all of good and glorious that there is in the religion of the Hebrews to-day has come as the result of the work of these moral reformers, infusing the religious life with their own enthusiasm, and making it teach their own moral precepts. And when Jesus came, it was not to teach a new religion. I believe Jesus had no idea whatever of teaching a new religion. Jesus started out as a moral reformer; and the whole Sermon on the Mount is simply an attempt to reconstruct the old system and shape it after the image of his own grander moral ideas. And so when you come down to the history of the Church, the work of Savonarola, the work of Huss, the work of Wycliffe and his compeers in England, the work of Luther in Germany, the work of Calvin in Geneva,—these men were chiefly grand moral reformers, and they made the conceptions of the people accord with their own grander and better moral thoughts and intuitions. And so down to our own time. Channing had no idea of starting a school, of founding a new church. Channing was simply a moral reformer. And so Theodore Parker, and all the greater men of the time. Their whole work upon religion has been a work of moral reform, a moral development, a moral shaping and uplifting; so that the religions in the world to-day are as good as they are because the moral enthusiasm of its prophets and preachers and teachers has lifted them up and shaped them after their own patterns.

And Christianity to-day,— what does it stand on? What are the foundations of Christianity in this modern civilization of ours? They are not the miracles. The miracles are coming to be looked at as a burden, as a thing that hinders modern faith. They are not the rituals and ceremonials,— none of these things. That which gives Christianity its

power over this modern world is the fact that it is the most moral religion on the face of the earth. It is the religion that teaches most emphatically the humanities, the charities, the relations of justice and truth between man and man ; and the power of Christianity is just here. A few years ago, just as I was leaving the Orthodox Church, I published a little book setting forth the moral claims of Christianity and its relation to the moral life of man. And one of the old professors in one of our theological seminaries in the country wrote me then, saying that the time was rapidly coming when Christianity must put this in the fore-front as its evidence, as the reason for its standing, for claiming the allegiance of the people. It is not its supernaturalism that carries its morality: it is the morality that floats the supernaturalism. Here is the power of Christianity to-day.

Now, friends, for two or three last thoughts, very important, that I must yet put briefly as I can. We are told perpetually, — and it has become a sort of war-cry in the English and American magazines within the last year, — that there can be no morality without a belief in God and a belief in the future life. Let us see for a moment the bearings of that question. Bacon, the philosopher, says in one of his essays, that “it is better to have no opinion at all of God than such an opinion as is unworthy of him.” And so I say, better to have no belief at all in God than to believe in a god that is below the moral level and ideal of the time. Whether a belief in God is a moral belief or not, depends entirely upon what kind of a god you believe in. The Mohammedan believes in God: it does not make him a moral man. The North American Indian believes in God: it does not abate one whit of his cruelty. The people of all ages have believed in gods: it has not lifted them up into the image of our own beautiful morality. You had better, then, believe in no god at all than to believe in one who is unworthy of your worship and your admiration.

Again, it is said there is no reason why a man should be moral unless he believes in immortality. Friends,

I believe that the question of morality is not necessarily attached to that of the future life at all. And here again, whether a belief in the future life shall be a moral force in your character or an immoral, depends entirely upon what kind of future life, and upon what you regard as the conditions of entering into that future life. The Mohammedan believes in a sensual heaven of flowers, and ease, and lovely women. This is simply a Turkish harem, without death or sorrow, lifted to the skies. Is a belief in that kind of immortality a moral force? The Indian believed in his happy hunting-grounds: it was simply an extension of the kind of life he was living here on earth, where he should still hunt, and fish, and pursue his enemies. Is a belief like that necessarily a moral belief? So I say you had better believe in no heaven at all, in no future life at all, unless you believe in one worthy of the grander aspiration and devotion of the noblest humanity.

Our Christianity needs still further purging and pruning to rid it of the survivals and excrescences of these old immoral conceptions of the religious life. There are still doctrines and beliefs and practices taught as an essential part of the Christianity of this nineteenth century, that are not simply matters of indifference, but that are definitely and distinctly unrighteous and immoral. Let me indicate as briefly as I can two or three of them. And first the old doctrine of the Divine Sovereignty as it was taught by Calvin. The doctrine that might makes right, whether it be in a religious creed or in the sceptre of a despot, is no less an immorality. The doctrine of the damnation of unbaptized infants, — outgrown, you say, but still a part of the written fundamental law of one of the largest branches of Christendom; this is distinctly and simply immoral. The doctrine of everlasting punishment in any form is nothing more nor less than an immorality. The doctrine so often taught, that belief is more important than life, — that a creed, sacrament, or ritual is more important than telling the truth, than paying your debts, than living kindly and nobly

with your fellow-men, — this doctrine is immoral. The doctrine which lies at the very foundation of the churches, that it is more important for you to believe in something than it is to possess a character wrought into the image of God's own natural laws, — this is immoral. The doctrine of a substitutional atonement is an immorality ; and so all these, and others that I could name were it worth my while, are simply immoral survivals of the immoral religions of the past.

I do not wish for one moment to be understood as saying that these old religions, even the lowest, have not had connected with them many natural virtues and sweet humanities. I have purposely emphasized the darker facts, so as to impress upon your minds the great truth that religion itself has not been conceived as necessarily and essentially moral. It is a great natural force, like the wind, or a span of mettlesome horses ; and the issue, good or evil, depends on whether intelligent morality or the opposite holds the helm, or sits on the box as driver.

Let us, friends, weigh the facts so far as I have had time to detail them, concerning the relations in which morality and religion have stood, and in some degree to-day stand, to each other. The ideal relations, how they are intimately blended together, or ought to be, as one, — this will be the subject of a future discourse.

THE ORIGIN OF GOODNESS.

THE fundamental problem of the old theology was the origin of evil. It started with the assumption of a perfect world in the midst of which was paradise, in which paradise dwelt a perfect humanity. This idea naturally springs up in the human heart; and two tendencies of our thinking, even though others contribute towards it, are sufficient to account for this early, wide-spread belief. In the first place, we naturally, perhaps necessarily, being what we are, idealize the past. Whatever may have been the troubles and trials and disabilities of our childhood, we forget them now that we are grown, and childhood is a sort of fairy-land of perfect peace and beauty. And then the other tendency of our thinking is this: Believing that God is a perfect being, the first thought is that he must have created at the very outset a perfect world; and that evil, if it be found anywhere to exist, must be accounted for as something that came in afterwards, something thrust into the universe by an enemy from without.

But this idea that the world must have been perfect at the beginning, if we think of it for a moment, we shall see to be entirely without foundation. Given eternity to work in, and there is no more reason that we can see in the nature of things why the world should have been perfect six thousand or ten thousand or fifty thousand years ago than that it should only become perfect six thousand, twenty thousand, or one hundred thousand years in the future. God does not, so far as we know, make perfect oak trees. Oak trees spring from acorns and develop and unfold gradually; and only after long years do they become complete. And so the world — as we have come not simply to believe, but to know,

in these modern days—was not a complete and finished thing at the first; but it has unfolded slowly, age after age, developing after the law of its inner life, and so taking on form and beauty. This is the order of God's work everywhere. And curiously enough we shall find that this is really the thought of the ancient prophets of Israel, the thought of Jesus, the thought of Paul and the disciples. They look forward to a perfect world as an ideal; as a hope to be realized in some time to come. And as you look back and turn over the pages of the Old Testament, you will find that there is no belief there, throughout the larger part of it, of any early paradise, of any perfect condition of things at the first. Paradise comes in after the captivity, as a thing borrowed from Babylonian paganism. It is a thing unknown to the prophets, and is nowhere recognized or spoken of by the great leaders of Jewish thought. We, then, I say, do not simply believe—we know—that the world did not start finished and perfect. We know that humanity did not start finished and complete. We know that evil did not come foisted upon the world of God as something from without, something apart from the nature of things.

What is evil? We talk about it still as though it were a thing, an entity, a substance. And if we go back we shall find that men have been accustomed in the past to speak of it even as personified. It was a being; it was a real thing; it was something that could be cast out and that could come into a man. So they have been accustomed to speak of disease. Disease is not a substance. It is not a thing. Why, they used to regard disease as the presence in the body of a possessing spirit; a demon that could be cast out by some form of pious exorcism; a being that was afraid of holy water, afraid of the cross, afraid of the pious words of the priest. A pain was something that could be let out through a gash made by a sharp knife in the body. And we talk about disease now, sometimes, as though it were a humor in the blood, some sort of tangible real entity. But intelligent men know now that disease is not a thing, a sub-

stance, any more than darkness is a substance,—it is simply the absence of light; any more than cold is a substance,—it is simply a lack of motion that generates heat. And so evil is not a thing in the nature of man. Disease is not a thing in the body: it is simply an abnormal condition of the cells, organs, and functions of the body; something that interferes with the natural and perfect working of the system. And so sin or evil is not a thing: it is simply a lack of recognition of, and obedience to, the perfect laws of human life; or the wrong direction of forces that are right.

Starting, then, to discuss the origin of goodness instead of the origin of evil, we assume that goodness exists. We assume that the universe in its essential nature and outcome is good; that the laws of things, if only understood, if only obeyed, will result in those things that we have learned to call right. Now what do we mean by goodness? In its essential nature it is a state of heart, an inclination of the will, a desire and a purpose to do that which we perceive to be right, to be conducive to the welfare and happiness of mankind. In its external features, however, goodness is a kind of conduct opposed to another kind of conduct which we distinguish as evil, or hurtful, as injuring ourselves, as injuring our fellows, as lowering the tone of life, as taking away from the fulness of the world's beauty and happiness and peace. Now this goodness is a thing that, so far as the consciousness of man is concerned, has been discovered. Man was not a good being originally, any more than he was an evil being. Goodness has been discovered in the experience of the world,—just as precisely, as truly, and in substantially the same sense as the laws of astronomy have been discovered. This Copernican system of which we talk has been known to the world only two or three hundred years. Did it come into existence only two hundred or three hundred years ago? Why, of course it is eternal. The Copernican system is as old as the existence of the stars and the moons and the worlds. But so far as man's thought of it, his consciousness of it, is concerned, I say it is a discovery that his

experience and thought have unfolded to him. And so, precisely, goodness is a discovery. Men from the first performed certain acts that were good, just as the planets revolved around the sun. Men thought certain thoughts that were good, they followed certain inclinations and emotions of the heart that were good; but they did not think of them as good, they did not recognize them as good, they made no distinction between that which is good and that which is evil.

When, then, did goodness come into the consciousness of man? When for the first time — I know not when that was — a man or a number of men recognized the laws of their life and the laws of the relations in which they should stand to their fellow-men, when they recognized them as good in themselves apart from any commandment from without that bade them to keep them, and when their hearts responded to these laws of right and truth and they determined to keep them, — then, at that moment, whenever it was, what we call rightly by the name of goodness was born. You are not to think that this came to pass all at once; that any whole family, any whole nation, discovered and recognized goodness simultaneously. You are not to think that humanity marches upward from its unmoral condition until all at once goodness dawns upon it as the morning dawns upon the world lying in darkness. For there are thousands and thousands of people, whole nations in the world to-day, in which goodness, in the highest sense of the term, as we understand it at the present time, does not exist. There are multitudes in modern churches that are not good in the highest sense of the word. I fear there are many of us — perhaps all of us at times — that are not yet good in the noblest meaning of the term.

Let me make clear to you in a moment, before I go on, just what I mean and how much I mean. I remember a man out West, a member of my own church, who said to me one day: "If there was not any devil, I do not believe there would be many Christians." That man was not a good man. He did not choose that which we call virtue because he rec-

ognized the fact that it was lovely and beautiful. He chose it for fear of something to come afterward. If a policeman should enter one of your houses, and force you to give money to a charitable cause, compel you to go out into the street to help a fellow-man, you would say at once that the act on the part of the man so compelled was not a good act. Why? Because it was done under compulsion. The element of force, when it comes in, takes away the morality of the action, making it neither good nor bad. If the policeman should take him by the hand, and put into that hand a revolver, and point it at the head of his friend, and compel him to fire it off, he would not be guilty of any crime, because the element of volition would be taken away. Now it makes no difference what this power is that comes in and compels a man to do that which he would not choose. If it is the fear of hell, if it is the fear of God, if it is the fear of the policeman, if it is the fear of society, of public opinion,—no matter what kind of fear it may be, or whatever form the compulsion,—if this is the ultimate reason why you do this, and why you refrain from that, then you have not yet risen into the condition of a free moral man or woman. I remember a case of a discussion on the part of a Universalist minister with another of the opposite creed, concerning the subject of future punishment. And in his speech the latter said: "If I believed, as this minister does, that there is no hell, then I would *have my fling*. I would take the pleasure of life as it goes along. I would follow my appetites and inclinations. Why should I deny myself?" When it came the turn of the Universalist to reply, he simply looked the man over from head to foot and said: "Judging your character as well as I can by your looks, I believe that you would."

You recognize at once — and this, of course, is the point — that a man so feeling is not a moral man. He may be scrupulously honest in his business; he may be true in the relations in which he stands to his family; he may be faithful in his neighborly duties: but if it is either fear of hell, or

fear of God, or fear of the police, or fear of his fellow-men, that compels him to do that which he does not recognize as right and true and beautiful in itself, and which he would not do were all these restraints removed, then I say that man is not, in the true and highest sense of the word, good. He has not attained free moral self-control as yet. He may be on the road to it, but it is something far in the future with him. So much to illustrate, as much as my present purpose requires, what I mean by goodness.

Now, then, let us see by what process this goodness has been developed in the history of the world. It will require a little effort on the part of your imagination to picture to yourselves unmoral humanity. I only etch in rough outline a picture for your thought to fill in.

I want you to see man—as near as we can come to his true condition—as he was at the first. Of course, we cannot reach him as he was at the beginning; for when we come to the lowest, farthest, dimmest point of human history, we must remember that then we have not found the place where humanity started. For man is old. Nobody knows how many years, how many centuries, how many thousands of years old humanity is when it first emerges from the darkness and comes within scope of our modern vision. But think of man stripped of all those attributes and qualities and attainments that make up civilization. Blot out all the cities from the face of the earth. Destroy all the roadways,—not only those of iron rail, but even carriage-roads and foot-paths. Level all the buildings with the dust, and blot out the very remnants of them, so that you shall forget that they have ever existed. Sweep every ship from every sea. Blot out everything that represents the attainments of civilized man. And not only wipe off of the face of the earth all the results of human activity, and human invention, and human ingenuity, and human enterprise, and let the world be a wilderness and a jungle, but do a more difficult thing still: conceive, if you can, of the inner thoughts of men that correspond and have led to the creation of this

external civilization — consider these as not existing. Think of man as never having written a book, as never having written a sentence, even his name; as not yet perhaps having attained the dignity of possessing a name. Think of him stripped, wild and naked in the woods, with rude ideas, with no weapons, with no tools, without even a hut or a fire,— wild, savage, uncultivated man. Here is where we want to start. Now this being is not a moral being; neither is he an immoral being. We make a huge mistake when we look over the barbarous portion of the earth and apply to it our modern standard of thinking and action. It has not occurred yet to this wild being, standing on the very confines of humanity, that there is any such thing as right and wrong. It has not occurred to him as yet that there are any such things in existence as laws, either laws of man or laws of nature or laws of his body. He knows nothing of the stars above his head, except that they are little shining points. The sun to him is a being, or an animal, or a chariot driven across the sky,—when he has become civilized enough to think of a chariot or of horses. The winds,—he knows nothing of the laws by which they move; he does not even know that there is an atmosphere surrounding the earth. He knows nothing of all that which makes the sum total of modern knowledge. Now I say this being is not a moral being: he is merely an unmoral being.

Now I wish to lead you step by step, not exhaustively, but simply by way of suggestion, along the pathway by which he comes to be developed into a being recognizing the distinction between right and wrong. We must think of him first, then, as a wild man of the woods. Now what are the forces that play upon him? What are the great powers that take him in their hands and shape him and lead him on towards the height of the attainment represented by our modern world? The first thing that he recognizes is this external world. And he learns gradually that here are forces and powers that he must be afraid of, that he must guard against. Here are heat and cold and tempest. Here is the danger of

starving, unless he supplies himself with food. Here are wild beasts and wilder men. Here are all these forces of the external world,—the winds and the storms that beat upon him, the cold that freezes him, the earthquake that makes the world tremble beneath his feet. These shape him and mould him into certain courses of conduct, driving him along the pathway that begins to point towards the modern world. How do they do it? Simply by making him feel that he must do certain things, or else suffer or die; that he must refrain from doing certain things, or else suffer or die. And besides the power of this external world, there is another that takes him into its hands; and that is the political power. Some one in his tribe gains prominence and becomes chief, a despot, ruling with an iron hand, controlling the destinies of the tribe. This political force takes him and shapes him; compels him, perhaps, to respect some of the rights of his fellow tribesmen; prevents him from killing his fellows and directs his murderous feelings only towards his enemies. This political force touches him at every point, and shapes all the habits of his life. And then, in the third place, there comes in the power of society, the estimation in which he is held by his fellows,—the same power which is the mightiest of all controlling forces upon us to-day. This we shall find in the lowest condition of barbarism quite as imperious, and even more so perhaps, than it is now. The young brave must do something to win an honorable position in his tribe. He must accomplish some feat of daring before any of the maidens of his tribe will look upon him as manly and honorable enough to claim and win her affection. And so one after another all these social forces seize upon him and shape the courses of his conduct. And then, mightier than all the rest, are the religious forces that deal with him. They control his thinking, the schemes of his brain and the emotions of his heart. They even shape and regulate all the external activities of his life. He has no idea of one God; he has thoughts of many. All the powers about him he thinks of as separate beings. He is afraid of the spirits of his dead.

ancestors. He is afraid of the power of the scorching sun. He is afraid of the sweep of the hurricane. He is afraid of the current of the stream that makes it dangerous for him to cross, or that drags under the comrade swimming on its surface. He is afraid of ten thousand forms and forces. The universe is just alive with these imaginary beings that either love or hate him, which he seeks to propitiate or make friends with. Now this religious power comes in and restricts his conduct, compelling him into certain activities and driving him away from certain other courses of action.

But have these all resulted in making him a moral being? No. The forces of the external world, the political force, the social force, the religious force, may all work upon and mould a human being and yet stop short of making him moral. Similar forces have worked upon, and do still work upon, the lower animals; and yet they have not developed anything like morality in them. Man begins to act with a forethought for the future; he seeks to avoid pain and to preserve his life. He is afraid of the wind or the storm or the hunger or the cold; afraid of his chief; afraid of the fellow-men of his tribe; afraid of the gods; or, on the other hand, he seeks the satisfaction of his tumultuous passions and desires. Through all these experiences he is gradually learning to live; but he is not yet a moral being.

Now let me outline, as plainly and simply as I can, a few of the steps by which these forces are preparing the way to make him moral. These are "school-masters to lead him to" morality. What are the roots, the essential principles, of this moral nature of ours, and how are they developed? In the first place, these powers outside of man have impressed upon his thought and upon his physical and mental and moral and spiritual organization, and impressed it age after age and by reiterated touch after touch, that there are eternal, inexorable, unchanging laws; powers all around him with which he must deal. That is the first thing; that is the very first and lowest condition of intelligent moral character or activity on the part of man. What is the next step? It

is this : He has learned that these powers are the conditions of his life ; that he cannot defy them without pain ; that he cannot defy them without subtracting from the sum total of his being ; that he cannot defy them long without death. He has learned, in other words, that these laws, powers, and forces that are around him are the very laws of his existence, and that he cannot disregard them.

What is the next step? This : and most important it is. The thought that these laws are all about him, and that he cannot disregard them,—these drive him in upon himself and develop the rude beginnings of self-control. And self-control you will recognize as the very starting-point and fundamental principle of morality. He has learned, for example, that he cannot let his moods run away with him ; that he cannot do “as he pleases,” as we say, without thought of the consequences ; that he must recognize this barrier on the one hand, and that contesting claim on the other ; and instead of doing as he pleases he must do as these powers command : and so impulse is restrained, and, as I said, he is driven in upon himself and taught the necessity and the first beginnings of the power of self-control.

And next, this self-control develops the ability to postpone immediate gratification and the immediate attainment of the desires of the moment, and makes him think of what will happen afterward ; makes him consider to-morrow and next year, and at last, the uncounted years of the future. And here again is one of the absolute conditions of moral character. A man who lives simply for the day, who takes no thought for the morrow, is not a civilized man, is not a moral being. The very essence of morality is that we shall think of the results of our present activities, whether they are to be good or evil, and so control ourselves by postponing the things we desire now, in view of what shall be the necessary result of those activities in the future.

Starting with fear,—for man at first, I suppose, we must think of as simply afraid, afraid and cowering, shrinking out of sight in the jungle and in the caves, afraid of all these

mysterious forces about him, the nature of which he does not understand,—this fear will pass naturally and of necessity, after a time, into reverence. He will recognize these powers and forces as great. There is something in them that inspires awe. He sees that they are not altogether evil; that if he attends to them and obeys them they work good for him: and so he begins to revere them. And then, as the goodness of their nature and their disposition toward him become more and more manifest, the reverence takes another step and blossoms out into admiration. The man begins to admire the sun; he begins to admire the winds and the might of these great forces; he begins to admire the supposed gods who control these forces; he begins to admire the fathers of the tribe, the chiefs; he begins to admire all these mighty powers of which hitherto he has simply been afraid. And this admiration,—do you see where it leads in its next step? It leads to the man who bows his head in adoration; for the next step after admiration is worship. Admiration itself is the root and the essential idea of worship. He who admires anything that he conceives to be above him has begun, consciously or unconsciously, to cultivate his higher religious nature. And then, when we have begun to admire, we naturally go on to love. We learn, of necessity, to love that which we regard as admirable.

And now I have led you, briefly but suggestively, step by step, to the point which is the conclusion of our journey. For when man, through fear, through reverence, through admiration, through love, has come to recognize the laws of his own nature and the laws of the universe about him as being naturally good,—when he has reached that point, then free moral agency, that which I have called goodness, is born. When you recognize the laws of this universe as necessary laws, as the conditions of your being, the conditions of your growth, the conditions of your happiness when you recognize the laws of your physical frame, not as hindrances, not as evil forces standing in the way of perfect gratification, but as the necessary laws of your physical

being, precisely as the construction of a piano or violin or any other musical instrument is the law in accordance with which it can be played and its music be developed,— when, I say, you have recognized these laws of life as essential, as necessary, as good, and have chosen them, not because you are afraid of them, not because you are afraid of God, not because you care for the opinion of your fellow-men, not because you are afraid of the arm of the law or a court of justice,— when you have recognized them and chosen them voluntarily, lovingly, then, for you, goodness has been born. You have become a good man ; a man who can be trusted even if religious beliefs have passed away ; a man who can be trusted even if courts were abolished ; a man — the highest specimen of humanity, perhaps, that we can conceive of — who can be trusted in his closet ; who can be trusted in the darkness of midnight ; who can be trusted when he is alone and when he knows that no human being will ever become cognizant of his deeds. A man is good when he has reached this point of seeing the laws about his life, seeing that they are essential and good laws, and when he voluntarily chooses to obey them.

THE NATURE OF GOODNESS

WE are now to consider that part of our subject which is fundamental to the whole. We are to ask ourselves the question as to what is the nature of goodness; as to why certain courses of conduct are called good, and why certain other courses are called evil; as to what is the standard of judgment; whether there is any permanent and eternal one; as to what is the ultimate end of human existence that makes it necessary for us, in order to attain it, to pursue certain lines of conduct rather than certain other lines,—this is the broad, great subject that I am to attempt to handle.

The law that determines the right use of any inanimate thing is the law of its nature, that which it is fitted for, the highest and best use to which it can possibly be put. For instance, we say of a piece of woodland that it is good; good to answer the ends of beauty to the artist; good to answer the purpose of furnishing timber for the architect or the ship-builder; good for whatever purpose its structure, the grain of the wood, and its general qualities make it capable of. The same is true of a piece of meadow or a waterfall. The fall is good for the painter; it is good to turn the wheels of a mill, and so be the mainspring of a great factory; good for the highest and best ends that its nature fits it for.

And when we leave inanimate things and come to the animal world, we are justified in saying of a lion or a tiger or an eagle that it is good in the sense of the first chapter of Genesis where it is said after the completion of the creation, the Lord looked down from heaven and pronounced all the work that he had made “very good.” Of course what

is meant here is, that each thing, according to its nature, is good for the kind of life it is intended to live,—fitted by nature for that life. That is why we call it good.

When we come up to the range of the higher animals, the domestic animals, those that come into connection with and are useful to the service of man, we say that these are good or bad according as they are fitted to render us those offices and services that we require of them. A horse is good for the plough when he is fitted finely for that kind of work. He is good for the road when he is gifted with speed and endurance,—those qualities that fit him for the race. And so of every form of animal life whatsoever. A dog is good as a pointer, as a setter, as a watch-dog, according to whether he is fitted or not for the performance of those things that we require of him.

Now when we come into the higher life of man, must we change our principle? I think not. The ultimate law of all human life, of all human activity, is the natural law of our constitution; the law of our physical, mental, and moral structure: that which we are capable of being, of doing, of becoming: the law of our relation to our fellow-men, the law by which we are related to the world around us, to the past and to the future. We say that a man has the right, and not only the right, but, after he is born, it is his duty, to live. It is his right and his duty to live just as full and rounded and complete a life as he can. It is his duty not to stand still. It is his right and his duty to lift up the tone and level of his life, to advance that life,—to progress, as we say. But the individual does not stand in the universe alone. It is his right and duty not only to develop and make the most possible of his own individual self, but he is linked by bonds, from which he can never escape, to his fellow-men; so that it is his right and his duty not only to live himself, to make his own life full, to advance his own life, but to help others live also in their degree: to do all he can to make their lives full, rounded, and complete, to lift up the tone and level of their lives, to help on the general progress of the world.

Now the experience of men has determined it beyond a question that certain courses of conduct do tend to the preservation of life ; do tend to fulfil and round out life ; do tend to lift up the level of human activity to something still higher, something still fuller, something larger in the way of life. These courses of conduct are not made conducive to these ends by any outside power ; they are not made conducive to these ends by any inside intuition or monitor ; they are the very laws that constitute existence, the laws that man cannot break without paying the price, without taking away from the quality and quantity of his life, without lowering its tone, without, if he persists long enough, bringing that life to an end, and destroying the whole scheme of things. The ultimate law, then, of conduct, I say—and this is the proposition I wish to go on for the present to substantiate,—the ultimate law of conduct, is the natural law that makes us what we are, and that sets us in the relations in which we stand to our fellow-men and to the world about us, just precisely as the laws of water and the banks of a river constitute that river ; and if you should change those laws so that water should no longer flow, or if you should break down the banks of the river, you would have destroyed the river itself. It is these that make its whole existence, and by which its currents flow.

We must now, in substantiating this position, consider, in relation to it, some of the great schemes of morality that have been held and taught in the world, and see how they bear upon this which we claim to be fundamental and permanent. For example : there are large numbers of people at the present time, and there always have been—though I trust they are lessening as intelligence grows—who hold and teach that the only law of human conduct is the conventionality of the time,—the law of habit of any particular people or race or age. They see, as they look over the world, certain superficial facts, that seem to justify them in coming to this conclusion. They see, for example, that one race, one nation, one religion, lives out a certain line of conduct, fol-

laws after certain ideals, and that this is what the habit, the conventionality of the time justifies, and that when this habit of the people changes the moral conduct changes. But you will see, of course, that there can be no essential or permanent morality if this be admitted as true. If it is only the habits of the people, the moment these habits change morality changes, and may be conceived of as passing entirely away. If you will only bear in mind the definition I have given, you will be able, I think, to see that there is something deeper than this, something eternal, something bound up in the very life of man himself. Whether the conventional habits of the people approve of it or not, if I put my hand into the fire, it will burn, and my hand will be destroyed. Whether the conventional habits of the people approve of it or not, if I take poison instead of food into my system, I shall die. That is, without any regard to the opinions of the time, if I break a physical law, that physical law takes its revenge in pain, in disintegration, in death itself. And precisely as this physical law cannot be broken with impunity, so the mental and moral and spiritual laws of life are those which constitute the very conditions of life itself; and no matter what the public opinion is about it. Suppose the popular opinion of the time countenanced immorality, does that make immorality harmless? There have been ages so shameless as that those things which we count as most disgraceful and evil have been popular, and practised by almost everybody; and yet they have been ages of disintegration, ages of death, ages that like a caracact have rushed on toward the brink, and plunged over into an abyss of ruin. The laws remain, whether public opinion changes about them or not. You can no more change or take away the moral law by public opinion, you can no more set it up or take it down by popular favor or popular will, than you can annul the law of gravitation by a vote of the city of Boston. These moral laws are the laws of things.

Plato and Aristotle and some of the more prominent among English philosophers have taught that the ultimate

reason for conduct is the State ; law, that is, the enacted law of the constituted rulers of the time ; that there is no justice and no injustice where there is no statute. Of course, if my definition is true, as I think it must appear to you to be, you will see the fallacy of the fundamental principle of these great philosophers who have swayed human opinion in this direction so long. Whether the State justifies it or not, the breaking of any of the natural laws of our life or of society will result in the destruction of this natural life or of the social life. If the statute laws echo these natural laws of life and of society, then well and good ; they are binding. But they are not binding because they are statutes, but because they are in accord with the eternal laws of things. This is the ultimate ; a law that echoes, a statute that echoes, the natural law of life is a good law ; one that does not is bad law, and ought to be repealed ; for these natural laws are ultimate and eternal.

There is one other standard of right action and wrong which is very popular still in the world, and perhaps more universal than any other. Men are accustomed to say : The ultimate thing in this matter, the standard by which I must judge of right and wrong, is my personal intuition of right and wrong,—my own conscience, in other words,—for conscience is simply the voice of this moral intuition. But we have only to look a little way over the world, and survey for a few moments the past history of men, to find out that there has been no agreement in regard to this matter of the voice of conscience. Men have conscientiously done the most evil things. Men have conscientiously opposed the advance of the world, those things which were essential to its highest welfare. Men to-day are conscientiously wrong in regard to a thousand things. And if you come to this principle, and make each man's conscience the ultimate law, you will work a widespread demoralization instead of building up a morality ; because you thereby admit that each man's intuition, each man's conscience, must be his law, no matter whether it is a prejudiced, ignorant, bigoted, and weak con-

science, or whether it is a good and noble one. And the very moment that you admit that the conscience must be educated, that the conscience must be referred to something else by which itself must be judged, that moment you admit that conscience is not ultimate and final ; for when a person has the right to appeal from a court, it is thereby admitted that it is not a court of final judicature, is not the court of last appeal. Conscience is not and cannot be ultimate. Conscience does not tell people what is wrong and what is right. It is simply a feeling of the moral nature that we ought to do right, but it does not tell anybody what right is ; that is the result of human experience the result of judgment and training and knowledge.

There is one other theory that is coincident with the teaching of the whole Orthodox world, and that is held by large numbers of people outside and beyond it. They say the ultimate standard of right, that to which everything must finally be referred, is the will of God ; the will of God as manifested through a priesthood, perhaps, or through a church that is infallible, or through a book ; but in whatever way, they say the ultimate reason for conduct is the will of God. Now, in one sense, I believe that is true ; but in another, and that the popular sense as I understand it, I do not believe it. If by the will of God you mean these laws of life to which I have referred ; if you regard these laws of body, of brain, of heart, of mind,—these laws of human relationship and association, these laws of the universe about us,—if you regard these simply as the expression of the will of God, then, of course, it makes no difference whether you call it law of nature or will of God ; for the two are identical. But if you mean by the will of God something apart from these laws of nature, something outside of them, something assumed to be above them, then the will of God is not and cannot be the ultimate law of human activity. Whatever may be the will of God, no matter what it may be assumed to be or taught to be, it still must be true forever that if I disregard the law of gravitation, and step over the

edge of a precipice, I shall be hurled in ruin and death upon the rocks below. Whatever may be the will of God, or may be assumed to be the will of God in regard to me, if I break any physical law, any mental law, any moral law of my being, that law takes its revenge. These, as I have said, are the constituent laws of my life; and no matter about anything outside or beyond or above these, I cannot break them with impunity; and to keep them means life, means health, means happiness, means peace. It depends, then, entirely upon what you mean by the phrase whether the will of God is the ultimate thing. As men are accustomed to picture God as a being standing outside of these laws of nature, and looking upon them as something apart from himself, with which he may interfere, that he may suspend for his purpose, that he may command or disregard,—looking at God, I say, in this way, I should deny most emphatically that his will is the ultimate law of human conduct. I believe that the will of God is the ultimate law, because I believe that these laws of life, laws of nature, laws of society, are simply the utterance and expression of the divine will; and they are of authority, not because we call them the will of God, but because they are the natural laws of life.

It is said a great many times—and I must touch upon these two points in passing—that there can be no permanent and eternal law of morality unless we believe in a God and a future life. Now, friends, you know me well enough to know what my beliefs are about God and a future life, so that you will not misunderstand me in what I am about to say. But I believe that this moral law stands by virtue of its own right, and would stand just the same without any regard to the questions of immortality or the discussion between theism and atheism. If there be no God at all, am I not living? Are there not laws according to which my body is constructed,—laws of health, laws of life, laws that I must keep in order to live and in order to be well? If there be no God at all, are you not existing? Have I a right to steal your property,

to injure you, to render you unhappy, because, forsooth, I choose to doubt whether there is a God, or because you choose to doubt whether there is a God? Are not the laws of society existing in themselves and by their own nature? Suppose all the world should suddenly lose its regard for truth, and become false all through and through, so that no man could depend upon his brother, would not society be disintegrated, disorganized? Would not all commercial and social life suddenly become impossible? Would not humanity become a chaos and a wreck, and that without any sort of regard to the question as to whether men believed in a God or did not believe in one? These laws are essential in the nature of things; and they stand, and you live by keeping them, and die by breaking them, whether there is a God or is not.

Suppose, for a moment, in regard to that other question, that there is no future life. Does morality fall? I think not. Am I not living to-day, whether I am to live to-morrow or not? Will not certain things give me pain to-day, whether I am to live to-morrow or not? Will not certain courses of conduct produce sickness, whether I am to live to-morrow or not? Will they not produce death, if I follow them out, without any regard to the question whether I am to live to-morrow, next year, or forever? Do we not stand in certain relations to each other to-day, so that I can hurt you or you can hurt me, so that I can help you or you can help me; so that I can add to your happiness or misery or you can add to my happiness or misery, and that without any regard to the question as to how long we are to exist? These laws are the laws, as I have said,—and I repeat it for emphasis and shall repeat it again,—these are the laws in the nature of things by which I live and by which you live. It does not make one particle of difference in regard to the validity of these laws, whether we are to live forever or only one hour. You, of course, are at liberty to say—any man is at liberty to say—if there is not any God, and if there is no future life, why, then, I won't keep these moral laws: I have no

sufficient motive for keeping them. Of course you are at liberty to say that. But these laws will say just the same to your laxity and disregard of them; if you don't keep them you shall die; and you will, too. Whether there is any God, or any future life or not, makes no sort of difference with the unchanging validity of these laws. They stand to-day, no matter how long they are going to stand.

But while these laws of our nature are the ultimate laws, the real conditions that control our conduct, yet there is something beyond this still to which I must call your attention,—one other position which I must state and defend. I have said that we have the right to live, the right to make the most of our lives, and fill them out as fully as we can; the right to progress ever toward something that seems to us higher and better. But why do I want to live? why do you want to live? This is this deeper question: What is the ultimate end and aim of life? Simple bare existence is not the thing that people care for. You do not want to live just for the sake of living; you want to live for something; you feel that you have a right to live for something; you look and aim at something beyond mere breathing,—the things that constitute existence. There can, it seems to me, be only one ultimate reason that justifies sentient existence. There are three possible conditions toward which you can look as ideals. One is a condition where there shall be more happiness than there is unhappiness,—that is, we can conceive of man as desiring happiness; that is one thing. There is another possible state of mind for a sentient being: a condition where there is more unhappiness than there is happiness,—that is, a condition of sorrow and misery. There is another possible condition of a sentient being, and that is a condition of practical indifference; you can hardly call it a condition of a sentient being, however, because if there were perfect indifference there would be a loss of consciousness, and no feeling at all. Now we cannot conceive of a sentient being desiring as the ultimate end and outcome of his life either of these three conditions, save that

in which there shall be more happiness than unhappiness. It is the law of every healthy, free, sentient being that he should shrink from pain, and reach out after that which shall constitute pleasure or happiness. This we shall find to be the law, the necessary law, as it seems to me, of all sentient beings. Protoplasm, the learned men tell us, is the first form that living matter takes on. The lowest form of life we know, and the basis of all life, is protoplasm,—a little glutinous substance that does not seem to be organized at all. And yet it possesses one quality which is the fundamental and essential quality of all living things. It possesses, not consciousness as yet, but what scientific men call irritability, —the first crude form of feeling. The essential thing, then, in every living creature on the face of the earth, the one thing that separates life from that which is not life, is feeling, and motion in accord with feeling. We cannot conceive, then, I say, of any sentient being desiring or reaching after anything except a feeling, and that feeling, on the whole, a pleasurable one. The ultimate end of life, then, that which justifies the existence of sentient creatures, is happiness. You may call it pleasure ; you may call it happiness ; you may call it blessedness ; you may call it what you please,—it makes no difference,—it is some state, some condition, in which there is more of happy sentiency than there is of the opposite. This is the ultimate end and aim of life, and this you will find is in perfect accord with what we know of the structure of all beings upon the face of the earth. We are so made, every form of life is so made, from the lowest to the highest, from protoplasm to archangel—we are so constituted that pain is everywhere and always an indication of evil, an indication of a broken law, an indication of something out of the way ; and pleasure is always an indication of life, of health, of law obeyed, of conforming to the conditions of natural and healthful life.

It may be true, indeed, and it many times comes true in the course of every life, that we must accept suffering in the lower life for the sake of a higher pleasure of a higher life

in the upper ranges of our being ; but this suffering in the lower life is nevertheless a breach of the laws of the lower life, taking away from the fullness of that life and producing death at last. But on the principle that the highest law is capable of affording the highest pleasure, as in the case of the martyr, for example, who sacrifices his bodily life for his truth, he suffers in his physical nature, and he dies in his physical nature through suffering, but he rejoices in the higher ranges of his life, and lives in the higher ranges of his life ; as Paul says : “ Though our outward man perish, yet the inward (higher) man is renewed day by day.” So that pain is death where there is pain, and happiness is life where it exists.

But men are accustomed to think—it has been preached and taught for ages—that happiness as an end is not a worthy thing ; and they begin to talk about sensuality and the pleasures of epicurianism and all those awful things ; and they speak of suffering and sacrifice as though they were good things for their own sake. Now this has come about as the result of two or three different causes. In the first place, men have been trained throughout almost all ages of the world, for thousands of years, to worship gods who were conceived of as cruel,—gods who took delight, therefore, in human suffering ; so that suffering on their part has come to be looked at as a religious duty, as something that has merit in itself. We have inherited this tendency of belief and thought, until it has become a part of our sense of duty. And then, again, the experience of the world has proved to us, and it will prove a great many times yet in the future, that in order to attain the highest life, and therefore the highest ultimate of happiness, we must temporarily suffer ; accept the cross before there can be any crown, as they say. And so men, discovering that pain is so frequently a condition of the highest kind of life, have come to a mental confusion between the condition and the end which they seek ; so that they have learned to look upon suffering as something meritorious in itself, instead of being,

as it is, everywhere and always evil, and only to be accepted for a larger and a higher good.

But men oppose this objection to happiness as the end of life. They say we ought not to be good for the sake of being happy, but we ought to be good for the sake of goodness. "Virtue is its own reward," they tell us. Let us analyze this just a moment, and see what is meant by it. Being good for the sake of being good. Goodness is either an outward course of conduct or an inner state of the heart. But why should we be good? What for? What constitutes the essence of goodness, that which justifies it instead of the opposite? It is because the human race has found out by its age-long experience, that on the whole and in the long run, this course of conduct that men call goodness has resulted in the welfare and highest happiness of the world. The absurdity of supposing that goodness can be separated from this notion of happiness as the outcome will be seen in a moment if you suppose that a course of conduct which is called good might ultimately result in the misery of the world. Suppose we should suddenly discover that a course of action we have called virtuous would ultimate in the unhappiness of man; would you not say at once we ought not to be good any longer? The very nature of goodness would be changed. That which results in the misery and destruction of the world cannot be good. But they say, and they seem to think it some grand, heroic thing to say, though as it is ordinarily meant it is a grand heresy—in the words of the old Latin adage—*Fiat justitia, ruat coelum*—"Let justice be done, though the heavens fall." But if any course of conduct that man should determine to pursue should result in the falling of the heavens, would not every one at once say that that was a wrong course of conduct, and ought not to have been followed? "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall," then, when we analyze it, means justice is always expedient; and, whatever may be the immediate result, or may appear to be, or threaten to be, do

justice, and the heavens will not fall. As Wordsworth has expressed it so beautifully in his ode to duty : —

Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

There are two or three other considerations that I must take up, as bearing upon this ultimate end of human life. Men say, if you tell the world that the ultimate object and aim of life is happiness, then they will speedily, each one for himself, go about seeking his immediate sensual gratifications, and so morality itself will be destroyed. There is no possible fear of this, friends, for the experience of the world has demonstrated over and over again — it is demonstrating it to-day ; it must of necessity demonstrate it forever — that he who seeks his sensual gratification and the immediate satisfaction of his appetites and passions, will thereby destroy himself ; not only not attain his happiness, but attain misery. The world is learning this, I say ; so that, if you tell them that the ultimate end is happiness, they must find out by their experience forever that the way to obtain this happiness is not the way of immediate sensual gratification ; that this is not only destructive of morality, but destructive of the very object that men desire, and for which they seek.

But they tell us, that if you admit that happiness is the ultimate end for which sentient beings live, there will be no more unselfish action in the world. Each man will grasp after those things that he wants for himself, and let his neighbors come out as well as they can. But here again it seems to me so strange that men lose sight of the essential nature of man. I am an individual, constituted with a certain kind of complex organization ; but that is not all. I am a part of this larger organism called society ; and it is just as natural for me to act with regard to the welfare of those about me as it is for me to act for my own welfare ; and it is just as natural for you. It is a libel on human nature, it is false to the

law of human life, to say that the only natural thing in the world is selfishness. Take the mother bending over her cradle, night after night, and weary day after day, watching over the object of her love ; is she doing an unnatural thing under the impulse of morality, a sense of duty, of religion? She is doing the most natural thing in the world ; so that you would say she is an unnatural mother if she did not do it. Suppose I see a man in sorrow or in trouble, or any of you see him ; if you believe it is genuine, honest sorrow, it is the most natural thing in the world for you to help him. It is not natural for you to run away from him ; you have to obey the feeling of sympathy in your heart, and it is just as natural as any other affection or quality of human nature. We are bound together, then, in society. The good Samaritan was not a monstrosity ; he was a type of natural, human goodness. The sympathy that binds us to our fellows is just as natural as self-love which bids me look after my own welfare. And I find in my experience, and the world has found in its experience, that men are happier when they give full play and run to the sympathetic sides of their nature. The way to attain happiness, then, is not the selfish way, in the evil sense ; it is the unselfish way, and the world has demonstrated it over and over again : so that the pursuit of happiness, the intelligent and sensible pursuit of it, is by the pathway of sympathy and human helpfulness. For suppose, for the sake of saving yourself pain, you quench the sympathetic tendencies of your heart ; you might possibly save yourself a little pain, but you would also lose that other finer, grander joy of helping men ; you lose more than you gain ; and you shut out also the sympathy that binds you in the community of pleasure and happiness with your fellows. A man, then, that shuts himself up within himself shuts out the great world, and cuts himself off from the true, the loving, and the good,— as though, to escape the sight of one disagreeable object, a man should shut himself up in the dark, and thus lose the vision of all the earth's loveliness

and beauty. The straight road, then, to human happiness is along the pathway of virtue, of truth, of human helpfulness.

But men say, if you teach men that the ultimate object of life is happiness, then there will be no more martyrs. No more martyrs! What does martyrdom mean? Look at John Rogers at the stake, with the flames curling about his feet. John Rogers knew perfectly well that if he chose to utter a few words of recantation he could be released, and go home and "enjoy himself," as people say. John Rogers then chose the stake; and why? He chose it because this higher, larger, divine nature in him preferred integrity and truth, even accompanied by the crackling of flames and death,—preferred it to the self-contempt and scorn that he would have been compelled to feel for his own degradation, if he had played false, and gone home to his hearthstone. John Rogers, then, chose the one thing that he preferred, under the circumstances and at the time, just as much as the drunkard chooses what he prefers when he goes to his cups. He chose what to him, being a grand, noble type of man, he saw was the largest and highest happiness. There is no contradiction, then, between this ultimate end of happiness and martyrdom, if you only enlarge your scope of thought until you can comprehend that a martyr may enjoy infinitely more than the sensualist.

They tell us, again, that if you conceive of happiness as the ultimate end of life there will be no more progress; men will simply look around them, adjust themselves to their immediate circumstances, make themselves comfortable, and will stay where they are forever. But it is just as natural again, I say, for men to look upward, and desire something ahead of them, as it is to be comfortable where they are. Just so long as there is a mountain peak that overtops our present point of standing and outlook, just so long will men hunger for that higher height; just so long will it be natural for them to rejoice in struggling and striving to attain it; just so long will they find their highest and most glorious gratification in the triumph of trampling

obstacles under their feet, and climbing into those grander heights of nature and of God. There is no contradiction, then, between this law of progress and the ultimate end of happiness ; for a higher happiness—the experience of the world has proved it—comes by means of the struggle and the progress.

The ultimate law of conduct, then, is this natural law that makes us what we are. The ultimate end of it all is happiness. But you will make a woful mistake—and against that I wish to guard you—if you jump to the unnatural and baseless conclusion, that because the ultimate end is happiness, therefore you are to make the immediate thought of happiness the motive of your activity and the standard by which you are to try your conduct. For here, again, the experience of the world has demonstrated that the way to attain the larger and higher happiness of man is the way of right, the way of regard to these laws of our nature and our life. We are, then, to keep these laws even at the cost of temporary suffering and pain, however severe ; not because the pain is not evil, but because being what we are and where we are the pain may lie right before us in the path towards larger good. We are, then, to do right, though the heavens threaten to fall, conscious that they will not fall if we do right, conscious that this doing right is the only way by which to attain the larger good.

Now, then, friends, have I in any presumptuous fashion attempted to discover a new morality, to supersede the thought, the religious life, the intuitions of the world? No, a thousand times, no. This morality is substantially the morality of the Sermon on the Mount. I am only giving in its essential features the preaching of Jesus himself. But there is one advantage which comes from this kind of presentation, which I have tried to give you : and that is, to show you that this moral teaching of Jesus,—present sacrifice when needful, in view of the larger good,—is not merely a beautiful sentiment of Christianity, but is grounded in the

nature of things. I have simply attempted to lay bare to your view the basis of the morality of Jesus in the laws of the universe. But you are always to remember that principles are not authoritative because of the word of Jesus; but that his word is authority only as it is true to the nature of things. They say that Jesus taught an utter disregard of happiness; that his end is not human happiness: that it is the law of sacrifice, the law of suffering. Jesus himself is the great image of the world's glorified sorrow; the cross is his symbol, and not the crown. And yet, glance for a moment at the New Testament, and let us see what it teaches. He says: Blessed are the meek. Why? Because meekness is a good thing in itself? Blessed are the meek; *for*—something shall come after. Blessed are the peacemakers; *for*—. Blessed are the pure in heart; *for*—. He stands uttering his beatitudes, telling men to bear and suffer day after day, with his finger pointed forever forward toward the ultimate end of happiness. Blessed are they that mourn; *for*—. Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you and revile you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely; *for*—. The *for* comes after every beatitude, and points towards something beyond itself, and to the attainment of which the beatitude is only a means. And what is that grander thing? What means the New Testament statement of the apostle concerning Jesus himself, when he says of him, “who, *for the joy* that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame”? He looked forward toward an ultimate, and that ultimate is forever—call it kingdom of heaven, call it kingdom of peace, call it whatever you will—a condition of human happiness, blessedness, and peace.

And now, friends, there are two or three grand advantages that in conclusion I must call your attention to, in this method of presentation, this grounding of morality in the nature of things; and it is chiefly for this that I have been anxious to press it so earnestly upon your attention. We have been taught from the first, age after age, that morality found its ultimate reason in some theological scheme. All the minis-

ters, all the priesthoods, all the churches, have rung it in our ears, century after century, that there was no reason why people should behave themselves unless their theology was true. What wonder, then, that men so trained should rush into immorality when they come to doubt the foundation stones of the particular theological system in which they have been brought up? We are told perpetually concerning the Catholic Church that it is only the power of this hierarchy that keeps the mass of its ignorant followers decently moral. If they had been taught that morality rests on natural laws and stands by its own stability, they could have been kept without telling them a lie. I say it is infidel toward God and this universe to assert that righteousness, the most important thing for man, must of necessity rest on a falsehood. If God cannot keep his universe stable without a lie, then the sooner we have chaos the better. I believe it is safe and right everywhere to tell men the truth. And when they have learned that the laws of morality are the laws of health, the laws of life, the laws of peace, the laws of happiness, not because the priest says so, but because of the nature of things, then we can afford to do without the sham of a priesthood that is established upon a lie. I believe that the churches, then, are very largely guilty for the great floods of immorality that they talk about, and that threaten society, when men lose faith in any particular religious scheme. For is it not the one doctrine that we have been taught from the first, that if there was no God, and if there was no future life, the way to be happy would be to break all the moral laws, and rush into every kind of evil? Hasn't it been the teaching of the Church in all ages that, if it was not for the Bible, for the future life, for an angry God, the way really to have a good time would be to disregard the moral laws? And yet nothing is truer in the nature of things than that the obedience to these laws of life and truth and right are the immediate pathway toward the largest, highest, and sweetest human happiness. And this old falsehood, then, that the churches have told for the sake

of bolstering up their beliefs is responsible for people's running into excess when these beliefs are gone.

Mr. Goldwin Smith, a leading thinker and writer of England—a liberal, too, by the way—has been so far carried away in his thinking with this old fallacy, that he has written a remarkable article recently, for the *Atlantic Monthly*, "On the Prospect of a Moral Interregnum." That is, he assumed that the moral life of the people, having always been connected with some religious belief, now that Christianity, as he thinks, is passing away, is going to suffer a moral deluge for a while, until we get another religion. Nothing, it seems to me, has less real foundation than a thought like this. You might as well talk of an interregnum of the law of gravitation; you might as well talk of an interregnum of the laws of light or the laws of chemical affinity as to talk of a moral interregnum. Because people for the time do not keep the moral law, there is no moral interregnum, any more than there is an interregnum of the laws of life when a thousand persons are killed or commit suicide. It is because these laws do stand and must stand forever that the evil results of immorality come.

Morality, then, stands in its own right—the eternal life, eternal force, eternal law of things; and keeping these laws will lead us on, not only to virtue, but ultimately to the highest happiness of which our natures and our destiny make us capable.

THE SENSE OF OBLIGATION.

THE inanimate things of the world move on their way under the power of resistless forces. There is of course no sense of obligation in their fulfilling their careers ; and yet, in the primary sense of that word, they are obliged, compelled, by powers which they cannot resist. There is on their part no feeling of having done a thing which is right, no remorse for having wrought evil. As Matthew Arnold expresses it :—

Streams do not curb their tide
A good man not to entomb,
Nor lightnings turn aside
To make his virtues room.

These powers and forces move on, fulfilling their end, without any feeling, any conscience, any sense of good or evil. And the lower forms of life fulfil their careers by the laws of their nature in substantially the same way. The wild creatures of the world do nothing through any sense of obligation. They have no pleasure in the sense of doing right, no remorse for having wrought pain or evil to some other creature. But the moment you rise to the plane of the domesticated animals, those that stand in some sort of relation of dependence toward man, you come into the region of at least a crude sense of obligation. You find these domestic animals feeling obliged to do so and so, out of regard for their masters and keepers. And even when the master is not a cruel one, and has never been in the habit of punishing for disobedience, you will find animals so close to man, so much in love with the master, that they will show a very deep, keen sense of shame for having displeased him, and you will find the keenest possible sense of

pleasure in the master's approbation. Here, then, is the first crude beginning of the sense of obligation; but of course we shall find it fully developed only as we come to man. And yet among some of the lower forms of human life you shall hardly find it any fuller grown than you do among the higher domestic animals. But it comes, of course, to perfect bloom and full fruitage only in human life.

We want now to inquire what this sense of obligation means, the nature of its authority, how far it reaches, whether it is to be permanent, and whether it alone is enough as the impelling power in human life. These points we wish to take up briefly in their order. What, then, is the nature of this sense of obligation? Why do we feel obliged to do this, obliged to refrain from that, obliged to perform one thing when we would choose to perform something else? The word, obligation, carries with it a sense of being bound by something; whether it is an inner force or an outer, whether it is conscience or whether it is king, whether it is private will, whether it is public opinion, no matter what it may be so far as this word, obligation, is concerned, it refers to something that binds us to a particular course of action rather than to another course. When we come to the word, ought, here we find something that is intimately connected with the verb, to owe. If you ought to do something, you owe it to somebody to perform this particular action, to refrain from some other action. The word, duty, carries with it the same implication: it means that which is due to another.

So much, then, for the meaning of the terms that we are to use. But how does this sense of obligation spring up? What does it mean? It represents, I think, at first, a gap, a breach, a gulf between the actual in our lives and the ideal or the possible; that is, we are living on a certain plane, living out a certain kind of life, performing a certain kind of actions, and we see above us and beyond us a certain other kind of life, certain other actions that we are capable of per-

forming, and that we say we ought to perform,—that is, instead of being on this low level of human life, we ought to be up on this higher level. Whenever we say ought, then, we imply a gulf, a breach between the actual and the possible, between that which we really are and something higher and better that we might be. There are those teachers in the realm of ethics who tell us that the sense of obligation is simply the inherited result of the old-time reverence which children from time immemorial have been taught to feel towards their elders, towards those in authority, towards the chiefs of the tribes, towards the gods, towards those that they were taught they must at any rate obey. And there are others that supplement this by telling us that it is the result of the fact that men, living under law, under compulsion, have been punished from time immemorial for pursuing a certain course of action, and for not pursuing a certain other course of action; and they say this sense of obligation has sprung up as the result of all this age-long training from generation to generation; that it is the result of the fact that from the beginning of the world men have been compelled to do so and so; and now, after these external restraints are removed, men still feel this inherited compulsion, and say, I ought still to do these things which the human race has been trained from the first to do. But it seems to me that we are to find the root of it deeper than this: I believe that it runs down into the innermost nature of man, and that it springs out of the age-long experience of the world. For example, I told you the other day that the law of the use or the conduct of anything or person was to be determined by the nature of that thing or person; that is, we say that a knife ought to be sharp so that it is capable of cutting. Why ought it? Why, because that is what a knife is for; that is the nature of a knife; that expresses the highest and best possibility of a knife. We say of a boat, a ship, or a yacht, that it ought to be capable of sailing, of weathering the storm, of buffeting the waves, of going safely through the hour of danger. Why? Because it is the nature of a good boat to accomplish that.

We say of a watch that it ought to keep correct time. Why? Because that is what a watch is for. A good watch must fulfil the law of its nature: if it does not, it is worthless. And so we say of any animal, of any creature of the universe. So we must say of man. Man ought—what?—ought to fulfil the highest possibility of his being; ought to be a man; ought to be all and the highest that being a man implies. Why? That is his nature. He ought to fulfil the highest possibilities of his being; ought not simply to be an animal. Why? Because there is something in him more than an animal. He ought not simply to be a brain, a thinking machine, although he ought to be that. Why? Because that does not exhaust the possibilities of his nature: he is capable of being something more, something higher than a brain. We say he ought to be a moral being. Why? Because it is living out his nature to be a moral being. He ought to live as high, grand, and complete a life as it is possible for him to live, and he ought to stand in such relation to his fellow-men that he shall aid them in doing the same. Why? Just the same as in all these other cases: because this and this only is developing the full and complete stature of a man, and he is not a man in the highest, truest, deepest sense of the word until he is that and does that; he is only a fragment of a man so long as he is less and lower. Ought, then, means just that. The sense of obligation is the sense that we have when we see some height of our being overtopping our present attainment, and we say that we must strive to attain that in order to be all that we were intended to be, all that we are capable of becoming. And we feel this because the experience of the world has demonstrated that only thus can we attain our own highest welfare and happiness, and help others to do the same.

Ought, then, implies two things. It implies the doing of something useful. You never felt, or you never should feel, any sense of obligation to do that which is of no use. You may be inclined, as mere matter of play, to do a thousand things; but you never feel I ought to do anything, unless

you conceive of it as useful. And the other element that enters into this conception is the sense of difficulty. You never feel a sense of obligation to perform anything that you are perfectly inclined to perform, that is perfectly easy, that is perfectly simple, that you would just as lief do as not. The sense of obligation comes in when there is something before you that is difficult and useful. Both of these ideas must enter in to complete the conception. You ought to do this because it is useful, and you feel the ought because it is hard.

So much, then, for the nature of this sense of obligation. Now, then, there is the other question that has perplexed all of you first or last, the question that has agitated the world and been discussed for thousands of years,—What is the nature and extent of the authority of this sense of obligation? Ought I always, under all circumstances, to bow before this sense of obligation, and do that which I feel I ought to do? And here I would guard my statements very carefully, lest I be misunderstood. I do not believe it is safe, as related to the moral sanity and the moral health of any man, woman, or child on earth, that this sense of obligation should be lightly disregarded; because thus you blunt what ought to be its keen edge, you take away from its power and tenderness. And, if you accustom yourself to disregard the sense of duty, you may break down entirely your moral nature, and thus undermine that which in you is highest and noblest and best. And yet, friends, it is true, it has been true in the lives of every one of us, it has been true thousands and thousands of times in the history of the world, and will be for years yet to come, that this sense of obligation commands people to do things that in their nature are wrong and injurious to themselves and to others. The sense of obligation,—what is it? where does it come from? You know there are those—large numbers—over the world, perhaps a majority at the present time, who will tell you that this sense of obligation is the voice of God in the soul. And yet, if you look over the world, you will find yourself distracted and disturbed and troubled

to carry out a theory like that ; for the voice of the everlasting truth cannot contradict itself. And yet we find two men in life-long opposition to each other, both of them impelled by a deep-down, deathless sense of obligation. It cannot be the voice of the same God in the soul of both of them. We find some tribes where, in spite of our thought that one must feel remorse for having committed a murder, the young braves of the tribe feel a sense of remorse and shame and restlessness, feel as though they had not won the right to be called a brave of the tribe, until they have committed a murder. A sense of obligation commands them imperatively to take the life of an enemy before they can dare to look their fellow-tribemen in the face. There are other nations where a sense of obligation commands theft. You know that almost everything that we call crime at the present time has been sometime, somewhere, commanded by the sense of obligation of the people. Almost everything that we call crime to-day sometime, somewhere, has been a religious duty. This sense of obligation, then, surely cannot be, in the ordinary use of language, the voice of God in the soul. God does not contradict himself. He does not commend murder, adultery, and all the crimes of the world as virtues in one nation and one period of the world's history, and condemn them as heinous offences in another. The great German philosopher Kant, and the transcendental school which he founded, talk about this sense of obligation as being what he calls a "categorical imperative" ; that is, if I can translate it and make you understand it, provided I understand it myself,—which I sometimes doubt,—he teaches that this sense of right is something that exists somewhere in the depths of the universe, that is independent of human experience, that has not sprung from it and does not represent it, and that yet has a right to command the absolute, unquestioning obedience of the world. Now I do not think we need to go so far away as this to understand the nature of its authority. I believe we can find a perfectly rational explanation of it close by, in our own natures. By asking and answering the question as to how this

sense of obligation is transmitted from one generation to another, how it happens that it has passed down the centuries from the old time to the present and will pass on to the future,—by asking and answering this question, I say, I think we shall be able perfectly and easily to understand how much authority attaches to this conscience that we carry in our bosoms.

This thing is to be explained by the modern law of heredity,—modern in the sense that it has been appreciated only in modern times, though it is no more modern as a fact than the law of gravitation. There is one grand thing about this theory of evolution: that it explains and reconciles so many of the old contests of the world. You know a theory is accepted as true when it answers to and explains the facts. How did it happen, for example, that the world came to reject the Ptolemaic theory of the universe? Because students discovered all sorts of facts with regard to the planets and the stars that that theory did not fit into and explain; and the Copernican theory of the universe stands to-day only because it easily explains them all. Now there has been a world-wide and a world-long conflict between two classes of thinkers, one class saying that all our knowledge comes from the experience of the individual; that each new child is a piece of white paper, and that it is left to its life experience to write on this paper its character; that each new child is a piece of uniform plastic material that is to be shaped by its own individual experience. And the other school of thinkers have said, No: this piece of paper that you call white is a palimpsest written all over when the child begins its career; this piece of plastic material is shaped already with certain tendencies that individual experience does not explain,—shaped as soon as the child is born. One of these classes of thinkers has been called experimentalists; the other, intuitionists. Now the grand thing that I speak of in regard to this modern philosophy of evolution is that it explains and reconciles this world-long conflict. Experience does account for it all; but not your experience,

nor mine alone: it is the experience of the world, the experience of the race from the beginning. And we, each one of us, are born as the results of what has been in all the ages of the past. And so we are born with intuitions of right and wrong, and we go on and add something to these intuitions, change or take away from them by our own personal experience, making them, perhaps, far other than they were when they came to us as our own personal inheritance. Now, then, if it is by the law of heredity that this sense of obligation is transmitted, what does it mean? It means simply this: the race has passed through long ages of experience, trying this course of conduct, trying that, to find out that in the long run this is good and healthful, and adds to the welfare and happiness of man, and that this other is evil and hurtful, taking away from the welfare, taking away from the happiness of humanity. And the result of this experience is wrought into the individual nature and inheritance of each one of us, so that we come into the world feeling that we ought to do this thing that the experience of the world has proved to be helpful and good, and that we ought not to do something that the experience of the world has proved to be hurtful and evil.

The nature, then, and the extent of the authority of this sense of obligation we shall easily understand, if we remember one distinction on which the whole matter turns. There are two kinds of experience which the world has gone through, and which we are going through to-day. One is the experience of the real facts, the real, vital relationships in which we stand to each other, to our fellow-men, to the world around us; and the other is the experience of the relation in which we suppose ourselves to stand to imaginary facts, imaginary beings, imaginary realities. Do I make myself clear? Suppose, for example, that I think there is a particular kind of God in the universe. I come to believe with my whole soul that God is of such and such character and nature, and that he demands of me certain things, and forbids certain other things. Now, so long as I

believe this, it has all the power over my life in controlling my actions, controlling my thoughts, in shaping my whole being, in marking out my career—it has, I say, all the power of the mightiest and grandest reality, even though there be no such God, and no such duty at all. My belief is the mighty thing that shapes me. If that belief corresponds to a reality, then the experiences I go through, and the intuitions that I transmit to posterity, are real and binding; but the beliefs that we inherit, the sense of obligation to do such and such things that we inherit from these *pseudo*, these false experiences of the world, these are not binding, because they do not represent any reality in the nature of things. You are to study, then, and find out whether the sense of obligation that you feel corresponds to some reality; whether the God you worship is a real God; whether the law you believe in is a real law; whether the relation in which you suppose yourself to stand is a real relation, or whether it is only an imagination of your own mind. The things that are binding are the eternal verities, and the other are things to be sloughed off and outgrown.

We must now pass to another question in regard to this sense of obligation,—the extent of it. How far does it extend over the world, how low down beneath us does it reach? How is it that this sense of obligation has widened out from ourselves to others? How does a selfish life become unselfish, and we become linked with all things that live and move on the face of the earth? We talk to-day a great deal about humanity, about the love that we ought to feel toward man as man, about the sense of duty that binds us to the lowest that wear the human form. And we go even farther than that: we are getting to be tender toward the lower forms of life, toward things that even do not live at all in the sense of having a conscious existence. We have not to look far into the past before we come to a state of things very unlike this. If you go back to the time of Paul, you find him standing on Mars hill in Athens, and proclaiming; “God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the

earth." That was a comparatively new and startling truth then; but it was not entirely new, for Paul himself was able to quote a verse from a heathen poet, one of their own, to confirm his own doctrine; and he adds, One of your own poets has said, "We are also his offspring,"—the children of the one God. And a Latin poet about this same time was able to write a verse that has become famous: "I am a man, and whatever is human I regard as not foreign to me." And yet you have only to go back to Plato, the great philosopher of antiquity, who is looked upon as one of the ideal men of the world, and you find him commending the Athenians for what? Because, in relation to the Persians with whom they had been at war, they had distinguished themselves among all the peoples of Greece. How? By, as he says, manifesting "a pure and heartfelt hatred to the foreign nature." There you find the true feeling of antiquity. And you go back far enough, and you find a little tribe with no sense of obligation to anybody outside of its own family limits. They were bound together by ties of blood, and they considered everybody outside of this little circle as a natural enemy. Did not Jesus himself say, in his Sermon on the Mount, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy"? It was an accepted maxim of antiquity that you were to hate foreigners. We have not quite outgrown that yet. How many of us can feel just the same toward a German or a Frenchman or an Englishman, much less toward a Chinaman or other Asiatic, as we feel toward one of our own kind? We can hardly feel that they are men like us. We can hardly feel the same tingling sense of indignity when a wrong is committed against a foreigner that we feel when it is committed against one of our own neighbors or friends.

And when the poet Cowper wrote that famous sentence of his, in which he declared that he would not care to count in his list of friends a man, however intellectual, however much of a gentleman, who would needlessly set foot upon a worm, he uttered a thought fit to make an advance in civilization, a

thought that is only in the hearts of the highest, the best, the noblest of men as yet. We have learned at last to look down upon Spain, with its bull-fights, as degraded and half-civilized; and yet the hunting-scenes of the gentlemen of England are only one step above that condition. And we, I think, shall have hardly risen to the noble ideal of our natures, until we, in our sensitive consciousness, shrink from inflicting the slightest pain, simply for our own amusement, on any creature that lives or moves or breathes. And this sense of obligation will reach out farther yet and lower down toward the inanimate world. There is something in us that responds to the beauty of that verse,—that sentiment of attachment toward what is living, indeed, but not conscious,—where the poet sings:—

“ Woodman, spare that tree
Touch not a single bough! ”

The sentiment appealed to there was indeed the memory of a childhood spent under that tree before it had attained its growth; but a perfectly sensitive, true conscience of the ideal gentleman of the world will shrink even from crushing a flower, a leaf, or a weed, out of pure wantonness. In anything that lives there is a touch of this infinite mystery, infinite beauty, infinite power that is all around us, and that breathes and kindles in ourselves.

How has this sense of obligation, then, passed so broadly over the world? It has come first from intelligence. So long as the nations of the world were not acquainted with each other, so long as they could dream that in some far-off country there was a race of men who carried their heads under their arms, or had only one eye in the centre of their foreheads, or were in some way monsters among men, you could not expect them to have any sense of obligation toward them. Intelligence first. Then next—what? An intellectual step, not a moral one yet,—the development and the making keen and vivid the power of imagination; the ability to think of other people as of other selves; the ability to realize their pain as though it thrilled your own

nerves; the ability to realize their pleasure as though it throbbed in your own heart; the ability to feel with them, to put yourselves in their places. And when intelligence and imagination have done their work, then the power of sympathy. Sympathy is the root of this sense of obligation. It is the grand power that links us with everything that lives, with everything that breathes, with all beauty and all life the wide world over.

There are one or two other points that I must briefly touch. This sense of obligation—will it last forever? Has it something permanent in its nature, or shall we by and by outgrow it and leave it behind? I believe, friends, that, just as fast and just as far as we get to be what we ought to be, the sense of obligation dies out. You hear people say sometimes,—and perhaps you sympathize with the saying, not stopping to think what it means,—Why, it is no virtue in me to do a certain thing: I had just as lief do it as not. It is no virtue for me not to follow a certain course of action, I have not any taste that way. It is no virtue in me not to get drunk; I do not like the taste of liquor. And yet I believe that you will not be perfected in virtue until you have reached that condition where everything you do is just what you like to do, until the sense of obligation is forgotten and outgrown. Think for a moment of the physical forces of the world moving on by their own law, perfectly, without any sense of obligation. Those functions of our body that are spontaneous, that are unconscious, like the beating of the heart and the breathing of the lungs,—those are the most perfect functions of all,—most perfectly fulfil their end, and carry out their true nature. If a man should say in regard to his wife, I know I ought to love her, and I will try just as hard as I can to do it, you would not think that he was an ideal husband. If a mother should say of her child, I ought to take care of my child as well as I know how,—it is hard work but I will try to do the best I can,—you would not think she was a model mother. It is when we have risen to such a state of heart and life that the things we ought to do are the

things we love to do, the things our nature leaps out to the performance of, those that are spontaneous, that we do without thinking, it is then we are perfect. A man is not a good player on the piano until he can sit down with fingers so trained and with his whole nature so habituated to it that the piece will, as we say, "play itself." When you can say of him as Lowell says in the opening of his poem, "The Vision of Sir Launfal":—

"Over his keys the musing organist
Beginning fitfully and far away
First lets his fingers wander as they list"—

when you can say of a man that, you can say that he has attained high excellence as an instrumental performer. So, then, just as fast and as far as you learn to love the things that you ought to do, and choose them because you love them, just so fast and so far will the sense of obligation die out, and you will not feel obliged to do them any more, because you want to do them.

And there is one other last question to be asked and answered briefly, Is this sense of obligation enough? It is that old question concerning "mere morality." They tell us a great many times that mere morality is not enough: that a man ought to be religious. In the true sense of these words, I most heartily agree with that statement. The mere intellectual perception of something as that which ought to be done is not enough. There is no power of motion in the simple intellectual perception of duty. That which moves the world is motion. That which moves men, always has moved them, always will move them, is motion with an *e* prefixed,—emotion. Emotion is the spring of life, the power that gives all human activity its impulse. If you have a clerk in your employ, and you say of him, He has a strong sense of duty, he feels that it is wrong to steal, and so I am sure he will not be guilty of it, you may feel perfect confidence in him on that basis. But if you could say of him, That young man hates and loathes and detests the idea of meanness just

because it is mean, of dishonesty because it is dishonest, and he has such a love of all that is true and noble and manly that he will not be honest under the impulse of a sense of duty, but will be honest because he loves it, you would feel a great deal safer about such a one than you would about the other. You feel that here is a higher, nobler state of mind. And all the grandest work of the world has been done under the impulse of this emotion of love and admiration. You take and open in your hands the poems of Hood, and you could pick out, even if you knew very little about his life, just the poems that he wrote under pressure of poverty and because he must earn money to keep want from his door, and those other poems that sprung spontaneously out of the poetic nature of his heart. A painter is not a perfect and finished artist until he loves his work, so that he does not paint merely for money or fame: he paints because there is a picture in his soul that he must transfer to canvas,—from love, admiration, worship of his ideal: then he is a perfect artist. Now I do not say that your religion must be a supernatural religion, that it must be consciously to yourself a worship of God,—anything that the churches call religion. The root of the religious life is simply admiration; love for something above you. I believe no man's life is perfect and no man's morals are safe until the sense of duty flames up into this emotion of love for an ideal far above him, far beyond him, that he worships, and must perforce, because he worships it, eternally pursue.

SELFISHNESS AND SACRIFICE.

The first question of the old "Shorter Catechism" is, "What is the chief end of man?" and the answer, as you will remember, "To glorify God, and enjoy him forever." Let us ask this same question from the standpoint of modern scientific morality, and see what the reply will be. The chief end of man is to discover and obey the laws of his nature and the laws of the universe of which he is a part, and thus to attain the highest possible welfare and happiness for all mankind. You will notice that what theology calls in one word God, modern science speaks of as nature or the universe. Remembering that, with a proper understanding of the two terms, they mean substantially the same, you will notice that our answer to the question as to what is the chief end of man is not so very unlike that of the old catechism. It is to glorify God by discovering and obeying his laws as manifested in human nature and the universe about us, and thus attain the highest possible welfare and the highest happiness. But who is this humanity? Who is this society, this all people, that we talk about, that need to attain the highest welfare and the highest happiness? Humanity is but an aggregation of individuals, and, from the standpoint of any particular person, humanity means simply himself and everybody else. If, then, humanity is to attain its highest welfare and its highest happiness, I must attain mine, and everybody else must attain theirs. The problem, then, as you will see very clearly, is to adjust the relationship between the individual and society, so that both the individual and society shall attain the rights,

perform the duties, and gain the welfare and happiness that belong to them. Let us see, then, if we can discover the principles that underlie the relationship in which the self stands to society,—if we can solve the problem of selfishness and sacrifice.

If you go down to one of the lower forms of life, you will find that the most characteristic thing about it, beyond the fact that it is alive, is the passion of hunger. After the simple fact of existence comes this all-absorbing hunger,—a reaching out in every direction for that on which it can feed and by means of which it can grow. As we come up in the scale of life, from the animal world to man, is there any change in the principle? Not at all. The one essential characteristic of every individual on the face of the earth, beyond the fact that he is alive, is expressed by that one word, hunger; only man does not hunger simply for bread, but he hungers for everything; hungers for whatever can feed any want, any department of his nature. His body hungers; he hungers for the materials of civilization; his brain hungers for truth, reaching out in every direction, a restless discoverer; his heart hungers for affection, for the response of other beings to his own nature; and his higher being hungers and thirsts eternally after 'righteousness. Hunger, then, is the root and is the most characteristic feature of the individual life. What does this mean? It means that the primal right and the primal duty of each individual is that it shall exist. Your first duty is to live. The duty that precedes anything that you owe to wife or child, to society, to the State, to anything else,—the first right and the first duty of every individual is to exist, and to reach out in every direction until it has gained the means by which it can exist. For see, society is only an aggregate of individuals. If the individuals perish, where is your society? Society itself depends upon the existence of the individuals that compose it; so that if you do not seek to exist, do not seek the means by which you may live and grow, you are false not

simply to yourself, but you are false to society. This, then, is the first right and the first duty,—the duty that you owe to yourself, and, through yourself, to the world.

Next, we are brought, as we think of it, face to face with the fact that the immediate motive, the spring of all human activity is, and must forever be, a selfish motive; not selfish in the evil sense of that word, but in the sense that all activity springs out of the self. The influence under which every person in the world acts is some sort of a feeling; and feeling, universal feeling, can be divided into two halves, two kinds, feeling of like or dislike, of attraction or aversion, of pleasure or pain: and no individual can by any possibility voluntarily act, except in the direction which, on the whole, it chooses. And the feeling under the impulse of which I act is my feeling, not yours. It may be, indeed, that the ultimate reason is your condition, your suffering, your pleasure, your wants, your desires, your pains; but until these things, through the power of sympathy, have started a feeling in my heart, I cannot voluntarily act. Every activity of the world then, I say,—and we cannot possibly escape it,—must have for its immediate motive and spring some feeling of the self.

There is another thing that we must notice. Society, I have said, is made up of the individuals that compose it. Each individual must count for one; and any particular individual has just as much right to count for one as any other individual. That is, to put it concretely,—so that you may see the extremest force of my meaning,—I am an individual, helping to make up the total that I call society. Now, then, I have just as much right to attain my highest welfare and happiness as you have to attain yours. It is just as important to the whole, taken as a whole, that I should attain my welfare and happiness, as that you should attain yours. But let us balance this by the necessary statement on the other side: it is just as important to the welfare of the world that you should attain your highest welfare and happiness as that I should attain mine. The point that I wish you to

bear in mind is, that each individual, the self or another, must count for one.

Let us now take one further step, and discuss this matter of selfishness. What do we mean when we call a person selfish in the evil sense! What are the limits of right and wrong concerning this matter of myself and my relation to other people? I have a right to seek after anything on the face of the earth that I desire; that can minister to me physically, mentally, morally, spiritually; that can add, in any direction, to my life; that can add to the fulness of my existence; that can add the least particle to my happiness. I have a right, I say, to seek any and all of these things, only with this one limitation: that I must not do it at the expense of the welfare or the happiness of any other creature on the face of the globe. That is the only limitation. And when you call a man selfish, in the evil sense of the word, if you stop to have any intelligent thought about it, you will see that what you mean is really this: that the person that you speak of as selfish is willing to get rich, is willing to gain social position, is willing to seek political preferment, is willing to be happy at the expense of the welfare and happiness of somebody else. If he desires any and all of these things within the limits of a strict and just regard for the equal rights of others, then he has done nothing wrong, and you have no right to call him selfish, in the bad sense of that word.

Let us go on further now, and consider in some concrete fashion this right and duty of the individual to seek everything that is best for himself. We shall find, as you have found in your experience, whether you have ever thought it out clearly in your own minds or not, that it is simply impossible for us to separate the self from the society. Self and society are the two unexpugnable factors of the problem. You cannot get rid of either of them. To bring it right home, then, and speaking of myself as representing this selfish side—I do it for the sake of being concrete and clear—let me say that it is my duty, not simply to myself, but it is my duty to you, to seek everything that is best,

everything that I can attain, that shall benefit me in any direction. Take it, for example, on the physical and material plane. It is my duty, so far as possible, to be physically healthful and strong. If I am not, I may become a charge and a burden upon you, upon those around me. If I am diseased, I cannot keep that disease to myself. I may communicate it to those about me, in every direction. It is not selfish for me to desire to live in as good a house as I can command the control of. If, for example, I build myself a fine and beautiful mansion close beside yours, you may, in your thoughtless moments, be envious if you are not able to build one just as fine ; but, if you stop to think of it for a moment, you will see that I am conferring a direct, definite, and tangible benefit upon you. The finer house I can build, the more I add to the value of your property that is just next door. The better work I can do in any direction, then, I am adding not simply to my own pleasure and enjoyment ; I am adding to yours. If I am able to become rich — not in what I believe to be the illegitimate way of taking without adequate payment the riches that somebody else already has created — but if I can become rich by creating myself, by adding to the wealth that already exists in society, then I am not taking away from your welfare and happiness ; I am adding to the sum total of the well-being of the town or city in which I live ; I am conferring a direct and tangible benefit upon every person that has to pay taxes, or that comes within the range of my influence. By as much, then, as I can benefit myself in any direction physically, by as much as I can build up myself, by so much I am not doing a selfish thing in the evil sense of the word ; I am conferring a direct and tangible benefit upon society. It is my right, then, and it is my duty, to secure just as much of good in my material and physical life as it is possible for me to attain.

Come up one step higher, into the intellectual life of man. It is my duty to be self-regarding here ; that is, in the sense of reaching out after the highest, deepest, broadest education that I can command ; to make the most of myself intellectu-

ally. Why? Suppose I am ignorant : I take away from the value of your knowledge just to the extent to which my ignorance reaches ; I destroy the field in which you are to display your intellectual activity and achievements. As far as my influence goes, I put a premium upon ignorance, I increase it in society. As far as my influence goes, I tend to increase the amount of bigotry, the amount of intolerance, the amount of superstition, that drags society down, and that drags you down as a part of society. So far as I am able to control the movement of public affairs, I injure the family, I injure society, I may even endanger the State, I may overthrow the foundations of a rational religion. So far as my influence goes, I tend to do all these things. My ignorance, then, so far from being an expression of humility and of self-abnegation on my part, is a weakness and a wrong,— a wrong not only to myself, but a wrong to others.

Of course you will see this principle with perfect clearness, when we come up into the region of morals. We never speak of a man as selfish when he tries to get all the morality that he can into his own heart and his own life ; because we see at once, as we do not see in regard to the lower things of life, that by as much as he is moral, by so much is he conferring a benefit upon society. But carry it a step further, and take it into the region of what is ordinarily regarded as pure and simple selfishness. Every one of you, the total society with which I come in contact, has a direct and personal interest in my being personally happy. When I seek happiness, then, for myself, I am not seeking something that is purely selfish in the evil sense of the word, and that interferes with the welfare and prosperity of the world. If I am happy, I cannot help communicating happiness to those about me, any more than the sun can help shining in the heavens, and sending his light out upon every planet and every moon that comes within the reach of his beams. If I am unhappy, I lower the tone of the happiness of the family and of the society in which I move ; I do a positive damage and injury to everybody that I can influence. If I am

happy, I can do better work, and I can do more of it : I can take better care of myself ; I can take better care of those that are dependent upon me. So then, it is my right and my duty, it is your right and your duty, to look after the matter of personal happiness ; because, as I said at first, you cannot separate yourself from those that are dependent upon you, and those that come in contact with you in every direction ; and, if you are unhappy, you are not only taking away from the sum total of the happiness of society, by as much as you are one member of it, but you are taking away from the happiness of everybody about you.

Let us now pass from this selfish side to the side of sacrifice,—the rights and the claims of society,—and see how they are related to the life of the individual. If your training has been like mine in this matter, you have been accustomed to hearing it preached from the pulpit, to hearing it talked about in society, that selfishness is the one thing that is natural to man. I think it is a part of the common creed,—until people stop a little, and think about it,—that everybody is selfish, a good deal more selfish than unselfish. Selfishness is looked upon as perfectly natural. But most of the churches teach that unselfishness, wherever you find it, is something unnatural, an indication of a supernatural grace, something bestowed ; that it is not a part of human nature, and that it does not spring naturally out of the human heart. And yet, if you will think about it just one moment, the simple fact that we are here to-day, pleasantly and peaceably related to each other, is not simply an indication, it is a positive demonstration, that there is more of unselfishness in the world than there is of selfishness. It is a positive demonstration that the self-regarding actions, in other words, are not so many, not so wide-spread, as are the class of activities that regard the rights and welfare of other people. If selfishness were in the majority, then there could be no society existing. That is, if the power that tends to drive men apart — and that is what we mean by selfishness in the evil sense — if the power that drives men apart were more power-

ful than that which draws them together, then they would be driven apart, instead of being as they are, together. There are more activities, then, more thoughts, more feelings, more affections, that are regardful of the rights and of the happiness of other people in society than there are of those that we call, in the evil sense of the word, selfish; and this is proved, as I said, by the simple fact, that there is any society existing.

We found that there was a great universal human passion at the root of selfishness, at the root of all regard for the individual,—this passion of hunger. We shall also find,—though possibly you may never have thought of it in this direction,—that there is a great and equally universal passion at the root of the social life of man, at the root of all those activities that regard the rights and welfare and happiness of others. Unselfishness, society, springs out of the fact, the great universal fact, of sex, and the relations in which man and woman stand to each other. This universal hunger that we call love lies at the root, and is the main-spring and essential characteristic of all unselfish activity the wide world over. Perhaps you will have to take this thought home, and think about it somewhat for yourselves, before you will see how much it means. It means that the individual, man or woman, standing alone in the world, is restless and unsatisfied; feels itself incomplete; desires inevitably and desires forever to go out of itself, and to attach itself to some other individuality. Here is the very root of ceasing to be simply individual, and beginning to be social. "It is not good for man to be alone," wrote the old chronicler, thousands of years ago. This simply sets forth this great universal fact. And when a man and a woman have found their complement in each other, and a little child is born by that mysterious miracle that no one has ever been able to explain, then both find their sympathies widened to take in a third, and the family broadens; and the love or the sympathy of the individual, having left itself, goes out, and expends itself on these other selves that are grouped around

it, and, in so wondrous a fashion, have sprung from the individual life. And so this sympathy, this unselfishness, widens, taking in the family ; then taking in the tribe ; then taking in the town, the community, the city ; then taking in the State, then the nation, then broadening to the rim of the world. The whole thing starts, as I have said, from this one central fact, this hunger that we call love, that reaches out for some other individual to satisfy the incompleteness of the one.

Now, let us pass on, to consider the law that underlies this great duty, this great beneficent fact of sacrifice. When is it right to sacrifice the self, and why is it right ? The end, as we have seen, the great end that justifies existence, is the welfare and happiness of mankind. Now, then, just think for a moment : the welfare and happiness of all the individuals composing society being the end, suppose I sacrifice myself, I have sacrificed one of the individualities that make up society ; that is, I have taken away from the welfare and the happiness of society just so much. Have I a right to do it ? Is it a duty to sacrifice ? Let us think ourselves clear about this just a moment, for there are many people in the world — I meet them in every direction — who have a general notion that there is a virtue in the matter of self-sacrifice, no matter for whom or for what or under what circumstances, or whether there is any special call for it or not ; they have a general idea that there is a virtue in self-sacrifice for its own sake. This has sprung up, I think, for two reasons. We have found in the history of the world, and as the result of human experience, that we have been obliged to sacrifice a great many times for the welfare of others ; and we have also been taught, from the beginning of the world until now, that it was a religious duty to sacrifice ourselves at the command of religion ; and people have done here, what they are doing all the time everywhere, for the lack of stopping to think long enough to find out what they are doing, — they have put the means in the place of the end ; and because it is a virtue to sacrifice yourself for somebody else, because it is a duty to sacrifice the present for the future sometimes, because it is the duty of the individual to

sacrifice himself for society, they thoughtlessly take up with the notion that there is some inherent virtue in the matter of self-sacrifice for its own sake. But, if you think of it for a moment, you will find that there is not the slightest. The end to be attained, as I have said, is the highest welfare and happiness of all. It may be right for me to sacrifice the present for the future ; it may be right for me to sacrifice myself for the general welfare, or for you to sacrifice yourself for the general welfare ; for a man to sacrifice himself for his wife, for his children, for his friends, for society, for his country, for his religion : but if you sacrifice yourself for nothing, instead of having done a virtuous thing, you have done a vicious one ; that is, you have taken away from the sum total of the welfare and happiness of society without a cause. I know men and women who, in a morbid conscientiousness, are continually carrying this thing so far as to make it absurd. I have one lady in mind now,—who has the idea that somehow or other, she, or somebody else will be the better for it, or that God will be pleased by it,—who, on particular days in the week, declines to eat special things that she is very fond of, or declines to go to certain places in which she takes great delight ; or is perpetually hunting up something or other that she can do, or not do, to make herself uncomfortable, with the general idea that thus she is manifesting some extraordinary kind of piety or virtue. She has no clear idea of what it all means, what it is all coming to in the end. Only she has the idea, that she is better for sacrificing herself, without any thought about anything beyond that. This, I say, instead of being a virtue is a vice.

Sacrifice is a virtue only where, by sacrificing the present, or by sacrificing yourself, you are adding, in the long run, and all people taken into account, to the general sum of goodness and happiness in the world. That is the only reason there can be to justify the sacrifice of self or of anybody else. It may sometimes be necessary for the individual to sacrifice even life itself for society ; and he ought to do it when he stands face to face with some crisis

where he cannot refuse to stand and be true to the truth that has laid its hand upon him,—for we owe everything to society. We owe our existence, we owe our material surroundings and welfare, we owe our health, we owe our intelligence, we owe our morals, we owe the commercial relations of the world that enable us to carry on our business and to accumulate our property—we owe everything to society; and, when the highest welfare of society asks it, we have no right to decline the uttermost sacrifice.

But it is possible to carry this matter of self-sacrifice altogether too far, even when we have the clearest ideas concerning the natural end and motive for doing it. For example, I have in mind, now, a friend who frequently carries unselfishness to such an extreme as to make it selfishness. What do I mean? Why, think for a moment how possible it is. If I am to give money away as a present, or as a charity to anybody, there must be somebody to take it. If I am to impart my knowledge, there must be somebody to receive the knowledge. If I am to spread broadcast influences that shall result in human happiness, there must be somebody to accept those influences. If everybody should get to be perfectly unselfish, everybody anxious to give and nobody willing to take, why, of course there would be no possibility of active unselfishness any longer in the world. It is a mutual thing, give and take, bestow and receive. So that if anybody else is to be unselfish, you and I must be selfish sometimes; that is, we must be willing to accept things from them. As I said, I have a friend who carries this matter so far, that she is all the time anxious and afraid lest she should be under obligation to somebody; that is, lest somebody should have done something for her that she has not paid back. I call that simple selfishness. I enjoy giving; it is a source of delight to me. I think, then, I ought to give other people credit for having this same beneficent delight in bestowing and in making other people happy. That means, that I ought to be willing to

give them the privilege of giving as well as to exercise that privilege myself ; and, in order to do that, either I or somebody else must be willing to receive. If you carry this matter, this unselfishness, too far, you defeat it, and make it selfishness and wrong.

Now, then, friends, just as in treating of selfishness I said we cannot possibly separate the self from society, and that we cannot benefit ourselves without benefiting others, so I say in regard to society ; even if we are ever so selfish, we cannot afford to neglect the welfare and rights of other people. It is a necessity, that we should think about and act with regard to the wants, the rights, and the welfare of others. Take for a moment, some complementary illustrations to match those I used on the other side in discussing selfishness. Does it make no difference to me what the material condition of my neighbors may be ? If my neighbors cannot support themselves, I must help support them ; if they are sick, they may impart to me the disease ; if they are living in a hovel, next door to me, they take away from and deface the beauty of my own residence. It is just as important to me that my neighbors should be prosperous and well off as it is that I should be prosperous myself. They cannot possibly, any of them, get any good without benefiting me by it. I may be foolishly envious, because I have not attained precisely the pitch of respectability or wealth that somebody else has attained ; and yet a man of respectability and wealth in my neighborhood is a positive benefit to me, because he lifts me up, and floats me on a higher tide than I should otherwise attain. Were there no general civilization about me, my own civilization would be either impossible, or would count for nothing. The rich, the cultured, the healthful, then, cannot afford to disregard the poor, the ignorant, the diseased.

And so it is essential and important to my prosperity and welfare, and to that of my friends and neighbors, that you should be intelligent. There would be no field for any intelligence that I might possess were there no intelligence on

the part of those around me ; they could not understand it. And if there is ignorance all around, superstition, bigotry, my intelligence may be shut up, and limited to a very narrow sphere ; it would be restricted on every hand, and might be even swamped by the floods of ignorance and bigotry that were about me. And am I not interested in the moral condition of my fellow-men? Can I afford to fold my arms and say, I am righteous, and I do not care whether anybody else is or not? The immorality that is around me constitutes a malarial and infectious atmosphere that I must breathe, and in which moral health and moral happiness can no more exist than a plant can grow under an exhausted receiver, or in air that is poisonous to its very life. And if there is criminality on the part of my fellow-men, it taxes and cripples and hurts and hinders me in every direction. It is absolutely essential, then, to my highest and best welfare and happiness that society should also attain its highest welfare and happiness, thus giving me a proper surrounding and soil in which I can grow. It is essential, even, that society about me should be happy, if I am to be happy. No man who is sympathetic and thoughtful can live happily in the midst of surrounding squalor, misery, and wrong. It touches and chills and thrills him in every direction with throbs of pain. And if to escape this sympathetic sorrow with the sorrows of others, I blunt and harden my sensibilities, I may indeed escape certain pangs of pain ; but I cut off at the same time all the sources of sympathetic pleasure that must come in at the same avenues. I am no wiser than as though, in order to escape seeing some ugly spot in the landscape, I should put out my eyes, and thus incapacitate myself for seeing the beauty of the earth and of the heavens. We cannot, then, I say, separate between the rights and the duties, the welfare and the happiness of the self and of others ; they are linked indissolubly together ; they go up or they go down together. I cannot be unselfish to the extent of injuring myself without injuring you ; I cannot be selfish to the extent of injuring you without injury to

me. We stand hand in hand, and must march on brothers and sisters, or else we must all be crippled and halt together.

And now, for my brief closing word, I wish to call your attention to two principles that issue from this discussion, and on which the whole problem rests. The first thing, the one thing essential to the welfare of the individual and of society, the one thing on which all other things rest, is not love, not unselfishness even; it is justice,—the thing that we need first and above all things else. We need it before we need charity, we need it before we need pity, we need it before we need love, we need it before we need beneficence,—we need justice; justice in the household between husband and wife; justice in the household between parent and child; justice in society; justice between the different classes that make up society, between the rich and the poor, between the learned and the ignorant, between the capitalist and the laborer; justice between the different religious organizations that exist, and have an equal right to exist; justice between the citizen and his ruler. This is the one grand crying need of the world, the one thing to adjust the relations of the individual to society. And I emphasize this, because there are thousands of men in the churches, men everywhere, claiming to be pitiful, with words of love, with words of beneficence, and with words of brotherhood on their lips, who are telling us that we must love our neighbors as ourselves, who are talking charity, and who are giving money—there are hundreds and thousands, I say, like this, who have not yet learned the first essential principles of justice. They talk love, while they ought to be studying what is fair and equal.

That first, that always, that everywhere! Then, after that, the other principle:—the free play, the spontaneous activity of love and beneficence; the pouring out of your thought, of your character, of your time, of your money, without thinking whether it is going to be paid back or not; the giving and doing all fine and sweet and true and beautiful things, because, possessing those qualities, you cannot help

it. A flower cannot be beautiful without imparting the delight of that beauty to every competent beholder. A flower cannot be fragrant without scattering its fragrance on every breeze, and delighting every passer-by. A diamond cannot be brilliant without flashing its beauty and its wealth on every side. The sun cannot shine without scattering his rays broadcast in every direction, through all heavens, to fall upon every wandering planet and most distant moon. And so man cannot be what he ought to be without this free, spontaneous activity,—the natural outplay in all directions of those things that in him are highest and finest and sweetest.

And you will see right here, that, looked at from this standpoint, there cannot possibly be any intelligent conflict between selfishness and sacrifice. That which is for the best good of everybody must be, in the long run, for the best good of the individual; and that which is for the best good of the individual must be for the benefit of society. For those qualities, those characteristics, that make you a man high, sweet, pure, and true, that constitute your own perfection, it is those that make you of use and value to the society of which you are a single member. There is, then, no conflict, no antagonism. Only learn to establish equity between man and man, only give free play to the beneficent and beautiful impulses of your being, and there shall be no more talk of self or sacrifice, but only a free play and activity of human nature, culminating in the kingdom of God, of truth, and of love.

THE RELATIVITY OF DUTY.

WE sometimes talk about things as they are in themselves, and then about them as they appear to us to be. This is all right and allowable, if we only understand what we mean; but, as a matter of simple fact, we do not know what anything is in itself, *per se*. We do not know what an atom of sand from the street is in itself. We do not know what a flower is in itself, or a tree, or a star. All our knowledge, in other words, is relative—relative to the faculties that we possess for perceiving them, the sense by which we come into contact with them, the avenues through which they report themselves to us. Let me take a simple illustration, that you may see how universal this truth is, and how far-reaching. Suppose I have here in my hand a violin—a violin as I can describe it now, having all my five senses; that is, being able to come at it from five different directions. I can report that it is something hard to my touch, of a particular, definite shape. I can strike it, and hear a sound, and report that it is hollow, my past experience enabling me to say that that kind of sound always means that the thing giving it out is hollow within. I can touch its strings with my fingers, and thus learn that a violin is something that is capable of giving forth different kinds and qualities of tones. If it be made, as it generally is, of some fragrant kind of wood, I can smell it, and so discover that it has another quality that we call odor. I can look at it, and see its color; and I can even touch it with my tongue, and find out

the taste either of the wood itself or of the varnish that covers it. That is, it reports itself as something different to every one of my senses. Now, suppose I had only the sense of touch: so far as my knowledge is concerned, a violin would be only something hard, having a particular shape. Suppose I had only the sense of sight: I should be able to perceive its outline and its color; and a violin would be only something having shape and color. Suppose I had only the sense of hearing: a violin would be something having no shape, color, or hardness at all, but only sound. Suppose I had only the sense of taste: then the violin would be only something that had about it a resinous taste, or a taste like varnish, or a taste like cedar or spruce, or whatever the wood of which it was composed. Thus we come at anything that you choose to select as an illustration, from stars down to street-dust. We reach them through the functions of these senses that are capable of perceiving their various qualities; and they are to us according to these perceptions which we bring to the investigation of them.

Now, it is perfectly conceivable that we might have more than five senses, just as it is conceivable that we might have less than five, as we know a great many persons do. If we had six senses or seven or ten, the addition of these perceptive powers might give us a new universe. That is, the universe to us, to-day, is what it is because it is related thus to the different perceptive faculties and powers with which we come to its investigation. There is nothing that is such, in itself. Water of such a temperature as would freeze us and put an end to our existence is perfectly comfortable to creatures that are made to live and swim in it. We sometimes talk about sugar as being sweet. There is no inherent quality of sweetness in sugar. The taste of sugar is purely relative to our tasting capacity. Sometimes, when you are sick, sugar is not sweet, vinegar is not sour; and nothing has the taste that it has when you are well. You have changed the quality of these things, then, so far as they appear to you, simply by changing the condition of your own system. And

so of beauty. Our ideals of beauty are not those that have always been held, or that are held, to-day, all the world over. The fair-skinned beauty of Boston would not be regarded as beautiful in the land of the Zulus or in China. Types of beauty are relative to the perceptive faculties of the people that have been trained to see and to regard them. And so—I have given you illustrations enough—all our knowledge of the universe is relative knowledge, not absolute. We cannot penetrate anything, and find out what it is in itself. People sometimes think that it is a very discouraging statement to make about God, that he is unsearchable,—that we cannot find him out, that we cannot seek the place of his abode, and tell what kind of a being he is in his inmost nature. There is nothing more discouraging in that direction than there is in any other. I cannot find out what you are in your inmost nature; I cannot find out what a tree is in its inmost nature; I cannot find out what anything is in its inmost nature. I simply know things as they are manifested to me; and the kind of knowledge I get depends upon the condition of every one of my faculties of perception.

All this is only introductory to the statement, that precisely the same thing holds true in regard to the matter of duty. Duty, also, is not absolute. There is no absolute, unchanging, eternal duty in the universe, so far as actions are concerned. Must we, then, say that there is nothing eternal about it, that there is nothing absolute about it, that there is nothing final about it? No, we need say nothing of the kind. We must simply remember a distinction which is all-important for the clearness of our thought. The underlying principle of duty is absolute, eternal, unchanging. And what is that underlying principle? That which I have had occasion to state to you several times during the progress of these discourses. Every man, every woman, every child, is under eternal obligation, so far as able, to do those things which are for the highest welfare and happiness of all mankind. There is the principle,—a principle that never relaxes, a principle that is never broken, a principle

that is never changed, a principle that applies to the lowest form of life as well as to the highest ; that applies to the first crude beginning of civilization, and applies equally to the last and highest that we can conceive. That is the eternal part of duty. But when you come to the matter of the practical application of it, it is infinitely varied ; for we must perpetually, in all the changed circumstances and conditions of our life, ask ourselves the question : " Just now, just here, what is for the highest welfare and happiness of myself and of all mankind ? " There is a question that can receive an infinity of answers, and yet the principle remain unchanged forever. It is for lack of marking clearly this intellectual discrimination that so many people have been able to say : " Why, duty is anything, and duty is everything. It is never twice the same ; it is not the same in different climes ; it is not the same among different people ; it is not the same in different degrees of civilization : and so there is nothing permanent about duty ; it is a mere matter of convention and fancy. " I say it is for the lack of clear discrimination that people have been able to blunder into a statement so wide of the truth as this. The principle is eternal ; the applications are infinitely varied.

Now, then, let us pass to consider some of the principal ways in which this matter of duty appears to us as relative. And, in the first place, it is relative to man in general. This is an important fundamental statement, that I am briefly to dispose of, making it as short but as clear to you as I can. Duty is not something that existed before there were any creatures in the universe, something outside of all human beings, or human relationships. Duty begins when sentient creatures come into contact with each other. Duty, then, to-day, is what it is because men, women, and children are what they are. If, for example, we could conceive of a universe where all the present conditions of life could be changed, if we could find a world where cold would not freeze people, and where heat would not burn them ; if we could find a world where those things that now hurt people

would be good for them ; where it was a benefit to a man to steal from him and swindle him in business ; where those things that would make him sick now would then make him well ; where those things that now give him pain would minister to his pleasure,—if, I say, we could conceive of a different kind of man and a different kind of world for men, women, and children to live in, then we should have altogether another kind of duty, another kind of right and wrong : because it is the eternal duty of all to do that which ministers to the welfare and happiness of man. And if, I say, our circumstances were so changed that something else would minister to our welfare and happiness, then duty would change. In saying this, do we admit any disintegrating principle into this matter of right and wrong, so that the foundations of morality are liable, by and by, to be worn away and crumbled into dust ? By no means. Until humanity changes, and becomes a different kind of humanity from what it is to-day, duty will not change. When humanity does change, if ever, then duty not only will change, but it ought to change.

Not only, then, is duty relative to man because he is what he is and is circumstanced as he is, but it is also relative to the different grades of the advancing civilization of man. This you will find to be a very important distinction and one to which I ask your earnest, careful attention ; and you will find we have not outgrown applications of it yet. What do I mean ? Why, when we look over the history of the world, if it be for the first time, we are rather startled to find that almost everything that we now consider virtue has sometime been disregarded,—not only by individuals, but by a whole race, by a whole civilization, by a whole religion ! We find that those things that we now regard as vices have been practised universally by whole tribes, whole cities ; and we are startled also to find that the people were comparatively happy and comfortable under those circumstances ; and that, instead of being in process of disintegration and decay, they are actually in a comparatively healthy condition of growth,

and are looking on towards a higher and better condition. For example, to make myself perfectly clear, as we go back into the past, we find, at times, grades of civilization and conditions of the people when superstition of the wildest kind, when despotism of the most iron sort, when war, merciless and bloody, when polygamy, when slavery, have all been regarded as right and good. And let me say — I will explain so that I trust you will not misunderstand me — let me say that in regard to these all,—superstition, despotism, war, polygamy, slavery,—at that time, under the circumstances, they were comparatively good. They are not to be looked at and regarded as we regard them from the standpoint that we occupy, to-day. They were good. They were not a sign, then, of degradation ; they were a sign of progress. Let me see if I can make you understand clearly and definitely just what I mean. I hold an acorn in my hand : the inner meat and seed are covered with a hard, impervious shell. This shell is necessary in the growth of the acorn, necessary to preserve and protect it so long as it remains an acorn ; and so, for the acorn, it is good. But if this is ever to be planted, and to become an oak, the shell must be burst and broken ; it must be sloughed off and left behind, to go back to decay, and thus help on the nourishment of the higher life. A man who is worth only one hundred dollars is looked upon by a millionaire as in comparative poverty ; and he is. But if the man has never before owned a dollar in his life, and has come up from a lower condition, and for the first time holds in his hand one hundred dollars that he can call his own, compared with his previous condition he is rich.

This whole matter, then, is relative, comparative. Now let me tell you what I mean. We go back to the primal condition of men, and we find them wild and degraded and barbaric,—hordes on the very verge of humanity, so that we can hardly tell whether they are brute or human. Now, for their progress, one of the very first conditions is, that they shall become organized,—compact together in some kind

of society ; that there shall be some bond that will bind and hold them together so that they can act, not as scattered and dissevered individuals, but as a larger unit. Superstition once helped to bring about just this condition of things : the fear of the ancestral spirit ; trembling in the presence of the shade of the dead chief ; not daring to do anything except that which was supposed to be his will ; the necessity of keeping up the worship of these ancestors—this was once the central idea of the family. It bound the family together ; it bound the tribe together ; it helped, among other forces, to create the family and the tribe. When first arose the despot,—one man who towered so much above his fellows that they began to think that he must be a descendant of the gods, and to call him hero, demigod, and after his death to worship him,—when, I say, one man towered thus above his fellows, and gained such wide-spread power and influence that he was able to sweep whole masses of men into compacted communities and armies,—to organize them,—he helped man onward and upward one step in his civilization. What does polygamy mean, when you approach it, not from our standpoint, but by going down, and, from a standpoint away below it, coming up to it? For you must remember that polygamy is not the lowest social position that the world has ever occupied. It is comparatively above the barbaric, and is a step onward in the progress of man. At first, there was wild and brutal promiscuity,—not even the semblance of family, not even the semblance of wifehood or legal motherhood. When, emerging from a condition like that, you come up to polygamy, and find, though a man have five, fifty, or a hundred wives, a recognition of the propriety of some sort of family relation, society wins a grand step in advance in the civilization of man. So that, I say, when you look at polygamy from away beyond and below it, looking at it out of the depths of human barbarism, it was away up above the then condition of humanity, as much as the perfect purity of the home is above the average condition of

our great cities, to-day. And slavery; was that also once a good? We have been accustomed to think that it is the most gigantic of crimes,—this depriving a human being of his rights, of the control of his body, of the control of his wife and children, of the control of his earnings; and, from our standpoint, it is a gigantic crime. John Wesley did not use any too strong language about it, when he said it was “the sum of all villainies.” There is hardly a crime or wrong that can be mentioned that does not find natural shelter under the shadow of the black wings of slavery. And yet there was a time in the history of the world when slavery was a blessing,—when slavery was an advancing step in civilization. Think for a moment. It was at first the universal custom of tribes, in their wars, to massacre indiscriminately all the prisoners that they took captive; they did not know what else to do with them; they had no idea of humanity. By and by there came into their hearts something more of human tenderness, something of a regard for the rights and the lives of their fellow-men; and, instead of putting them to death or letting them go free—for they did not dare then to let them go free, and it would have been unsafe to let them go free, to come back and fight them again—when the people, then, had conquered an alien tribe, instead of putting them indiscriminately to death, they took them captive, and carried them home, and held them in slavery. This, then, was something better than indiscriminate murder, and it was a step higher in advancing civilization.

Slavery, then, was once a good. It is a crime, to-day, and an unspeakable wrong, because it represents a lower type of civilization that we have outgrown. There is a lesson here, it seems to me, for us to learn concerning the condition of the South to-day and our own recent history. I do not think that Garrison was any too bitter in his denunciations of the evils of slavery. I think that he may have been sometimes too bitter, and that we to-day may be sometimes too bitter, in our estimate of the conscious sin and wrong of

the people who were implicated in that institution. Only remember that it is just a few years ago when the North, a large part of it, believed in it just as much as the South. Among those that made themselves distinguished in our pre-revolutionary times, there was no man greater than Jonathan Edwards. He was intellectually so gigantic in his stature that he was one of the first Americans tall enough to be seen across the ocean, and recognized as a great man in Europe,—one of the keenest and subtlest metaphysicians of his time. And he was not a cruel man; he was not a hard man; he was not a man without a conscience,—one of the most conscientious, earnest, religious souls of his age. And yet Jonathan Edwards went down to Connecticut and bought a negro boy, took him behind him on his horse, and carried him home to Northampton; and, when one of his deacons remonstrated with him on the subject, he preached a sermon in defence of slavery. I speak of this simply to illustrate how people, thrown in the midst of certain systems and certain ideas, although they may be doing wrong, may not be consciously doing wrong; and there is a world-wide difference between the two. One is wrong; the other is a sin. A man is doing wrong when he is breaking any law of his nature, or law of the relationships in which he ought to stand to his fellows; he is sinning only when he is doing this consciously and purposely. You may do wrong under the inspiration of your conscience just as easily as under the inspiration of a burning hatred; but you cannot sin under the inspiration of your conscience; you can only do that when you are acting against your conscience.

Right and wrong, then, are relative to the different grades of civilization. But once more: taking it home to us, to-day, right and wrong are relative to the circumstances in which we stand,—relative to our ability; relative to our opportunity; relative to our intelligence; relative to our moral and spiritual insight. For example, as giving you an illustration of what I mean, and letting you follow it out for your-

selves : I know mothers who carry around with them a burdened conscience, because they do not help on this work of benevolence, and do not help on that ; because they are not able to enter into society, and assume, as they say, their share of the social burden. Perhaps they are physically weak. Perhaps they are kept at home by ties which they dare not disregard or break. And yet they go about, I say, burdened, carrying a conscience that accuses them of wrong ; and they say, " I know I ought to do this, and I ought to do that ; but I cannot." Duty is relative,—relative to your ability. And when you say, " I ought, but I cannot," then one or the other of the terms of that proposition is untrue. If you ought, then you can ; if you cannot, then you ought not. There never was a case in the history of the world where a person ought and could not. It may sometimes be a difficult matter to decide whether you can or not, or which way the balance should turn ; but duty never points in two directions at the same time. And so here, again, duty is relative to conditions and circumstances. Precisely the same act which is a crime under one condition may be a virtue in another. Suppose, for example, I seize by the hair of the head a beautiful little fair-faced child of yours. I do it in a fit of anger. I receive and I deserve your execration. Suppose we are out in a boat together, and she has fallen over the side, and I seize her just as she is sinking,—seize her more roughly than I did in the other case, and save her life ; I receive your thanks, your tender gratitude. And yet it is precisely the same external muscular act. A man may kill another, and be guilty of premeditated murder ; he may kill him, and be guilty only of manslaughter ; he may kill him, and it be simply an accident ; he may kill him in war, or where some grand principle is involved, and it be an act of heroism that shall make his name famous among the benefactors of his kind through all time. A deed, then, the quality of a deed, is relative to the conditions and circumstances under which it is performed. There is no single deed in the world that may not be bad or good according to

the circumstances and the motives that inspire it. And so in regard to this matter of moral insight. When I have seen some high duty, when it has revealed itself to my eyes, and I know that I ought to do it, because I see that it is a good thing and ought to be done, no matter if nobody else sees it, the duty has laid its hand upon me, and I have no right to excuse myself on account of the lower moral life and tone of society about me. It is relative to my moral insight, and I ought to do my best, grandest, and highest.

I must pass, now, to another division of my subject, and give what time remains to the discussion of the relative importance of certain classes of duties ; for this is a matter, I think, that needs and deserves our most careful attention. In the first place, let me say, that, other things being equal, the duty that lies nearest to you is the one that you ought first to give your attention to. Suppose I am a surgeon on the field of battle, and there has a man fallen right by my side, and over there are a hundred or a thousand ; which shall I attend to first ? Life is dear to them all ; all of them have friends, perhaps wife and children, dependent upon them. I must take the first that comes to hand, then that which lies over yonder. Take it in regard to our social relations ; which shall I do, look after my wife and children first, or look after the general welfare of society ? Many and many a time does a conflict, or an apparent conflict, of duty like this come up. You remember, perhaps, that picture of Mr. Dickens' in "Bleak House," where he describes the household arrangements and affairs of Mrs. Jellyby,—how the children are left running loosely and wildly over the house, in rags, in dirt, neglected, uneducated, unkempt, while the mother is devoting herself, day after day, week after week, to the work of sending the gospel to foreign parts. I remember a case like this, not in a novel, but in real life. When I was living at the West, there was a lady who was a very zealous religionist. She was one of those who believe in perfection, and she was one of those who supposed that she had reached it ; and a large part of the time she was engaged in attend-

ing perfectionist meetings and discussing the subject, and trying to get all her friends to be as perfect as she was. And I remember, one day, a friend of mine met her little boy, out at the knee and elbow, in the street, looking very dilapidated. He inquired where his mother was, and found that she was attending a perfectionist meeting somewhere. And then the boy gave a sigh, and said, "And when papa comes home, and does not find the dinner ready, you just ought to hear him swear!" And I seriously question which was doing the most evil, she in attending her perfectionist meetings under those circumstances, or he in swearing about it. She was neglecting the first duty that was laid upon her, the duty of taking care of those of her own household,—those around her feet, those that looked to her for care and guidance.

And so I say of a man: his first duty, before he is generous, before he helps send the gospel anywhere over the world, before he helps any charitable association, before he does anything beyond the limits of his own doorstep, is to look after wife and child. He has entered into these sacred associations, taken upon himself these sacred obligations; and these come first, before generosity or charity have any claim. There may indeed come a conflict that shall even supersede the rights and the claims of those that are dearest. When John Rogers went to the stake, and the wife and the children followed him to see him burn, which was it then? Was it duty for John Rogers to look after wife and child, or to burn? When Sir Thomas More stood in prison, and his wife came to him and clung about his feet, and begged him with tears to recant and go home, which was duty then? There may come a time when the claims of humanity, the claims of truth, shall supersede all lesser and lower claims. When that time does come, then let us turn our faces Godward, and put all the world behind our backs. This is the spirit expressed in the lines of that old song where the lover says to the one that he loves, when he

leaves her and goes to the wars to fight for his country and his God :—

I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more.

There may come times when a man, in order to be true to the lower wants and welfare of those about him, must be false to all that is highest, deepest, and noblest in his own being ; then he must stand up and be true.

And there is another apparent conflict,—the relative importance of duties to man and duties to God. Which have the first claim on us? It has been held from the foundation of the world, almost, that duty to God must be first. Duty to God among the barbaric peoples of the primeval world was worship of dead men instead of living ones ; it was satisfying the claims of deceased ancestors. So that then, perhaps, it was hard to decide as to which had the highest claim, the living or the dead. But now which? What does Jesus say? Let us look at a little New Testament morality, although I think it is still very far from being acted upon and carried out. Jesus rebukes, with all the bitterness of his burning words, that recreant son who instead of taking care of father and mother put his property beyond his reach by calling it “corban,”—that is, sacred to deity,—and then saying, “Father, I would like to take care of you and mother, I would like to look after your wants ; but all the property there is for doing it is ‘corban,’ it is sacred to God, and I cannot take it for the sake of looking after human welfare.” And so you find in different directions, all over the world, how the rights of men have been trampled on in the service of God. There have been periods in history when every year kings and priests slaughtered men by the hundreds and thousands to please the deities ; when they did not slaughter them, but ground them down, crushed them, taxed them, made them work and slave and labor for the building of gorgeous temples, and the support of magnificent services and rituals,—long, wailing, dreary periods, when human rights, human welfare, human prosperity,

human happiness, was nowhere of any account, but all the priesthoods and the kings were very religious, serving God, but neglecting man.

Which is the highest claim? Go back again to the New Testament for an illustration. You remember how Jesus says, you bring a gift here to the temple altar, and you remember there that there is some difficulty between you and one of your friends. Do not dare, says Jesus, to go in with this offering to God, so long as this difficulty remains with your brother. Go and adjust matters with him first, then come and be religious afterwards. That is the doctrine of Jesus. Let us think of it for a moment, to see whether it is possible for us to approach God while neglecting humanity. People seem to think that they can leave human rights and human welfare neglected all around them; that they can be unjust, refuse to pay their debts, swindle those that are laboring for them,—that they can break every law of humanity, and still be very religious. I tell you there is an adamant wall as high as heaven, as deep as the abyss, as wide as the diameter of space between a man like that and God; and there is one little narrow door, and only one, through which he can go to reach the other side of that wall where God abides; and over that door is written for inscription, “If you would find God, first be in right relation to your fellow-men.” Where is God, that we can find him while out of relation to our fellows? What is he, that we can bring an offering to him that he will care for, except service to our fellows? Did he not say, even by the lips of the old prophet, thousands of years ago, I do not care for your thousands of rams or your ten thousand rivers of oil: I do not care for your incense,—it is an abomination to me; what I do care for is, that you shall “do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God”? And yet people have gone on still, in spite of these grand words echoing and ringing in their ears, neglecting their duty to their fellow-men and very devoutly coming to church, reading the Bible, doing this thing, doing that, doing a thousand other things, well, and perhaps

useful and good, in their place, but false and wrong when used as a substitute for this that is higher.

How can we approach unto God? Where is he? I tell you that God, though he be in the heavens, cannot be served by you there. What can you do that he cares for? Would you bring him an offering? The cattle on a thousand hills are his. If he were hungry, he would not tell you. You need not bring him food to eat, or raiment to wear. What does he care whether you pray facing the East or facing the West? What does he care whether you are robed in a surplice, or in a black frock coat? What does he care whether you pray on your knees or on your feet? What does he care for the swinging of a censer in which sweet smelling spices are consumed? All these things, if they be made to take the place of righteousness and truth and service to your fellow-men, are trash and rubbish. Only those things that help man are of any use to God. Where is God? He is where a man needs something; he is where a man is ignorant that needs teaching; he is where a man is wounded, and needs to be bound up; he is where a man is in prison who needs to get free; he is where a man is depraved and degraded, and needs to be lifted up towards heaven. God is anywhere, where there is human need; he is anywhere, where you can help your fellow-men. And if you attempt to find him anywhere else, you will only choose a phantom of your own imagination. If you attempt to find God, then, do not dare to pass over the prostrate body, or trample down the rights, of a fellow-man. Until you are in right relation with your neighbors, until you have done your best to be just and generous and faithful and true, in the relations of life, do not dare to think that you can come to God, and leave man bleeding behind you.

And now let us look at the relative importance of the duties that you owe to this present life, and that you owe to the next; which is the most important thing, as a duty, that you look after this world, or that you look after heaven? And here let me say frankly, if it be true that there is this

great eternity outlying us on every hand, stretching on forever and ever, then of course that is unspeakably more important than this little brief life. If it be true that happiness in that eternity depends on something else besides your being righteous and true here, then it is unspeakably more important that you look after that world than that you look after this. If it be true that only by neglecting all the duties of life and becoming a hermit or a St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar, that only in this way can you purchase heaven, then you ought all to be hermits, or stand on pillars. Eternity is unspeakably more valuable than time. If it be true that only by accepting such a creed, and being obedient to such a priesthood, a man can gain heaven, then every persecution, every bloody torture, every unspeakable cruelty of the Catholic Church has been more than justified. What are these little passing pains and tortures and trials and sorrows of an hour compared with eternity? And this is the way man has reasoned. On the basis of a groundless supposition, that heaven can only be purchased after this fashion have these gigantic cruelties been enacted. But who has spoken out of the eternities to tell us that the endless life depends on something besides character; that it depends on something besides obedience to the laws of God; that it depends on something besides being pure and true? Who has spoken with the authoritative word of God to tell us any such thing as this? All that we know about God, about the past history of the world, about man, about the future,—all that we know utters and echoes and rëechoes only one grand principle,—the same God everywhere, the same laws everywhere, the same love, the same truth, the same life everywhere. And it is an absurdity, an infamous contradiction in the nature of things, to assert that the way to make the happiness of heaven is a course of conduct that would turn this earth into a hell. Heaven: its pillars are lifted up as the support of justice and truth; its foundations are laid in everlasting righteousness; its principles are obedience to the

laws of the love and the life of God. And the way—if there be a future—for us to find it, the way for us to prepare for it, the way for us to build the walls of the city of heaven, is for us to lay the foundations of righteousness, and raise the walls of truth and of purity right here.

He who proposes to find the next world by neglecting this, or thinks he does, only deludes himself by a fancy and a dream. We know very little about the future. All we do know about God, all we do know of righteousness and truth and happiness—all are here—God manifested here in his present laws: God's love in human hearts, God's pity, God's justice, God's happiness and delight and joy, in these simple loving human relationships. All we do know, then, I say, teaches us with perpetually renewed and reiterated emphasis, that the way for us to look after the next world is to look after this. It is not for us, then, to trouble about heaven; it is for us to build heaven here.

Real and Conventional Virtues and Vices.

As we look over the past history of the world, and survey the present condition of human affairs, we are struck by this fact: that men and women, under a sense of obligation, have not only done things that were useful, things that were helpful, things that were good, but that under this same sense of obligation they have also done, and declared that everybody else ought to do, a great many things that, at the least, were useless. They have gone further than that; they have done things that were positively harmful, injurious, and evil; all under this same sense of obligation. Along with the necessary habits and customs and courses of conduct of men, there has sprung up this undergrowth of weeds—sprung from the soil of human fancy, speculation, superstition, accident, custom,—a whole harvest of manners and thoughts that sometimes seem ready to choke out the life from the things that are vital, the things that are essential to the welfare of men. For men not only say that you ought to do certain things, but they say concerning another whole class of human actions, that you ought not to do them; laying their restriction upon things that do not touch real, vital human concerns at all. Thus they create conventional virtues and conventional vices. And there have been times in human history—and those times, in some parts of the world at least, exist to-day—wherein men have laid more stress on the conventional virtues than they have upon real ones; wherein they have condemned with severer penalties the conventional vices than they have those that were real. For example, as setting forth simply just what

I mean: I suppose every sane man in the world holds that belief stands in some vital relation to conduct. Thus has arisen a sense of the necessity of creeds, written or unwritten; for creeds exist not only in religion, they exist in agriculture, in banking, in the law, everywhere. There has sprung up, then, I say, this sense of the necessity of belief, of right belief; because generally men carry out that which they really believe into their conduct; though they do not always. And this sense of the importance of belief as being a necessary condition to right conduct has grown so strong in the thought and the heart of the world that many a time that which is only a condition has usurped the place and province of the thing sought; and men who failed in conduct have been applauded if their confession was thought accurate, and men who have failed in the supposed accuracy of their convictions have been condemned and outcast though their conduct were faultless. This simply as illustrating what I mean. There are whole classes of these conventionalisms corresponding to the different ranges of human activity. I wish to draw from society, from the political life of the world, and the religious life, some illustrations of what I mean; and then we will go on and find out how they have grown up, and what we ought to do with them.

If men and women are to live together in society, there are certain courses of conduct which they must follow, on which the very existence and prosperity of society depend,—that is, men must not kill each other; they must not steal from each other; they must not lie to and about each other; they must not injure each other in property, character, or estate. This is the ideal. If everybody did what some people do—break all these laws—there would be no society possible. There is society existing, just because the majority of people comply with these necessary conditions which are the very foundation stones on which society rests. These, and such as these, are the real social virtues; but not only are these regarded as important, not only are penalties visited more or less severe upon the breaches of these laws, but there have

sprung up in all departments of society, habits, and customs,—right enough in themselves, if men only understand what they are, and keep them in their proper places,—but which are in no way essential to the real welfare of man; and many a time these rise to such a height in the estimation of people as to overtop and overwhelm the real virtues on which society rests.

Let me give you some very simple illustrations; and, the simpler and more frivolous they are, the better they will do for my purpose, because they will illustrate all the better, all the more forcibly, this tendency of mankind. Let us take it, for example, in regard to the mere matter of clothing. Clothing of some sort, if men and women are to live together in the world, is essential—essential to decency of life, to the health of the body, to the welfare of all. This, then, is the one real thing that is necessary; but the peculiar kind of fabric out of which the clothing is constructed, the pattern after which it is made, the times of the day when particular articles of apparel shall be worn, the occasions when people are required to dress so and so,—these, of course, you will recognize at once as mere conventionalisms. And yet, how many people are there in the city of Boston who look upon these things, the mere conventionalisms of dress, as a great deal more important than the necessity of dress itself! They sacrifice health, convenience, a thousand real things to the fancies and whims of the milliners, of the dressmakers, of the fashionable leaders of the time. Not only that; they sacrifice deeper and higher things than these. I trust there are not a great many women,—and yet there are some,—of whom the one that Mr. Emerson speaks is typical, who said that the sense of being perfectly well dressed gave her a peace of mind and a calmness of soul that it was beyond the power of religious consolation to bestow. There are not a great many, I trust,—and yet there are some men of whom the famous English “Beau” Brummel is a type,—who cared but little about keeping his character free from “spot or

wrinkle or any such thing," who cared little as to the question whether the associates with whom he mingled day by day were spotted and wrinkled in their character, but who staked his reputation and the happiness of his life on never having his necktie spotted or wrinkled. He devoted the energies of his life to faultless attire ; so that it was not an uncommon thing for his body servant to take down the back stairs a whole huge basket full of white neckties, saying, "These are our failures." He had wrinkled them somewhere, so that he would not be seen in his fashionable society with them. How many people are there in the city of Boston who would cut an acquaintance on account of the clothing they wore ; if they should fall, as we say, in the social scale so as not to be able to appear fashionably enough ; when they would not think of cutting them for a vice, for an unkindness, for neglecting to meet their bills ; would not think of cutting them for purposely failing in business, and paying ten cents on a dollar ; would perhaps court their society if they succeeded in it, and were able to dress and appear more fashionably than ever !

Take it, again, in the matter of food and drink. Of course, if we are to live, we must eat ; but what we must eat at particular times, the ordering of our table, the arrangement of the different courses — all these things, of course, you recognize at once as mere conventionalities. And yet there are people in all the highest society, as it is called, who would associate with a lady who was a backbiter, who was a slanderer, who was known to be mean and contemptible in character, and yet who would cut another lady who should commit the indiscretion, the fashionable crime, of pouring her tea out into her saucer. There are men and women who will associate with people whose characters are blackened and disreputable, but who would not invite to their tables a man who took his soup from the end instead of the side of his spoon, or who should commit the horrible indiscretion of putting his knife into his mouth.

And so in regard to homes and houses in which men live.

A house is a necessity to shelter us from cold ; but there is no special law of necessity connected with the question as to the material of which the house shall be built, as to how many stories or rooms it may contain, as to the particular spot of earth, east or west, north or south, on which it shall be located. And yet I know young ladies in this city, who think so much of the particular spot of earth — its location— where the precious lump of clay of which they are made shall sit down to its food, or where it shall lie down to its sleep, who, I say, lay so much stress upon this question, that seems, when you consider it, mere nonsense and folly, that as soon as they have removed half a mile from the place where they were accustomed years ago to reside, they do not any longer know their acquaintances who continue vulgarly to eat and sleep upon the old spot. This, of course, is mere conventionalism. It is flippant, foolish, contemptible conventionalism. And yet it is something that gets into the air, and infects us all more or less, and must, in spite of ourselves, unless we stop and think, and weigh these things.

And then the social conventionalisms as to what constitutes education. Education, of course, means the drawing out and development of our faculties, so that we can deal with this great problem of life. To live first, and then to live nobly,— that is the end of education ; that is the only end that justifies it. And yet people abuse that noble word culture, which means education in this sense, until they come to think and to feel that only those persons are educated who can torment a musical instrument and torment the people that have to listen to them ; who can speak a little bad French or bad German ; or who have been transported in a ship across the ocean and brought back again,— nothing else ; who have done this thing, done that thing ; who have got certain facts into their heads, or have been put through certain courses of discipline without any regard whatever as to the good that is to result to society by it ; and they treat as uneducated and unworthy of their patronizing society and notice people a thousand times their stature in all that is

manly or womanly, because, forsooth, they lack some one of these misnamed accomplishments.

When we come into the political world, we find precisely the same thing there. What is the object of government? It is to protect individuals in their relations to each other, so that they shall not encroach on each other's rights; so that, consistently with this, they shall have the largest possible opportunity of action to acquire for themselves whatever may seem to them to be desirable. This is the object of government; and the best government is the one that does this the best. And yet we here in America pride and plume ourselves perpetually on our republican form of government, which we have a perfect right to do, so far as that goes: we talk scornfully about the "effete monarchies" of Europe, which, so far as that goes, we have a perfect right to do; but we do both of these things, and at the same time rest contented under abuses, under evils, which perhaps other people do not bear so patiently as we. That is, we put the form of our government in the place of the object for which governments are created, and pride ourselves on our form, without stopping to think whether it is to accomplish the end in view or not: no wiser than a farmer would be who should pride himself upon his improved machinery, his ploughs, his planters, his reapers, and his threshers, and all the time not raise half as good a crop as the more faithful worker on the next farm who lacked them all. These things are good, if they accomplish their end: the end is good, if it be accomplished in any manner; and it is better than the means, however fine and beautiful the means may be.

And then there is another point in this political conventionalism of ours to which I think we here in America, at the present time, need specially to have our attention called! Political parties are a necessity in a country like ours; I do not see how it would be possible for us to carry on our government without them. But what is a party? Any party that has a right to exist is simply a collection of people, having certain common principles, not only as a plat-

form, but certain common aims that they believe will ultimate in the public good. These principles they seek to realize in legislation. But how is it with us to-day? How many men are there connected with either the one party or the other, who stand by it through thick and through thin, not because of the principles underlying it, not because of any grand aims that that party has specially in view, and that they believe cannot be reached so well in any other way? They stand by it because they did stand by it fifteen years ago, or last year. They stand by it because they have become proud of the name, or because they have learned to hate and blacken everything and everybody that goes by the other name. They stand by it even when it forsakes its principles. When it surrenders the very object for which it exists, still they stand by the party; and they carry it as far as that famous man whose saying has been quoted a great many times,—and which represents the outcome of the principle,—who said he would vote for the regular nominee of the party, even if he were the devil. This is party conventionalism; and when allowed to stand in the way of that thing, good government, for which parties and all forms exist, it becomes, not a virtue, but a vice, a crime; it becomes treason to the country, treason to the welfare of men. Your business, then, and your duty, is not to cling to a party through thick and thin. Cling to principles through thick and thin; and, if the party does not stand by a principle, let it go to wreck.

When we pass from the social and the political world into the religious, we find such a field and wide range of conventionalisms that one knows hardly where to begin or where to leave off. Take it in regard to our conception of God—God the Infinite One, who cannot be compassed by the thought, who cannot be put into any words—what is our highest ideal of Him? It is simply an ideal of the best goodness, of the truest wisdom, of the mightiest power, that we are capable of conceiving; that is what we mean when we say, God. And we know perfectly well, if we stop and

think a moment, that our ideal is not he; it is simply our best thought of him; and we know that this may be improved and enlarged a thousand fold, to infinitude if it were possible, and yet hardly express him. And yet nations, religions, churches, get their peculiar little pet ideal of God, no more real, no more worthy of reverence than a stone idol or a wooden block; and that is the thing that men must reverence and bow down to, whatever the reality of their religious life; and if a man dare to doubt that thing to be God, if he dare doubt their thought of him, then he is infidel and atheist. The conventional precedes the divine.

And so in regard to times. When shall God be worshipped? One religion says one day, another religion says another day; one says morning, another noon, another evening. If we should regard all the conventionalisms of the world, there would be no time left for anything else but scrupulous devotion to somebody's worship and somebody's god. And yet people get so full of the idea that it is necessary to have some time for worship—as of course it is, if you are ever going to worship at all—that they fix upon their peculiar stated time, and make it more important than the worship itself; until there needs the voice of a liberating Jesus to come and ring in the ears of all the world a principle which is applicable in all directions,—“The Sabbath—the worship time—was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

And so in regard to churches, whether it shall be mosque or cathedral or conventicle or meeting-house: in regard to the clothing of the ministry, whether it shall be orange, like the Buddhist; whether it shall be black, like the Anglican minister's robe; whether it shall be glaring and gorgeous, like that of the ritualist or the Catholic—all these things: the form of worship, whether you stand or kneel or prostrate yourself: the words, whether extempore or written, English or Latin: the rites and ceremonies, whether there shall be Lord's supper, whether there shall be baptism; if there be baptism, whether it shall be plunging beneath the water, or

the touching of a few drops upon the brow. All these things and a thousand more, what are they? Mere religious conventionalisms, not necessarily attached anywhere to the heart of true, sincere, and reverent worship. And the man who worships — if it be under the open sky at night with the stars for chandeliers, if it be not in the “dim religious light” of the cathedral, but the dim but quite as religious light of the aisles of the forest,—the man who worships, admires, loves something above him, aspires toward it, he is the religious man. And all these other things, if they help him, are good; if they do not, they are useless. If they are placed in the stead of the real religiousness of his nature, then they are positive evil and hinderance, to be brushed out of the way.

Now how is it, friends, that these things — the social, the political, and the religious conventionalisms — have come to such a growth as they have? What is the working of the human mind that leads us perpetually to lay such an emphasis on a thing that is not of the slightest consequence, and leads us to overlook a thousand things that are exceedingly important? Men come to the position occupied by the priesthood to whom Jesus spoke when he said: “Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith.” How does all this come about? I will group the ways under two or three general heads, so as to guide your thinking; not to exhaust the theme.

And first, there is a perpetual tendency in the mind of people to put the means toward the accomplishment of an end in the place of the end itself that they desire to reach. How many illustrations there are of this! Take it right here in this audience, to-day; take it in every civilized centre of the world, and in the uncivilized regions of the world as well, in this mere matter of money-getting. What do people want money for? You want money to furnish food, to furnish clothes, to build your houses, to provide for the highest wants of the world. And you know perfectly well how high

I estimate this necessity. Civilization would be impossible, if it were not for money. And yet, how many men are there that keep their heads balanced and level all their lives through as to the meaning of money and the relation it bears to the things they desire to gain! Money is only a means to an end, to the welfare of man. A man starts out in business, and says: Now I must make a certain amount of money, and I must lay by enough so that, if anything happens to me, my wife and child will be secure and their welfare provided for. That is, it is the welfare and happiness of his wife and children that is the first thing he thinks of in trying to make money. And yet there are hundreds and thousands of men who get so insane over the idea of accumulation that they sacrifice the happiness, they sacrifice the comfort, they sacrifice the welfare, of their wife and children, for whom they are making it, through the desire to make more; putting the means perpetually in the place of the end. As though a man, seeing it was necessary to the raising of a crop of wheat that he should plough his field, should keep on ploughing all summer, and forget to sow the grain! As if we should say here in this city of Boston, Now if we are to bring Cochituate water here to supply all our homes, why, we must lay conduits and pipes all the way from Framingham to Boston; and then we must lay them through all our streets and in all our houses, and arrange the plumbing and the faucets so that the water shall come straight to our hand with its life-giving power and its cleansing qualities whenever we need. This is the means for bringing it here. Suppose a man who had all this machinery skilfully developed and completely arranged should still have no water, priding himself only on keeping this in perfect order; suppose he should sneer at his next door neighbor, who, more anxious for the water than the plumbing, if the pipes did not work, should take a bucket and go to a spring and fetch the essential thing into his home; suppose he should say to him: Why, that is all absurdity and nonsense: that won't do you any good; it did not come through the true catholic means

of supply! That is what people are doing everywhere in society, in education, in political life, in religion,—bowing down to and worshipping the means and forgetting all about the end, or postponing it indefinitely.

There is another way. Certain courses of conduct having been found useful at a certain time, people keep on under the law of habit—a necessary and yet a very thoughtless kind of law—after the meaning has all dropped out of the things in which they are engaged. Long before any metal was invented, or there were any metal knives in existence, the barbaric nations of the world used a stone knife for the purpose of sacrificing at the altar. They used a stone knife because it was the best they had, all they had. But, after bronze and iron were discovered, they still went on using the stone knife in sacrificing. They used the better instrument everywhere else, but they had come so to reverence this which was good and useful, the best they had once, that they thought it a kind of sacrilege to substitute anything, even though it were unspeakably better, in its place. And so of religious matters all the world over. Because a certain thing was good once, at one stage of civilization, men keep on practising it forever, when the meaning has all dropped out; and for the life of them, if you should ask them, they could not tell you where it came from, when it was first used, why it was first used, or why they keep on using it to-day. As though an eagle, able to reflect on the past history of its life, and thinking within himself that his shell was once absolutely essential to his existence, or an exceedingly important thing in the course of his development up to a certain point, should, even after he had chipped it, broken away, and escaped, go back and attach it to himself, and carry it about with him forever! Shells are good things, so long as they are needed; when we are able to get along without them, they are bad things. A man is obliged to use crutches when he is lame; but he would not keep on using crutches after he is able to walk by himself. And yet socially, politically, religiously, nine-tenths

of the world to-day is still going on crutches, and thinking that they would fall prostrate if they should be taken away from them ; though they are perfectly sound, strong, and able to go alone.

And then there is another reason, a very important one, a thing that runs through all the life of the past ; and that is the establishment between certain courses of conduct, certain forms of words, or certain ceremonies,— the establishment between these and certain results that are desired, of a connection that is not real, but only magical. Until within a few years, the whole world was one broad scene and network of magic. Magic everywhere. Did you ever stop to think what the underlying principle of magic is? I must tell you, so that you can see how it connects itself with my thought. Magic springs out of the idea that a certain coincidence, or a certain fanciful resemblance, or a mere connection in thought, may stand in a real causal relation to some end or result that is desired. To put it tangibly ; I was at the theatre, the other day, and saw Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." Beatrice, in that play, you will remember, is explaining the fact that she is so vivacious in her disposition, so full of buoyancy and animal spirit, so ready to laugh, so ready to play back and forth with words. And what is her explanation of it? If she had said that her father or mother, or grandfather or grandmother, or some of her ancestors had possessed a disposition like this, and had transmitted it, she would have given a reason in accordance with the essential law of cause and effect, that we could have respected and understood. But the reason she does give is one drawn from the old doctrines of astrology. She says that, on the night when she was born, "a star danced." That is the reason why she is always ready to dance, always voluble, vivacious, and full of life and spirit.

That is an illustration of what was all over Europe only a few years ago. For example, in medicine, the mandrake, a little plant that grows with forked roots, and is supposed

in its general outline to resemble man, was considered to have all sorts of magical connections with human life, to be powerful for good or evil in the hands of those who came into possession of it. A yellow flower, just because it was yellow, was supposed to be an infallible cure for the jaundice, because the jaundice turned the complexion of the invalid yellow. So they established all these fanciful, unreal relations as to cause and effect, between this thing and that thing. They were not real, they were only imaginary; and these influences infected religion, and are all through religion to-day. It was a piece of magic when the king of England was supposed to be able to cure scrofula with his touch. There is no connection between the touch of the king's hand and the cure of scrofula, only a purely imaginary, magical connection — no real connection of cause and effect. You remember the story in the Bible of the dead body that was let down into the grave and touched the bones of the old prophet that had been buried there before him, and which by that touch was suddenly raised to life. You know that the history of Europe is all full of the magical efficacy of the bones of the saints. And what is very strange, we find that sometimes these bones, supposed to be the bones of saints that were producing such wondrous cures, were discovered by modern anatomists to be those of a donkey, or some other animal; and then this magical power suddenly ceased. This connection of supposed cause and effect, then, in magic is no connection at all,—simply an imaginary one. Take it in the grandest service of cathedrals here in America and in Europe, to-day. A priest pronounces a special formula over a piece of bread, and it suddenly becomes the body and the blood of Almighty God, in spite of the fact that we are taught to say that "God is a Spirit." What is the connection between the form of words and such tremendous changes as this? What is the connection between the robe you wear or the posture in which you pray and the real results that you seek? These things, friends, are magic; they are not religion, they are magic; they are not

science, they are magic ; they are not even common-sense, they are absurdity itself.

The thing we need, to-day, then, friends, in social life, in political life, in the religious life, is to study and think until we have found out the real virtues, what they are ; the real things on the performance of which hangs human welfare. What are the things I ought to do to build myself up, body, mind, and soul? What are the things I ought to do really to help you? These are the virtues, and these are the only virtues, of the world, in the real use of that word. But we are to discover, on the other hand, what are the real things that injure men and women, that take away from the fulness of their life,—that hinder their growth, their development, their happiness. We are to find out what these are, and be careful that we do not these things ; not that we do not trespass on some fastidious conventionalism of some fastidious section of society. All well enough, if you please, to obey the conventionalisms of the world, if you only remember that they are conventionalisms. Pay tithes of mint, anise, and cumin, if you please, but do not make these a substitute for justice, mercy, and faith. The thing we are to do, then, is to be sure that we keep the real laws of life, that we obey the real commands of natural morality, that we do those things that stand in real relation to the welfare of the world.

And then next, beyond that, —keeping if you choose the conventionalisms of the world,—do not dare, as you value your soul, your higher life, do not dare to place the conventionalism above the reality ; do not dare to substitute a conventional virtue for a real one ; do not dare to obey a conventionalism at the cost of disobeying a reality. Do not lie because society demands it, or it is politic. All this is real injury to your own soul, and the soul of your fellow-man. Do not value yourself so much on politeness and courtesy, while, at the same time, you are willing to injure or ruin the characters of those to whom you are courteous and polite.

Break a conventionalism always, rather than a reality; but dare not break a reality for the sake of a conventionalism.

And then, lastly, remember that our conceptions of what we ought to do to-day are entirely related to the conditions of to-day; and that if to-morrow discovers a larger, deeper truth, that which was true to-day may be a conventionalism to-morrow. Be ready, then, to study more deeply the conditions on which human welfare depends; be ready to know any truer, any larger, any higher ideal; be ready to recognize anything that may be revealed to you, that shall tell more and more for the advancement of man. Believe in the reality you can see to-day, but believe in a larger, a grander, a deeper, higher, broader reality for to-morrow; and be ready to sacrifice always that which you believe in now and see to be good now for that which shall be better in the time to come. For, as Tennyson expresses it in "Locksley Hall".

"Thro' the shadow of the globe we sweep into the younger day.

* * * * *

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

* * * * *

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range!
Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change."

MORALS AND KNOWLEDGE.

If a man is to make a journey, at least two things are requisite,—that he should know his course of travel, and that he should have an inclination to pursue that course. If a general is to attack a fortress, he must understand the art of siege and war; and he must have the will to carry out his knowledge, and make it practical and effective. So, if men are to walk through this world in ways that we call right instead of wrong, two things at least are essential,—that they should know what right is, and that they should be inclined to pursue it.

There has been a great diversity of opinion as to the relative importance of these two essential things. There are, for example, many persons at present, among the leaders and thinkers of the world, who tell us that the one thing that is needed is education. The hope of the world, they say, is in the direction of the school-house and the university. If we can only get men to think and to study, that is all that is required. And they buttress this statement with very substantial and plausible statistics. They point to the fact that the criminal class, in almost every civilized nation of the world, is recruited from the ranks of the ignorant. They point to the fact that no one can dispute, that those nations that are the most illiterate are the ones that present to us the longest catalogue of crimes. But, on the other hand, there is another class of men who tell us that we all know, every day, a great deal better than we do. They point now and then to a case such as we were familiar with only a few years ago, of a man in prison for the crime of murder, who passed his leisure time in solving important

problems in mathematics, and in reading the Greek and Latin classics in the original tongues. They tell us that there are thousands of men who persistently, day by day and year by year, pursue courses of action that are destructive to themselves and injurious to society, when they at least have the means at hand of knowing better. And they would go so far as to say that they do know better; and in one sense we should be obliged to admit the statement.

We are met, then, at the outset of our subject, by these two apparently antagonistic classes of opinion. That we may clear our own thought, and know really what we are dealing with, let us go down beneath the surface, if we can, and find some of the principles that relate to the bearing which knowledge has upon character and conduct.

And, in the first place, I must remark that knowledge is not an end in itself; it is not a good in itself: it is only, like most other things, a means to an end. What is the end for which we live? I have had occasion to tell you more than once, during the progress of this course of lectures, that the end is human well-being, through recognition of and obedience to the laws of nature in ourselves and the universe about us,—to the end that this well-being may result in human happiness now and always. This is the end. Knowledge, then, is only a means to an end, is not a good in itself. But, on the other hand, knowledge, possessing no character of itself, no intrinsic virtue or vice, may become, and frequently does, a positive evil and injury to him who possesses it, and to the society in which he lives and moves. There is a knowledge of evil courses of action as well as of good. There is a knowledge that leads people not upward, but downward; not toward the harmonies of peace and heaven, but toward the discords of darkness and wrong. We say of a young man, for example, that he “knows the town.” What do we mean? We mean that he possesses a knowledge that is injurious to him and to all those over whom he has any influence. A pilot may have a knowledge of the coast and the rocks and shoals at the mouth of a harbor; and he may

use it to guide a ship safely past its perils, and bring it into port with all its treasure of goods and of human lives. Another man may have a knowledge of these same ways of the coast, of the rocks and shoals; and he may use it as a wrecker, kindling false lights for beacons, and so destroy treasure and life for his own selfish and evil gains.

Knowledge, again, may be evil when it is pursued simply for its own sake, selfishly. How many are there that perceive the principle underlying this? Fathers and mothers, for example, finding their boy or their girl of an evening over a book, generally, without looking into the book to see what it is, feel that the child is well employed, engaged in that which must result in good. And yet, until you know what the book is and what the child will do with the knowledge that it gains from the book, that which you regard as a good, as a pleasant and profitable way of spending time, may be only mischievous and evil. And there is many a man who is looked upon as studious, who devotes his life to research, who is yet of no practical value to the world, but might as well be devoted to any other course of selfish action. A man who is simply a bookworm, who buries himself in his study, who reads for nothing but for the sake of reading, who studies for nothing but the sake of studying, what better is he than any other hermit? What better is he than the man who in the Middle Ages retired to a cave, and sat contemplating a skull and meditating on the vanity of human life? The life is useless, not devoted to any human, helpful end.

Another may pursue knowledge with the pride of a conscious *dilettante*, simply setting himself up as knowing this thing and knowing that, and proud of his knowledge; and he may carry it so far as to take him out of sympathy with his fellow-men. And, when he carries knowledge in this direction, it becomes not a good, but a positive evil. Any knowledge which severs you from your kind instead of bringing you into closer contact and sympathy, any knowledge which kindles your sense of pride and superiority, and

makes you feel that you are above the common herd, that you cannot stoop to come into contact with and to help, inspire, stimulate, and lift up your fellow-men, is evil knowledge, is the knowledge not of an angel, but of Mephistopheles. Knowledge should make those that are learned like elder brothers toward those that are younger and less able to mark out the way for their feet; should only stimulate them to be guides and helpers of those that have not been lifted up to ranges of life as high as their own.

There is another kind of knowledge that is useless or worse; and that is knowledge—however honestly, however earnestly pursued, with however strong a desire to make it helpful to one's fellow-men—of things that in their very nature are divorced from the realities of life. I must make myself clear by an illustration. I know a prominent theologian, one of the strongest thinkers of the age, who told a friend of mine some years ago that he did not waste his time reading any book written since the seventeenth century. That is all very well for a man who proposes to live in the seventeenth century; but do you not see how it necessarily cuts him off from the vital life of the world, that is not in the seventeenth century, but in the nineteenth? A man may pursue Middle Age scholasticism through all its range, its infinite wilderness of ramification, and study it all his life; but it may not touch practically the great problems that the world is trying to solve to-day; and, so pursued, it is useless knowledge, or worse than useless. One who is burying himself in these theories, fine-spun and high-flown, but that yet do not touch the real life of man to-day, might as well, so far as the world is concerned, be buried in private dissipation, in the selfish pursuit of money, be doing any mean, sordid, evil thing. He is out of harmony with the life of his time, and his character counts for nothing in helping on the world.

And yet, on the other hand, after noting all these considerations, that you may see both sides of the problem, it still remains true that knowledge real knowledge of the uni-

verse,—which is a knowledge of God; real knowledge of men, of human history, of the path by which the race has come up to its present condition; of the principles that underlie right action, of the direction in which we must walk in order to attain man's highest welfare in the future,—I say this, which is real, true knowledge, is absolutely essential to moral action on the part of the man who proposes to live in the midst of this rushing, throbbing world,—to live not as a dead weight in it, dragging it down; not as one merely borne along on its current and tide, but as a helper, one whose life shall count for at least a little in making the world better. Knowledge, I say, true knowledge is essential to right moral action. A man may indeed, as I have just intimated, drift along with the current, without knowing much as to where he is going. He may, like one of a flock of sheep, simply follow the lead and the drift of those about him, and, on the whole, pursue a career of right conduct, a healthy course of action, without knowing anything about it. But it does not invalidate the statement I have made; for it is somebody's knowledge that directs the current of the stream, the tendency of the flock, if it be going in the right direction.

And one other consideration we must grant. A man is two-sided in regard to his moral or immoral action. There is a subjective side and an objective, as we say. There is a side of motive and intention; and there is another side, the external course of action that he is pursuing. A man may do wrong, and yet maintain his moral integrity so long as he intends to do right. His motives may be true, his intentions may be good, and yet he may be a life-long mischief-maker, a positive and perpetual injury to those that are about him. There has been no more gigantic power of destruction from the beginning of the world until the present time than this same "Meant-well-but-didn't-know." It was "Meant-well" who, with good intentions, became the pilot of a ship and ran it on the rocks. It was "Meant-well" who, a few years ago, in Western Massachusetts built a reservoir that he

thought would hold the waters, but which burst beneath their pressure, and destroyed the whole valley, devastated village after village, ruined property and human life. He meant well, but he was ignorant. It was "Meant-well" who built the bridge at Angola ; and yet, in spite of his good intentions, the train plunged through, and darkened a hundred homes. It was "Meant-well" who constructed that great mill at Lawrence ; but not understanding the laws of the strength of materials, not dealing fairly and truly by those eternal forces of nature to which every man must first or last give an account, the mill was crushed beneath the weight of its enginery and its human freight, and came down one shrieking mass of ruin. It was "Meant-well" who, in the person of Philip II. of Spain, pursued such a disastrous career. I believe there has been no ruler in all history who has sat on any throne of whom it could be more truly said that he meant well. He was the incarnation of a certain kind of conscience, and he pursued his whole career under the inspiration and guidance of what he thought to be religion, the will of God. And yet it is said that he never smiled in his life except when he heard of the massacre of St. Bartholomew. His reign was one of the most conscientious and best intentioned, one of the most religious, and at the same time the most immoral and execrable that Europe has ever seen. It is not enough, then, to mean well. There must be intelligence. You must know that this thing you purpose to do is in accordance with the laws of your own nature and the laws of your fellow-men. If you undertake anything touching the welfare of society, touching the foundation principles of government, touching the verities of religion, before it is safe for you to lay your hand to these mighty forces, you must know that the thing you purpose to do shall be for good and not for evil. Intelligence, then, is all-important.

And now, friends, we approach the central and most difficult part of our whole theme. It involves no less a question, that each one of us ought to ask ourselves, than this : What shall I do, in which direction shall I look, toward what end

shall I work, in order that I may help on and help upward the world? Is there in human nature any force, any motive power on which we can rely, so that, when we have made men know what they ought to do, we can count upon their doing it? Must we direct our thought and our endeavor toward education or toward this matter of inclination, of which I spoke at the first? Which most needs our care? which must we nourish, which seek to develop? I believe, though I expect I shall make some statements that will give you hesitation in your thought, if not lead you to positive dissent,—I believe that there is such a power. I believe there is a permanent, indwelling motive in humanity, taken as a whole and in the long-run, that we can count on to propel the world in the right direction, just as fast and as far as we are able to persuade the world what is right. What is this power? What is this motive force? It is nothing more nor less than that best-abused motive of all the world, regard for self. We may preach and we may talk and we may labor until the end of time, but I do not believe we can radically change human nature from what it has been from the first until now. In the nature of things,—see if my statement be not true,—every man, every woman, every child, must, if they are free to act, choose that thing which at the time, in their circumstances, and for them, seems to be good. No man ever did choose anything else, no man by any possibility ever can choose anything else. Can a man voluntarily choose that which for him, under the circumstances and at the time, he knows will make him worse off and more miserable? I do not believe it. This suggests another question, which is no less than this: Is the universe, on the whole and in the long-run, a righteous universe? Is the universe in favor of good or evil? And that, friends, means nothing more nor less than this other question: Does the universe care anything about its own laws, respect its own integrity? And that again leads us to this other statement, which shall complete our circle: if the universe is right, the keeping of its laws—the laws of our

own nature — must forever lead to our welfare and our happiness. That means that laws when kept are helpful to men, when broken are injurious. What is the definition of right? It means nothing else, and can mean nothing else, than simply law-keeping. That man, that woman, that child, that society, that state that obeys the laws of its nature, is the one that is doing right; for right is simply this,—obedience to the laws of things.

We are brought, then, face to face with this fact: that knowing and obeying the laws of the universe is the condition of life, of progress, of human happiness. Men desire life, they desire progress, they desire happiness. What more, then, needs to be done than that they shall come really to know, to feel, and to believe that it is always expedient, always best for them to do right? Do you believe it? If you do not, then you are infidel toward God and the universe. You believe that you can cheat the universe into favoring that which is against its own eternal, inexorable laws. Do you believe anything as absurd as that? If you do not, then you must believe that the universe is always in favor of righteousness; you must believe that, on the whole and in the long-run, it is always for your interest to do right, and cannot possibly be for your interest to do wrong. If, then, I say, the world could only come as a whole to know this,—not simply have me tell it to them, and they only half believe it,—but if the world could come to see it to be true in all its length and breadth and height and depth,—why, then, friends, the world—except that part of it that lives in madhouses—would be led forward in the path of right, of necessity, by the power of selfishness itself, if it lacked all other motive. It could not possibly be otherwise.

Let me now go on for a few moments, and give you some apparent exceptions to this rule, because I know your minds must be full of cases that appear to you not to come under so sweeping a generalization as this. Here, for example, is a man who is wholly under the influence of his passion,—let it be lust or thirst for drink, or whatever it may

be. Why, you say, this man is all the time doing what he knows is wrong, what is injurious to him and to others. Here is another man who lacks any high development of mind. He lives, as we say, on a low plane. He has no elevated tastes. He does not care for music nor poetry nor art, for any of the refined or higher pleasures of society. He does not thrill at the beauty of the heavens above him. There is no sense of mystery and of power in the world that appeals to his heart, that makes him feel that there is something deeper beneath the surface of things than he has yet fathomed. He is simply a sordid, animal, common kind of man, with no high tastes. Now this man is all the time doing things, you say, that are wrong, that are low, that are mean, that are commonplace, that are sordid, that are selfish.

Take another class of men,—men that have no development of the power of imagination in them; for there is no other faculty of the human mind more intimately connected with the question of right and wrong than this of the imagination. A man like a barbarian, who never thinks about to-morrow, is not able to realize how he will feel to-morrow, who simply seeks his present gratification, whatever it may be; like the savages of the Western plains, who, if they are able to kill a buck or a buffalo to-day, gratify their hunger and gorge themselves to the utmost, and to-morrow and for a week or two to come will starve. They have no imagination in regard to to-morrow, no foresight, no forethought, no self-control. Take a man or child who is cruel. As an illustration, concrete and patent to you all, take the Pomeroy boy, lacking in power of sympathy. There is a radical defect in his nature. I do not believe that it is simple cruelty. We speak of a tiger as being cruel. A tiger is not consciously cruel. He has no power of sympathy, so that the cry of his victim thrills his heart, so that he is able to imagine the pangs of pain he is inflicting. I do not believe it possible for any human being who is sensitively sympathetic, who feels what pain in another means, and who

is capable of the thrill of sympathy — I say I do not believe it is possible for any such human being consciously and purposely to inflict pain on another. It means a radical defect of nature when a person is able to play the part of the tiger or the beast, and to tear and slay right and left, and feel no compunctions or pangs of pain in his own soul. These, friends, are apparent exceptions. We say of these people, the drunkard, the licentious man, the cruel man, these that are doing all sorts of evil things perpetually,— we say of them, They know better.

Now let us face the matter a little without prejudice, and see how much this knowing better means. Take the case of your little boy,—perhaps you have had some experience like this during the Christmas holidays,—you tell him that he must not eat too much candy; if he does, it will make him sick. What is the attitude of the child toward you at such a time? You say, after you have told the child, he knows better than to do it; and, if he does it, he ought to suffer, and it is good enough for him. Does the child, in any real, comprehensive sense, know better? He knows that you have told him so and so; but he has not had any experience of those things expressed in the results of his conduct; he does not feel what it means, as he will when he has grown old and has passed through these things for himself. He simply knows that he wants the candy. He knows that for him, just then, with his appetite, with his imagination of the pleasure that he will receive from it, this candy means more, to him, for good, than anything else he can think of. That is the predominating feeling in the child's mind. He does not know, in the sense in which you do, that, if he does it, it will be injurious to him. There is this imaginative, this sympathetic, this moral side of intellectual perception, that must come in before there can be anything that deserves the name of real knowledge.

And so I say of the man who is drinking, and killing himself with drink: the principle holds substantially in his case just as it does in the case of the child. I remember years ago

hearing Mr. Gough give one of his most impassioned lectures on the subject of temperance. He was describing the state of mind that he used to be in. He said he could remember when he was so under control of this thirst that, if he were standing on the bank of a river of fire and a bottle of drink came floating down, he would not hesitate a moment, but would plunge in to seize it. Does this action, extreme as it is, contradict the principle that I have just enunciated? I think not. Mr. Gough being what he was, under those circumstances, just at that time, controlled by these all-consuming desires,—to him, then, that bottle of drink was more than all the universe beside: it was the one thing that to him was good and desirable. And he would have done just what every man does: he would have chosen that which to him at the time seemed best. I say, friends, the principle in this case, though it be deep as hell is beneath the height of heaven from the other illustration,—the principle underlying it is precisely the same as that which underlies the self-destruction of the martyr. The martyr sees God and his truth, or he sees the love of his country or the love of his home, and he sees it so vividly that it consumes him, that it thrills him through and through, that, for the time being, it is the universe to him; and, let the fires crackle about him if they will, he chooses God, his truth, his liberty, his country, his love, his all, at the price of everything in the universe beside.

I say then, at either extreme, in the depths of hell or in the heights of heaven, this principle rules forever, and must rule. No man can escape himself, no man can fly away from his own nature; and he must choose, if he be free, that which, at the time, seems to him most desirable. Society may have told him a thousand times that it is not good, it may have wrought ruin a thousand times to somebody else, but he believes that he shall escape, or, at any rate, believes that it is best for him just then, and he chooses it in spite of any possible consequences. Take it, business men, home to your own concerns. Have you ever, in the

course of your life, been guilty of a transaction that you know now, as you look back at it, was wrong? Have you money invested anywhere that you know does not rightfully belong there? Have you ever injured one of your fellow-men in this way? If you have, do you not now know that it was not good for you? do you not know that the universe never forgives? Do you not know that you must pay that back in some way to the uttermost farthing? All the world believes it. Even those sects and creeds that offer you unlimited forgiveness just for believing in and pronouncing a name have held to this fact, that the universe never forgives; for God himself, in their scheme, has paid the price. The price must be paid by somebody. Is it not perfectly plain, then, that it was not a wise transaction on your part, that it was not good altogether? Do you not know, if you have become rich at the expense of anybody else, that it was a bad bargain? Do you not know that, if you have ruined anybody else in any direction, it has taken away from your happiness more than it has conferred? Do you not know that you would have been better off in a poorer house, with less social honor and distinction, if you had been true to your manhood? Do you not know, then, this one thing,—that it always pays to do right? Do you not believe it through and through? And, when you were guilty of that transaction that now you recognize as wrong, did you not persuade yourself that, however wrong it might be for others, however somebody else might have suffered for a similar transaction, that for you, just at that time, it was best? Did you not persuade yourself that you would escape, that you would not suffer as others do, that your circumstances were peculiar? Had you not, in other words, committed the unspeakable folly of thinking you could cheat the universe? That is what it means. When therefore you face this one grand fact, when you wake up to the knowledge that this can never be successfully done, is there anything that can persuade you to do wrong, with your eyes open, seeing it clearly and fairly?

The point I wish to bring out from all this length of illustration and enforcement is this: that when men learn—what is eternally true—that it is for their interest to do right, when they learn that at the other end of the pathway of truth and justice lies the grand consummation of human happiness and human peace, then the wild horses of their own selfishness will be harnessed to the chariot of love and truth, to drag them on toward the goal of man's divinest possibilities. It is ignorance, friends, ignorance of some kind and in some degree, that has wrought the evil, the misery, and sorrow of the world. Look over the earth to-day, and see if it be not true. I cannot cover the ground. I wish to cull an illustration here and one there, so that you may see the way my thought runs. Take it in regard to the problems of society,—of pauperism, for example, or of crime. The world is just beginning to learn that there is an intimate connection between the brain, the body, the physical surroundings of man, and his moral character. Prominent *savants* of Germany have recently told us, after spending a lifetime in studying the brain, that they have never discovered in the case of a confirmed criminal any other than a brain abnormal and diseased. Does not every intelligent philanthropist know at the present time that the way to lift up the morals of our cities is to look after the sanitary conditions, tenement houses, the surroundings and associations and infected atmosphere of the places in which the children live and grow? Does not every man know to-day that, if he is going to solve the problem of pauperism, he must not simply mean well, not simply scatter his money on every side, not simply support this institution or that, but must learn the laws by which men can safely be helped? A lady, one of the prominent philanthropists of the city, told me only two or three weeks ago, "I have been spending my life in creating paupers; and I am done." What did she mean? She meant that, under the inspiration of the noblest feelings and desires to help men, she had been working in the wrong direction, and doing more

mischief than she had good her whole life long. It means, then, that intelligence, knowledge, are at the bottom of this great problem; and by knowledge, if ever, it must be solved. It is not enough to mean well: knowledge is the key to the morals of society as well as to its other problems.

And so in the case of the states and governments of the world. How is it that men age-long have submitted to despotisms,—millions of peasants ground down under the heel of one licentious and irresponsible tyrant? Because the people have been ignorant: they have supposed that he was the representative of the gods, that he ruled by divine right; and they dared not, on peril of their souls, rebel. It is ignorance that has made despotism possible. How is it that men to-day are so badly governed all over the world? Even here in the most intelligent country, as we like to believe, in the world, we are badly governed, because the people are ignorant of the practical problems of statesmanship, because they do not know enough to solve them themselves, and they do not know enough to select men that are capable of solving them. It is ignorance that is at the bottom of all the governmental evils of the world to-day. Do you not believe that the masses of the men of America would infallibly select as their representatives to Congress, and as the President to rule over them in the coming few years, the men that would solve these problems rightly, if they only knew who they were? What is at the bottom of the controversies of parties this way and that? Simply that neither side is able as yet to comprehend and solve the great questions at issue.

In the religious world, it is the same. How was it with Philip II. who rejoiced over the massacre of St. Bartholomew, that one of the greatest and bloodiest crimes of history? Because he was so ignorant of the truth of God, so blinded by the Catholic prejudice of his age in favor of the ecclesiastical conception of God, that he, like Paul, verily thought he was doing God service. He thought he was doing God service to establish the Inquisition. He thought he was doing God service to be the means of

putting to cruel torture and horrible death hundreds and thousands of innocent old women and children, on the charge of witchcraft. If you look at these things from the standpoint of the age, and not from the standpoint of our own time, you will discover that these atrocities of the world were none of them conscious and purposed cruelty. The men that stood by the side of the racks in the Inquisition, and listened to the groans and the cries of their victims, were governed by what they thought was the mercy of God. They were putting these few men to torture and to death to save, as they supposed, hundreds and thousands from the eternal tortures of hell. It was not conscious cruelty, it was ignorant mercy that built the Inquisition. It is the ignorant, stupid good-nature of the world that has been guilty of the larger part of its infamies.

I tell you then, friends, that the one thing that the world needs, in society, in government, in religion and everywhere,—the one thing it needs is light. The selfishness of men will lead them to God, if there be no better motive, when they once discover the way and know that it is the way of peace and the path of pleasantness, as the old Bible declares it to be. At night, the beasts of the jungle prowl about in search of prey. At night, all the cruel creatures of the world come forth to display their hideousness and pounce upon their victims. But, when the light comes, they get themselves to their dens and holes, and the world is beautiful and fair because the sun is up. And so it has been in the moral world from the first. The beasts of cruelty, the beasts of lust, the beasts of crime, have found their field in the night of the world's darkness and ignorance. Darkness, friends,—it is evil itself. Darkness is hell and the way to hell; and the inspiration, the best thought of the world has said from the first that "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." And it is a beautiful, glorious inspiration of the writer of the book of Revelation, where he says, speaking of the city that shall be the permanent home of God: "There shall be no night there. They need no

candle, neither light of the sun: for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever." Humanity has been like a ship lost in the storm and darkness of a fog at sea. She has wandered far from her course, she has been in straits and difficulties and dangers a thousand times; but both captain and crew have always desired to follow that path which would lead them to what they conceived to be the haven of rest, of happiness and of peace. But when the sun rises, or if only the fog lifts and lets the pilot catch sight of an eternal star, so that he can take his reckoning and find out his latitude and longitude, then all the power of the universe, co-operating with the earnest anxiety of officers and crew, shall lead the old ship on her course toward the harbor of righteousness and peace and joy.

Rights and Duties in Matters of Opinion.

I have had occasion more than once to call your attention to the central principle of the theme that I have been pursuing in this course of sermons, that the object and end of life are human well-being, progress, and happiness. That on which, in the long-run, these depend, is conduct; and that which is chiefly concerned in determining conduct is opinion. The one object of all thought, investigation, and study, is the formation of opinions. And, since opinions determine conduct, you will easily see that they are among the most important things that can claim our attention. But in spite of this fact, which would seem to be apparent on the face of it, there is a widespread popular feeling here in New England, and I think largely over the country, which has crystallized itself into the words that you will recognize as having heard many a time, "It does not make any difference what you believe." Let us look, if we can, and find out how this strange thought has sprung up. How has it come about that thoughtful people are able to say, and to say sincerely and earnestly, It does not make any difference what you believe? I think after this fashion. We have been taught here in New England from the first generation after generation,—taught by the highest authority of religion, by those who have claimed to speak in the name of God,—that it was absolutely essential that we should hold such and such opinions concerning God, man, and the future, in order that we might live religious and moral lives. But the practical experience of men has, after many years, taught them that these assertions are not true. And so, because it is not necessary

that we should hold these opinions, because many that hold neither the one nor the other of them are among the noblest and best of our citizens,—best men in our churches, best men in society, best men in political life,—because, I say, this is true, men have thoughtlessly leaped to the illogical conclusion that it does not make any difference what opinions you do hold.

There is here a certain measure of truth that we must admit, in order to disentangle the false from the true. It does not make any difference what you believe concerning matters that are purely speculative, that are not practical, that do not come home to the real life of the world. It does not, for example, make any difference whether you believe, what a great many astronomers think, that there is another planet away out beyond Neptune. Whether you believe that or not does not make any difference to your practical life. What you believe about the chemical composition of the sun does not make any difference to your practical life. Or, take it in the realm of history, what your judgment may be of the character of Julius Cæsar, whether you think he really intended to subvert the peace of Rome, or whether he was a patriot acting according to the best light that he had in the conditions in which he was placed,—it does not make any difference what you believe. You may agree with Mr. Froude concerning the character of Henry the Eighth, or with those that hold the opposite opinion. But the very moment that you come to the affairs of practical life, the things that touch conduct, that touch character, then, to say that it does not make any difference what you believe, you will see at once to be absurd. Suppose you are in business, speculating a little in stocks. It may make the difference between a wreck and a fortune what opinion you hold concerning "Erie" or "Wabash," or what you think of the stock-market in Chicago; whether corn is going up or going down; what the prospect is going to be of a supply of hides next fall or a year from the present time. Take it in regard to the business of a lawyer, whether he has

correct opinions as to what are the laws on the statute-books of Massachusetts, whether he knows the methods of procedure before the Supreme Court at Washington, makes a very large difference, if he is going to hold the interests of clients in his hands and have anything to do with the decision of cases. In the matter of navigation, what a man thinks about the art of building ships, about the mariner's compass, about the use of charts, about the location of rocks and shoals,—these things mean life and death. And so in every department of practical life. What you think about vital religion is just as important. It does not make any difference whether or not you believe as the school-men in the Middle Ages did on some matter that is purely speculative, up in the air; except—and here is a vital exception—if you do firmly believe that a multitude of things of no importance is of first importance, then it makes a difference; because these pseudo-opinions stand in the way of your discovering and acting upon the true. I say, then, it makes a great deal of difference what you think about God, what you think about human nature, what kind of a being man is, what you think about sin, about evil, about crime, about patriotism, about the social problems of the time. The minute you come into practical affairs, to those things that, as I have said, touch character and conduct, then opinion means life and death, and it is not a slight affair at all.

Such, then, being the importance of opinions, let us for a moment pass on to consider some of the fundamental principles underlying the rights and duties that concern this matter of belief. And the first thing that you ought to be careful about is that you possess something that you have a right to dignify by the name of an opinion. This is not by any means as easy as at first you might be disposed to think. The majority of people do not have any opinions. They have simply notions, impressions, sentiments, feelings; they have prejudices, a desire to see this thing prevail, or that. But how many men are there in the city of Boston that, concerning any of the great problems of the world,

have earned the right to say that they have an opinion? How many men are there that have studied the question, that have weighed opposing claims and probabilities and testimony, so that their opinion is worth the breath it takes to utter it? There are thousands of people who are like looking-glasses: they have a shadow of whatever happens to be standing before them. They have an opinion so long as they are talking with some positive person who believes something; but let that person go away, and the shadow in the looking-glass is gone, and it is blank. They are like the sand on the seashore: the last person that goes by makes a track, and the next wave that comes up washes it away, and it is ready for another track. Or they are like a piece of putty that will take and hold the shape that the last pressure gives it; until some strong man comes along and gives it a stronger pressure. How many men, if some important question in religious matters comes up, have no opinion about it at all until their weekly papers come and they see what the editors are saying about it! How many people are there in the political world, who, if they are Democrats, have a Democratic opinion simply, and, if they are Republicans, have a Republican opinion! They have the opinion of the leading party newspaper to which they belong, no opinion of their own; for they have not looked into the matter, know nothing about it.

I say, then, the first thing of importance here, before we talk about opinions at all, is that you make sure that you have an opinion. But, granting you have one, let us then look into the pretensions of the statement that is so common, that passes current and unchallenged through the society of the world,—“I have a right to my own opinion.” No: you have not. You have no right to hold an opinion on any subject whatever, until you have used the utmost thought, study, and care to make sure that that opinion is true. You have no right to an opinion because it is your opinion. If there were only a vagrant law in the intellectual realm, the great majority of opinions that are walking up and down

the earth would be arrested for lack of "visible means of support." You have no right to hold an opinion, I say, simply because it is yours, because you have inherited it, or because you have chosen to adopt and patronize it. Remember what we have all seen: that, in the practical life of man, opinions touch character, touch the conduct of the world. Opinions, therefore, determine human welfare and happiness. And you have no right to trifle with these things, any more than a druggist has a right to deal out arsenic over the counter, because he is of the opinion that it is something else. You have no right to spread abroad your opinions, until you have done your utmost to be sure that they are true; because, as I have just said, these opinions determine the conduct, character, welfare, happiness of men. These are sacred things, which you must not play with just to please yourself and your own fancies and notions. There is in one of the public halls of this city, up over the platform, the motto: "To speak his thought is every freeman's right." I suppose that, according to the intent of the person who first gave utterance to these words, they are true. That is, he meant that no church had any right to prohibit a man from speaking his thought. He meant that no State had any right to put a padlock upon the lips of a free man. And to that extent he was right; for neither Church nor State has any monopoly of human wisdom. There is no probability that either Church or State has any private means of gaining access to divine wisdom that is not open to all. Therefore neither Church nor State has any right to claim to be infallible. They have no right to determine whether a man shall think this way or that, speak this way or that, except so far as his utterances may touch the practical morality of the world. But because neither Church nor State has a right to interfere, that does not give a man, by any manner of means, the right to utter any thought that he pleases to hold. Because no outside power should interfere with you, does that take away your own conscience, your own sense of respon-

sibility? Does that take away the fact that on right opinions the welfare of the world ultimately turns, and that wrong opinions are and must be disastrous?

Must a man, then, not have any thoughts? Must he not give utterance to what he believes? If you have no right to hold opinions that are not true, if you have no right to give utterance to opinions that are not true, must you therefore stop thinking and stop speaking? By no manner of means. The principle does not lead to that. It leads to this: that you have no right to assert as certainly true, or to believe as certainly true, anything that is not verified. But you may hold opinions tentatively. You have a right to say, I believe, with the facts and evidence I can find, that such and such things are so. You have a right to spread abroad your opinions after you have been as careful as you possibly can, with this proviso always accompanying them. And it is your duty to hold these opinions always open to reconsideration,—open for new light, for new evidence,—not to settle down into a petty private throne of personal infallibility: that is as much more contemptible than the infallibility of the Pope of Rome as one individual is less than all Christendom. Hold your opinions, then, tentatively, ready for revision, ready for new light.

And there is one more point, which I think goes contrary to the current of popular thought; and that is concerning the matter of toleration. You have no right to tolerate a false opinion in me. I have no right to tolerate a false opinion in you. Not—please remember—that you have any power to use, any right to use, force to prevent my holding or uttering my ideas; not that I have any right to use force to prevent your holding or uttering yours; but that no quarter, no mercy, should anywhere be shown to falsehood in thought any more than in speech. Can we not separate between toleration of thoughts, of ideas, of systems of belief, and toleration of the persons holding them? If it be indeed injurious to men to hold false opinions, why, then, can I not so separate between him, my brother and my

friend, as to hate and pursue and destroy, if I can, his opinions for his sake, in love, in brotherhood, in goodwill? Many a man holds opinions which are more pernicious than as though he carried a viper in his bosom. If I should attack the viper and destroy it, would I be an enemy of the man? If, then, I fight relentlessly, pitilessly, persistently, life-long, a certain system of belief that I feel to be utterly false and wrong it does not argue at all any lack of pity, charity, brotherhood toward the holders of those opinions. Rather, if I be sincere, I am their truest and firmest friend. And you, if you can seek out, in all the long catalogue of my opinions, some one that is not true,—do you not confer upon me the highest favor by convincing me of it and helping me to put away so much more falsehood that would injure and pervert my life, so much that stands in the way of my walking along the path that leads toward God and truth?

Since, then, it is so important that we hold correct opinions, and that we utter opinions that are correct, we shall see how necessary it is for us to raise and answer this next question, What is truth? A simple question enough; but, if I should come suddenly upon any one of you in this audience and ask you, What is truth? how many of you have ever thought it through carefully enough so that you could give me an intelligent answer! How do you know whether an opinion is true or not? What do you mean by a true opinion? Both of these questions needs asking and reply. First, then, What is truth? Truth is used in two senses. There is a truth of things, and there is a truth of thought. The truth of things covers all that wide range of the universe outside of our own brains. The truth of thought covers the world within. For example, it is a question concerning the truth of things as to whether Nero really set fire to Rome himself or whether the Christians did it. It is another question in history as to whether Joan of Arc—for it is a disputed point—was put to death, or whether, escaping, she lived a long life and died of old age. Any of these

questions pertains to matters of history. And then the whole region and range of science: the truth that certain gases put together in certain proportions will result in forming the air that we breathe; that certain others will form water; that the earth moves around the sun; that the planets move in their courses under the influence of certain laws,—all these great matters pertaining to the outside world, in these are the places where we are to look for the truth of things. Here is reality; and no matter what we think about it, whether we ever think about it at all or not, whether we have false opinions or true, the great facts of the world remain unchanged. The earth revolved around the sun for ages before there was anybody in the world who ever thought of its doing so. The thinking did not touch the question of fact. It is true that such and such things happened in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago. Whatever the opinion of Trinitarian or Unitarian, Theist or Atheist, may be on the subject, certain things occurred there. These are matters of fact.

The other great class of truths that we need specially to attend to now is that of thought; and a thought is said to be true when it corresponds with an external reality. If I think that the earth moves around the sun just precisely as it actually does, my thought is correct; if not, it is false. I may hold an opinion in regard to an open polar sea. Nobody knows as yet, or can tell, whether the opinion is correct or not; but it either is correct or it is not. My thought either answers to the fact, or it does not answer to it. So I may hold an opinion concerning the nature of God or of man, or of courses of conduct which I ought to follow under given circumstances, or as to the method of conducting my business, or concerning a mooted point in law, or a question of disease, sickness, or health,—it makes no difference what it is. If my thought corresponds to the external reality of the world, then it is true, my opinion is correct; if it does not, my thought is false.

Now, this being the nature of truth, this being what we

must seek if we wish to have our opinions correct, the great practical question for us to determine is as to the tests by which we are to decide whether our opinions are correct or not. For life is nothing more nor less than a long game of skill and strength. As Mr. Huxley has somewhere said: Man is like a chess-player sitting at the board, playing with an unseen adversary, not knowing his skill or his power, or what unforeseen move he may make. We are dealing with this great universe. On certain opinions about matters of fact depends the question as to whether we are to be sick or well. Opinions concerning the conduct of our business or profession mean success or failure. Opinions concerning the relations in which we should stand toward our fellow-men determine the questions of honesty and dishonesty, of purity and impurity, of helpfulness or hurtfulness toward those that are about us. Life, then, means the playing out of this long game. We deal with an adversary whose power many times we cannot measure. But the success of the game depends on our learning what the nature of this adversary in any particular department of life is. If we can only find out the laws, so that we can know what will take place under given conditions, then we are prepared. Take as an illustration — the same principle extends in all directions — the art of the navigator. Just so long as he understands the laws of the ocean currents, of storms, of wave, of wind, so long as he understands the construction of a vessel in accordance with these laws, so that it will stand the strain put upon it, so that it will weather the storm, so that the forces of the sea will drive it on its course instead of hindering its progress; so long as he understands the use of the mariner's compass; so long as he has a chart of the coast and of the whole course that he intends to pursue; so long, in other words, as he knows the nature, the laws of these forces with which he must deal,—so long he can count, with a great assurance of success, upon bringing to pass the things on which his heart is set. It all depends upon whether his opinions correspond to the reality of ocean, of current, of

wave, of wind, of storm, of the construction and manning of his ship, of the use of the mariner's compass and his chart. If his thought corresponds to the reality in all these directions, then he is comparatively safe, the universe at once becomes his ally, the world is at his back, and he is practically omnipotent, because the forces of the world are on his side. But the moment he makes a mistake, the moment he misunderstands one single essential element of the problem that is given him to work out, that moment the might of the universe comes upon him to crush him, because these laws and forces never change. He is mighty if he knows, he is mighty if he thinks, correctly ; but a mistake is wreck and ruin. It is, then, I say, of the utmost importance that we should be able to know by what tests we can decide whether our opinions in regard to the great questions of life are true or false.

But there is, preliminary to this, and perhaps quite as important, a preparation for truth-seeking, a fitness for the application of these tests. Let us run over this a moment, and see what it means. In the first place, you ought to be,—what the great majority of people I am afraid is not,—you ought to be really desirous of finding the simple truth. You ought to settle it in your mind that it is “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth” that you want. How is it with most people? Is it not true that, as we go on in life, we find that somehow or other we have come into possession of certain opinions. We do not know where they came from : we inherited them, perhaps, or we picked them up along the pathway of life. But we have come to hold certain views of things, and have come to have a sort of personal attachment to them ; and, if anybody comes along and questions their truth, nine times out of ten we resent it as a personal affront. We are in the position, then, not of truth-seekers, but of positive and earnest defenders of certain views, without much regard to whether they are true or not. Or perhaps we are anxious to maintain a reputation for consistency. If I believed and said a thing yesterday, I will stick to it

whether it is true or not. That is the attitude, I think, of the great majority of people. Or a person has a prejudice against a new truth. He does not like it, and therefore he will not look at any evidence in its favor. Whether for one reason or another, it makes no matter what it is, people are not truth-seekers so much as they are anxious defenders of certain opinions that they happen to hold.

Another essential prerequisite for truth-seeking is that you should surrender at once and forever the assumption of infallibility. You must surrender the assumption that you have the truth, and become a humble seeker for truth. Do not try to read your ideas into nature. Get your ideas out of the way, and listen to what nature has to say to you: that is the way to find out what the truth is. Most people come to the Bible, for example, or to the doctrines of Darwin,—to any of those popular doctrines that rouse the interests and the passions of men,—they come, not with the simple desire to find the truth: they come to attack, to defend, to fight as champions, this way or that. But think how foolish this is. If the position you hold is true, why, there is not a power in the universe that can overthrow it. Do not be afraid to let the wind blow against it! Do not be afraid to take it out of doors into the sunlight of the world! If you are really dwelling in the impregnable citadel of eternal, everlasting truth, why, God is in it, and he is the foundation and the cap-stone! And do you think anybody can overthrow it? Let the men that are investigating pry at its foundations with their crowbars as long as they please, let them click with their hammers, let them test with their acids,—let them apply any test they please to its principle. Why, the whole universe is in its favor! Nobody can overthrow it. Do not assume, then, that you have the truth. Listen, and find out what God desires to say.

And there is another prerequisite to truth-seeking,—the condition of your brain, how you shall use it. You ought, when you are investigating a simple matter of fact, to make your brain a clear, calm, cold logic-machine, without any

feeling, without any care, so far as your brain is concerned, as to whether the thing you are investigating be true or false. It is your business to find out a matter of fact. Do not let feeling come in then. The brain of most persons, I think, is like a pair of scales that are not balanced,—a magical pair of scales. You may cast the universe of truth into one side, and you put a little whim or prejudice or dislike into the other, and it will go down to the abyss, and the universe will kick the beam. Most persons' brains are not machines for the discovery of truth. And yet, when a matter of fact is in question, the brain should be a clear and polished glass to reflect. A painter sometimes flatters a face that he is copying, but a looking-glass never: it tells the truth because it cannot help it. You ought to train your brain into precisely that attitude toward questions of truth or falsehood.

There is, however, one field where emotion—love, pity, sympathy, all the free play of the soul,—has a right to come in and be heard: when you are investigating a matter of art, of poetry, the quality of a person or thing, something that can only be understood by one in sympathy with it, just as only a person who has a taste for music is fit to judge of a symphony or an opera,—in cases like this you have a right to let emotion speak. But, when it is a matter of fact, emotion should stand utterly one side. And yet is it not true that, concerning some of the grandest matters of fact that now divide the thinking world, it is not evidence that decides, it is not brain, it is only feeling, passion,—love, hate? Take the matter, for example, of the character and the real facts of the life of Jesus. Either Jesus was born of a virgin by miraculous conception or he was not,—it is a matter of simple fact. He rose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven or he did not,—it is a matter of simple fact. He wrought a miracle on a certain occasion, raising the dead or multiplying the quantity of food for those that were hungry, or he did not,—it is a matter of fact. And yet how many people are there

that have taken sides, one way or the other, without having even made the slightest attempt to settle it as a matter of fact! It is a question of feeling,—of love or hate; it is a matter of desire or of prejudice. And yet feeling has no right in this court. It is a matter of historic verity or falsehood, to be decided by the evidence.

When, then, we have made this preparation for truth-seeking, what are the tests? This is my last question. How shall we know that the opinion which we entertain is true, how shall we find out if it is false? And here there are two classes of tests, according to the two orders of truth; and it is very important that you keep them separate in your mind. The external truth of the world may be roughly divided into two classes. There is the truth of history and the truth of science: they are quite separable, as you will easily see. A question as to the historic truth concerning what Napoleon thought or did is a matter of testimony. It is a question as to the number, intelligence, capacity, and credibility of witnesses. You have only a balance of probabilities. There is no possibility—notice how sweeping this is, and yet how true—of our being able absolutely to settle any question of history in all its details. Points of so recent history as that of the last fifteen years are now in vigorous and red-hot dispute. It is not a question as to whether historians desire to tell the truth. Take it, for example, concerning the life of Napoleon. The people surrounding him either liked or disliked him; and their opinions of what he said or did were colored by that bias, one way or the other. Almost anything you choose to say can have a double construction put upon it: almost anything you choose to do can be interpreted one way or another. And the person that looks on may try his hardest to tell the simple truth about it, and perhaps be unable to do it, because he does not know your motive, your intention, he does not know the state of heart that lies back of the speech or the deed.

Historic truth then, at the best, must always remain a matter of a greater or less degree of probability. But when,

on the other hand, we come into the realm of science,—and this is its grand attraction to the mind that cares for accuracy,—here we come into a region where there are at least some things that can be finally settled. They are matters not of testimony. We do not, for example, to-day believe in the law of gravitation on the testimony of Sir Isaac Newton. He discovered this law. But it was not something that happened once, when the apple fell in his presence, and never happened before and never will happen again, so that we have only his testimony as to whether it is true or not. The law of gravitation is from eternity to eternity. It existed millions of years before Isaac Newton, and it will exist, so far as we know, forever. It is not something, then, that depends upon the accuracy of observation of any man ; for we can test it to-day. A competent man can go through the figures precisely as Sir Isaac Newton did, and verify the law of gravitation as he did. So in regard to the composition of a crystal, we are not obliged to take it on the testimony of somebody who lived a hundred years ago : we can try the experiment, and see it crystallize right before our eyes. Take the question of the indestructibility of matter. It is not something to be taken on testimony. We can try it over and over and over again, year after year, and see it prove true always. So of the persistence of force. In any question of scientific truth or falsehood, we have the matter here before our eyes, in our presence, so that we can test and find it truth to-day.

And now we reach the important thing for us as the outcome of our discussion : the fact that the great concerns of life do not rest upon any doubtful testimony. God has not put us into a world where life and death depend upon the accuracy of another man's observations, or the question as to whether he is minded to tell the truth. The great question as to what kind of a universe this is, as to what kind of a God manifests himself through its laws, this is not a matter of doubtful history, but of scientific verity. Then as to the nature of man, what kind of a being he is, according to what

laws he needs to live in order to develop himself, in order to organize into societies and states, to attain his highest possible welfare, this is not a question of doubtful historic testimony: it is a matter of scientific observation, experiment, and verification. Again, as to what evil is, as to the causes of crime, of pauperism, of all those ills that undermine human happiness, that shadow the world and blot out the light of heaven,—these are not matters that depend on testimony: they are questions for observation, for experiment, to be settled by the scientific method. And so of all the great problems,—those of religion, those of morality; the deepest questions of society and statesmanship, and the practical control and conduct of life,—are not those concerning which we need to be in doubt. They do not depend upon any Gospel or Bible or book or testimony of any witness who is now dead: they depend upon the great facts and laws all around us, in whose arms we are, in whose presence we stand, by whose power we live and breathe,—they depend upon these things that are open to the observation and experiment of the world.

It is our business, then, in this matter of opinion to search simply for truth. Emotion, the love of the heart for systems in which we have been trained,—O friends! I feel it as keenly as you,—but I have learned this one thing: emotion is called out by those things that we have long associated with, that we have learned to love, with which we have become familiar. No man can have this sentiment concerning anything or any person that is new. It needs time. The thought of the last century becomes the sentiment and poetry of this; and the thought of this century will be the emotion and poetry of the next. It is our business—for our own sake, for God's, for the world's sake—to find what is true, and let the heart come after and learn to love and venerate and worship the truth. It is not the heart's business to lead the head, but the head's business to lead the heart.

MORAL SANCTIONS.

It is commonly said that, though natural morality may be all very fine as a theory, it will not work in practice; that nature does not discriminate,—does not mete out adequate, accurate, and certain punishment for the breaches of the moral law; and therefore it is necessary that natural penalty should be supplemented by something extra-mundane, something supernatural, by a power outside of and above nature, that looks over the field of human society, and, if not at the time that the evil is wrought, at some time shall see to it that every wrong done shall meet with a certain penalty, and that every virtuous thought and deed shall find its certain reward. For it is said, although all of us are well aware that evil brings uncomfortable results to the persons against whom the transgression is committed, it does not always bring its sure and certain result of penalty to the doer of it. And it is further said that, if men were sympathetic enough to feel the pain and suffering of others as though they were their own; if they were loving enough so that they could not inflict an injury upon another any sooner than upon themselves, it might be safe to trust to human nature; but taking human nature as it is, unless men are fully persuaded that an evil result for every evil thought or deed will come upon themselves, and that this evil result will be so sure and so severe that it will not pay them to transgress, then there is no certainty that moral laws will be obeyed. All this, of course, will be granted; for it is a part of our definition of an evil action that it is such a one as will be necessarily followed by an evil result. If not, it would not be evil. And, if it did not result in evil to the doer of it as well as to its immediate

object, there would be no adequate motive to deter selfishness from having its own way.

But it is commonly assumed that the evil-doer frequently escapes; that nature has for him no adequate penalty. And out of this has sprung the demand for a theological, extra-worldly government of society; for a power outside of and above nature, who shall look over the world and see to it that good is rewarded and that evil is punished.

Without stopping at present to discuss the question whether this is necessary or not, I purpose, in the first place, to outline a few of the main points of the scheme of theological penalty with which it is proposed to supplement nature, that we may see whether it seems just.

Let us see if it is such a kind of government as we would like to have instituted in the place of natural laws and natural results. I say theological scheme, not because this which I am going to outline is the only theological scheme in the world, or the only one that we could imagine as existing; for there are many theologies, and they may be either natural or supernatural. But I use the word in the popular sense, as referring to that which to-day is dominant in Christendom. Now, what are some of the main features of this scheme of theological penalty, that debar us from accepting it?

In the first place, it treats innocence as though it were guilt. It starts with the doctrine of the fall of man; and this is said to bring in its train, as the result of that one deed of the federal head of the race, the total depravity of humanity. Natural law recognizes the fact of heredity, confesses the misfortune of being born of unhealthy or depraved parentage, admits the fact that the children do suffer to the third and fourth generations; but it does not "add insult to injury," and call this, which is only a misfortune, a sin, and it does not look upon the suffering that is thus entailed as being punishment. It simply recognizes the fact of misfortune and suffering. But the theology of the day teaches that it is not simply a misfortune to be born of sinful parents, but that the child comes into the world guilty before God, and

deserving of punishment; or, if not carried to quite that extreme, it does hold that the child is so born and so circumstanced that it will inevitably become guilty, if not so at the moment of birth. The difference between the two, although it is made much of in theological systems, seems to me to be trivial or verbal, and of no practical account. Dr. William G. T. Shedd, one of the leading theologians of the Presbyterian Church, published, not a great many years ago, a sermon with this title, "Sin a nature, and that nature guilt." That is the old Calvinism. The child, by virtue of its being born of a particular race, is guilty before God, and deserving his eternal wrath.

Troubled by the manifest and hideous injustice of this, Dr. Edward Beecher attempted to obviate the difficulty by supposing that men had sinned in some pre-existent state, and so might justly be born into this world in a state of guilt. But it requires only a moment's thought to see that this does not at all remove the difficulty: it only pushes it back into an imaginary former life. It does not do it away, but only tries to hide it. This theological penalty then is revoltingly unjust, in that it treats innocence as though it were guilt, and punishes it as though it were deserving of the wrath of the righteous Ruler of the universe.

Again, theology has invented virtues which are not real virtues, and vices which are not real vices. You will remember that I have devoted a discourse to a discussion of this point. I bring it up here, however, as having a special bearing on our present theme. When religion becomes an institution, a church, an ecclesiasticism, with a life and a discipline of its own, with its corporate emotions and aspirations, its desire to conquer and control mankind, then it is a power that, first and foremost, desires to live and to extend its sway over the thoughts and the lives of men. And very naturally, therefore, it results that the sins which are committed against it, as an institution, take precedence of those that are committed against the natural order of things. And thus it follows that, in most of the ecclesiastical systems of the world, the man

who doubts the pretensions of the ecclesiasticism, or dares to disregard one of its ceremonial laws, is looked upon as a greater sinner than he who has broken all the natural laws of morality, if, all the while, he has been true to this instituted religion. You can call up examples from history or your own observation, to show how true this is. A man who sits in the broad aisle of any church in this city to-day, and who is a strong man, one of the pillars of the church, who is necessary to its support, whose money is always ready to flow in carrying on those things which the church itself has at heart, — such a man may do almost anything, and still keep his seat in the broad aisle. But if he dares to be faithless to the institution of which he is a member, and of which he is one prominent support, then he has committed a sin which is not so readily forgiven. I say, then, theological penalty disregards the real, natural, vital relations of right and wrong. It punishes sins that are no sins, and it rewards virtues that are no virtues; while it lets sins that are real sins against God and man escape, and it lets virtues that are real virtues toward God and man go without recognition.

Once more, theology declares its purpose to punish sin out of all proportion to its guilt. A little child, because born of a particular parent, is sent to eternal perdition. So earnestly have men believed this, that they have tried to invent ways of baptizing children before they were born, that they might anticipate the possibility of their dying before birth. The enormity of it appears in a case like that. But take it in the case of a man who should live sixty years, and committed every crime of which he was capable. If, then, you can sit down and estimate the amount of evil that he has done, and then if you can estimate eternity, you will be able to see that the punishment which theology threatens is out of all proportion to the guilt he has been able to accumulate. It seems, then to the natural thought and the natural justice of man, revolting tyranny; and it naturally results in recklessness concerning the power and the authority of the being who governs after this fashion. So, men say, It may be true; but, if

it is true, it is unfair, it is unjust, and we will have none of it. So that a calm, philosophical thinker, like John Stuart Mill, will declare that, if there be such a god in the universe, he will go to hell rather than worship him. I say it results in that state of revolt in the human heart against a palpable injustice. And this feature of it is recognized by theologians themselves, who will confess, as did Dr. Albert Barnes, that they can see no reason in the nature of things why it need be so. And it reverses the ordinary argument concerning sin and penalty. Instead of men being able to look each other in the face, and say, See, this of which you are guilty is so enormous that you deserve eternal punishment, the argument has to be turned about; and, as I have heard it time and time again, the ministers are obliged to say, This which you are guilty of is to be punished eternally, and therefore it must be enormous. But, if the world were turned into one wild carnival of crime for ten millions of years, it would not then even begin to approach the unfathomable enormity of evil that theology teaches us that God will permit and perpetuate in hell. Edwards, Spurgeon, Moody, and a host of others, have given us graphic pictures of what *Our Father* will do and allow in perdition, beside which the blackest deeds of earth pale into almost the whiteness of innocence itself. The theological penalty, then, is out of all proportion to the crime committed.

And then it has another defect. It has invented a purely technical method of deliverance. The terms of deliverance from the natural results of sin, in the popular theological scheme of to-day, stand in no sort of real, vital relation to the deeds committed or their natural results. Suppose one has committed a murder, been guilty of theft or of adultery, or of any one of the great crimes of the world. The terms of deliverance are what? Reparation? No. Believe, be baptized, submit to the priesthood, become a member of the church, trust in the blood: do this, that, or another thing, any one of which, as you will see, stands in no sort of natural relation to the deed committed or to the deliverance expected.

These theological nostrums are on a level with the magical cures for disease in the Middle Ages, or the mummeries of an Indian medicine-man.

These four points, then, it seems to me are enough to show that this theological morality is unjust, and that it stands in no sort of vital relation to human life.

Let us, then, turn away from this and consider natural penalty as it is revealed to us in the evolution of the world. The central principle of the doctrine of evolution is "the struggle for life and the survival of the fittest"; that is, a struggle on the part of all things and creatures on earth to fit themselves to the conditions of their existence, the survival of those that succeed, and the dying out of those that fail. You will see, then, as the natural result of this, that the one, universal, eternal penalty of natural mortality is death, or some one of the steps that lead toward death.

To clear the way for what is to follow, let us begin by asking and answering the question as to what we mean by natural law. It is unfortunate, I think, that we have not some other term to take the place of this; because, when the word "law" is used, we naturally and almost inevitably think at once of a body of legislators or of a king making a law. We think of statute law, of law as the arbitrary will of some power which tells us, "You must do this, and you must not do that," and which threatens arbitrary penalty for obedience or disobedience. This is the ordinary meaning of the word "law." We have no other word to express what we mean by natural law, and yet we actually mean something very different. Let me, in the first place, put it into abstract language, and then illustrate what I mean by it. Natural law, then, is simply a phrase that we use to express *the relations in which persons, things, forces stand to each other, or the mutual influences which they exert upon each other, by virtue of what they are.* It means the constant universal relations between persons, things, and forces. Take, for example, ourselves as members of society. Certain men, women, and children are what they are; and they are together, in certain relations, in society. What we

mean by the natural law of society, then, are the duties and responsibilities that spring out of these natural and necessary relations. Take it into the region of things, to make it clearer. Suppose I have here, in some jar or vessel, the chemical ingredients which, brought together in certain proportions, will result in forming a crystal. What I mean by the natural law of crystallization is that, if I bring these chemical ingredients together after this fashion, a crystal will always be the result. They stand in such a relation to each other that, being what they are, they must crystallize. They cannot help doing so. Take as another illustration, in another department, — that of pure force, — the law of gravitation. This law has been put into a mathematical formula, which I need not trouble you with ; but you know that what it means is this : That, given certain bodies in space, of certain bulk and density, they will always attract each other with a certain power and in a certain way. They stand in such a relation to each other that they exert this power. They cannot help doing so. And the power which they so exhibit necessarily depends upon the bulk and density of the bodies so related. So you may take it anywhere else. We say of water, that it is a natural law that it shall freeze at a given temperature, and at another temperature that it shall be dissipated into steam. We say it is a law of electricity that it will behave so and so under certain conditions. These are not enacted laws. We do not think of electricity as something that might act in some other way, only that some power compels it to act in this way. It cannot help acting so and so, as long as it is electricity. So of water. If they cease to act so and so, they cease to be what they are. It is the law of their life, then, that, under given conditions, they should always behave after certain uniform and fixed methods.

Now we are ready to pass to our next point : that natural penalty, the result of a breach of natural law, is universal, is absolute, is self-executing. There is no such thing in the universe as escaping the penalty of a natural law ; no such

thing as suspending it, or as changing its action. It is absolute, eternal, universal. It rules everything that man has ever seen or can see. Let us take two or three concrete illustrations, that you may see just what I mean. If you are going to have a river, it would be proper for us to say that it is the natural law of a river that it shall consist of banks on either side, and a current of water flowing between them. These are the conditions by which a river exists. You break these, and the river dies,—there is no river left. Break down the bank, so that the water spreads over the country, and you may have a lake ; but it is not a river any more. Dry up the water : the banks may remain, but there is a river no longer. So it is a natural law that you cannot have two mountains without a valley between them. Fill up the valley, and the two mountains cease to exist. It is a natural law, as I said a moment ago, that water will congeal and become ice at a certain temperature. You change that temperature, and the ice ceases to be : there is no ice any more. It is the natural law in regard to steam, that, when water becomes heated to a certain point, the molecular particles of which it is composed seek to get just as far away from each other as they can,—expand, as we say. And on this one law hang the industries of the modern world. And, if this law of steam could be suddenly suspended or changed, it would paralyze civilization. Bring it into the realm of the physical life of man. It is a law of my body that, if I am to live, I must keep my body at a certain temperature. It must have food ; it must be preserved from hurtful influences of all kinds. The laws of life, in other words, must be obeyed. If I break these laws and become diseased, that is the first step toward death. If I carry the breach of these laws beyond a certain point, death itself ensues, and must ensue. Take it in regard to intelligence ; for it holds true in these higher realms of life, just as well as in the lower. If a man is to grow up an intelligent, instructed, educated being, there must be a certain amount of development of his brain : if that fails, he is an idiot. If, after he has become an intelligent

being, these laws of the brain are broken, he is insane. There are laws of thought, of study, of the pursuit of intelligence in this department of the world or that ; and, if a man fails to keep these, his brain as a physical organ may be perfect, but he will be ignorant. There are vast realms of truth and beauty, the threshold of which his foot will never cross. Bring it up into the realm of the moral nature. Precisely the same thing holds true. There are moral laws that a man, if he is to be a moral being, must keep. If he ceases to keep these, he ceases to be a moral being ; his moral nature is dead ; he is an immoral man. The penalty, you see, then, for the breach of the natural moral law, the natural physical law,—the natural law of any kind, the wide world over, and through all time,—is, and must of necessity be, death.

We are ready, then, to notice the next point which is sometimes brought as a great objection against natural penalty ; and that is that natural law never forgives. It never forgives, in the sense of letting one off from suffering the natural and necessary penalty of breaking it. And here let us notice a curious contradiction on the part of theologians, as they deal with this matter of natural penalty. I have heard it urged a great many times against natural penalty, that it is not adequate ; that it does not punish inexorably and certainly, and therefore must be supplemented by something else, as I said at the outset. On the other hand, when the purpose was not to prove that we needed somebody to punish, but that we needed somebody to forgive, then they tell us that natural law always punishes, and punishes so inexorably that we must have some one to deliver us out of its iron grasp. This natural penalty becomes one thing or the other, according to the necessities of the doctrine that the theologians wish to prove. But nature never forgives, and, in the nature of things, cannot forgive. But, on the other hand, it can and does do that which is better than forgiveness. Nature has a vast and wondrous power of recuperation. If I take an axe, and, going into my garden, strike it into the trunk of a beautiful tree, nature does not forgive

that stroke. The natural result of it, the evil, exists, and must exist. If I have broken the laws of its life, and if the hurt is serious enough, the tree will die. But, if its vitality is equal to the strain that is put upon it, then the power of recuperation comes in, and it will outlive the stroke ; it will overgrow the wound, and years afterward the bark shall be so smooth that you shall hardly know that such an accident ever befell it in its younger life. So, if I break any law of my body, if I carry the law-breaking far enough I shall die ; but, if not, there is this power of recuperation that shall enable me to overcome the devitalizing power which is dragging me down toward death. Nature, then, does not forgive, either in the physical world, the mental world, or the moral world ; but it does possess in itself this power of recovery, so that we may outgrow the lower and the worser conditions of our nature,—leave them behind,—and, by and by, stand on heights of physical, mental, and moral beauty and glory, such as perhaps we do not dream of now.

I wish now to pass to another point, where there is a large amount of misconception ; and I have passed over very rapidly some of these that really call for more adequate discussion, in order that I may come to this. There is apparent over the world a large amount of what is commonly and at first sight called injustice. I see, for example, a man prosperous in business. Every scheme that he lays his hand to succeeds. He becomes a king in the money market of his city ; he is able to control, perhaps, the financial interests of a State. And yet this man is not a moral man, not a trusted man in his business except in so far as the necessities of that business require. He is a man impure in his life, corrupt all through, such a one as we have first and last seen many times in the history of the world, who becomes utterly shameless, and flaunts his disgrace in the face of the society of his time. We look at a spectacle like this, and we say, Surely there is no moral government in the world ; there is no natural penalty that treads on the heels of a man's misdeeds, else how could it be possible that a man like this should prosper, when

there may be a hundred of his underlings, men working patiently hour by hour at his desks, who in moral stature out-tower him a thousand-fold, who are true and noble men,—true to their wives, true to their children, true to all the relations which they sustain in society, men of unquestioned integrity? Men say, What sort of moral government is this, under which such a man prospers, while thousands of good men fail? And yet, friends, all this confusion grows out of the fact that we do not discriminate in our thinking. There is no failure of the moral law in a career like that. There is not one single wrong that is not followed by its natural, necessary, and adequate penalty. What is it that we see? Let us analyze it just a little. Why, here is a man who fulfils the conditions of success in business. The result is, he is a successful business man. That is certainly in accordance with all natural law and order, as it should be. He fails to fulfil the conditions of a true and noble life, and therefore he is a corrupt, mean, contemptible man in his character. Is there any breach of law there? He succeeds in that department of life wherein he fulfils the conditions, the necessary laws of success; he fails in the other department, where he does not fulfil those conditions. We have not yet gotten over the old idea of the Jews: that, if a man behaves himself, he has a right to claim of God, or the world, or society, payment in cash for so doing. The promise of the Jewish religion was prosperity, wealth, a great many children, and long life for being good. But, when we come down to the New Testament, we find a sharper discrimination of the necessary laws of the universe than this. Jesus told people—though it has been forgotten ever since that time, for the most part—that those certain persons on whom the tower of Siloam fell were not specially guilty because they suffered; that those whose blood was mingled with the sacrifice in the temple, by the cruelty of Pilate, were not worse than those who escaped. And Paul tells us, in one of his letters to the Corinthians, “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” He does not say that, if you sow wheat, you will

reap oats ; or that, if you sow care in your business, you will necessarily reap intelligence as an historian. He does not tell you that, if you study the human body, you will become an adept in legal wisdom ; or that, if you are kind to your wife, you will, of necessity, get rich. He does not say that, if you plant your seed and take perfect care of it, if you look after the soil and chemicals and all the conditions of its growth, therefore you shall succeed in sending a rotten ship around the Cape of Good Hope, and have it reach its port in safety. We need to discriminate better, and to remember that each department of life has its own natural laws ; and that compliance with the laws of one department does not at all insure success in another, where the laws are not complied with. Now, for example, if you choose to live in a house that is unventilated, or where the drainage is not looked after, or where the water is impure, you may be the most pious man in the world, but that will not stand in the way one particle of your getting the typhoid fever. You have kept the laws of spiritual piety, but you have broken the laws of health. You receive your reward in the region where you keep the laws, not in the region where you break them. So what of it, friends ? Suppose a vicious man does ride in a carriage, and live in a fine house ? Suppose he is honored by his fellow-men as possessing great wisdom, or as being fit to represent them in the State Legislature or in Congress,— what of it ? Is there any law broken ? Is immorality unpunished ? Is the order of nature interrupted or interfered with ? Friends, if you believe it best to be righteous, true, honest, then be so, and take the pay that comes as the natural and necessary result. But do not grumble or find fault with this universe because righteousness is not paid in greenbacks or government bonds. There is a law in each one of these departments : keeping that is success, breaking it is failure.

Suppose, for example, that an immoral man escapes punishment from the laws of the city or the State in which he lives : does he therefore escape the natural, necessary penalty of the deeds he has committed ? This statute law — and I speak of

it, because there is such a misunderstanding concerning it — was never intended as an adequate punishment for moral offences. It is only very recently that moral offences have been taken any cognizance of by statute law. When the first laws of nations were made, in the early history of the world, they paid attention simply and only to what are called crimes against the State. They did not attempt to regulate the moral relations of individuals. The law is utterly inadequate to any such regulation. Who is there, what bench of judges, what twelve men as jurors, what court that is wise enough to judge of your guilt or mine, and mete out adequate penalty? The only object of statute law, and the only use or right it has to exist, is for the defence of the State, of the civil and social organization as such. And so, if a man does escape the penalty of the State law, he does not therefore escape punishment.

Let us now pass on to consider the question as to whether moral penalty is real, whether I can make you see its reality, bring it so home to your thought and feeling that you shall see that every breach of the moral law always has been punished, is always punished now, always will be, always must be punished. At any rate, it is simple fact that nobody ever did escape, nobody to-day is escaping, nobody in the future ever can escape, the slightest infraction of any vital law. This, I say, is a part of the nature of things. Let me see if I can make it real to you. I have said that the one penalty of natural law is death,—death, or the steps that lead toward it. That is, death in its totality or partial death, according to the amount of the infraction of the law. I have three points to make, three grades to notice in this progress of law-breaking that leads to death. If an organism is healthy, the first result of the breaking of law anywhere is pain. And pain, therefore, while it is the penalty and punishment of broken law, is never — in nature — unjust or cruel or unkind. It is the warning of a friend. It is a sign-board marked "Danger," set up along the pathway of life. If you are feeling pain or suffering in any department of your life, you are to remember that it is

simply the voice of nature, saying to you, "Stop." You are going in the direction of danger and evil. The first result, then, is pain. If I carry the breach of physical law far enough,—notice how true this is that I have just been saying,—I cease to suffer. Every educated physician knows that, when he is called to the bedside of a patient, and he finds that, though very sick, he is not suffering any pain, this indicates a more dangerous condition than as though he were in the acutest agony. That is, if the life of the system is so drained that the nerves no longer thrill,—so that, although there are disease and disorganization, the system has not life enough to suffer,—why, then the case is desperate. If he should find the patient not suffering one day, and then on the next should find that pain had set in, he would take courage; for it would show a higher degree of vitality in the system than it possessed the day before. The next step, then, after pain, is this one I have just indicated,—such a degradation, a lowering of the life, that there is no longer vitality enough to suffer. The next step is death.

Now let us look at this as it bears on moral penalty, and see if there is any real parallelism. The first result, in every healthy nature, of a wrong deed, is pain. A man is conscience-stricken, as we say. He feels ashamed of himself for that which he has committed. And, if his fellow-men know it, the additional pain that comes to him then is not simply that he is found out, but it is that these same moral natures, which are like his own, look into his soul, and reflect the self-contempt which he feels for his own evil deeds. And there is no suffering in this world—if you have ever felt it, or if you have ever studied the nature of man so as to know what it means—equal to that of a living but wounded conscience, the righteous sense of nobility in a man, that climbs up into some height of his being, and from that standpoint looks down with contempt upon itself,—is there anything worse than that? And men have found it so unbearable that they could not continue to live. Men who have committed a crime, and who have not been discovered, have found this

stricken conscience so much heavier a load of suffering than they could bear, that they have come and submitted themselves to the law, that they might try, at least, to make expiation. They have given themselves up, and said, Let me suffer at the hands of my fellows for the deed I have committed ; let me hide myself somewhere from the face of the earth !

And now, to advance the next step, we find a class of men that most people are apt to say are not punished at all, for the reason that they do not feel it. May they not correspond to this insensibility of the body of which I have just spoken ? A man at last gets his conscience seared, so that he does not feel any remorse. He will commit the most outrageous deeds, and not be sorry for them in the least. He will break all the laws of society. He loses all care for public opinion, and may even come to rejoice in the notoriety of his own disgrace. What shall we say of a case like this ? Men declare, Here, at least, is a person unpunished. He is doing wrong, he is bringing any quantity of suffering and ruin upon other people ; and he does not care. He suffers no penalty at all ! Does he not ? Next to death itself, it is my deliberate opinion that just that man who is rejoicing in his villany and disgrace, and who is flaunting them in the face of the world, is suffering a punishment severer than all. Just look at him for a moment, and see how it only needs a little deeper thought to correct your misapprehension in regard to the government of this world. Let us start with an illustration. You remember that old story of the *Odyssey*, how when Ulysses is on his way home he stops at a certain island, and his crew falls into the hands of the sorceress, Circe. All his companions, who had left the ship and gone up the island to visit her palace, she turns into swine. When Ulysses comes to look after them, because they had not returned, he finds them brutes, rooting in the mire, grunting and sleeping in swinish content. They had forgotten that they ever were men. Think you that Ulysses, as he looked upon them in that condition, would say, These men are well off : they are in no pain. No calamity has befallen them, so long as they

do not know it. Is it just as well to be swine as men, if only you do not know that you are a brute? Is it nothing to be deprived of manhood,—to lose the delicious unrest of thought, to miss the pleasures of friendship and the sight of the stars? Is the man who is degraded, shut out from all the higher, nobler, sweeter realms of life, who does not know what they mean,—is he free from the penalty of broken law, because he does not know what he has lost? Is the youth who has grown to the age of fourteen, and either by disease or on account of some congenital malformation has suddenly ceased to grow, and so stands still and comes to be only an idiot, is he as well off as another, because he does not know he is an idiot? Is there nothing pitiable about a man who is insane, though he may think himself a king, simply because he does not know that he is insane? Take that beautiful little picture from Moore's "Lalla Rookh":—

"One morn a peri at the gate
Of heaven stood disconsolate."

She is sad, heart-broken, because she is not permitted to enter the abode of the blest. Now and then she catches a gleam of its brightness and glory; now and then she hears a snatch of its ravishing song: she knows the beauty and the glory, but is not yet permitted to enter. Would you not rather be in her place, shut out from heaven as yet, but able to think of heaven, than to lie contented by the side of the gate, unable to hear its music or see the gleam of its glory; and incompetent, even if transported into the presence and set before the throne of God itself, of feeling that you were in heaven, or knowing what it meant? A man who is blind suffers no less deprivation because he does not know what he is losing. A man who is deaf loses no less because he does not know what it means to hear. So a man who is degraded in his moral nature, so that he rejoices in his shame, who does not know what it means to be a man, who does not know anything of the sweets, the unspeakable delights of those who inhabit the higher ranges of human life, though he

come to love only the sensual, and be indifferent to shame,—such a man is bearing a load of penalty unspeakably worse than any evil he can possibly inflict upon his victims, unless he can induce them to become willing partners in his degradation. If he only knew that there was something better, and longed after its attainment, there would be some hope for him ; but, so long as he does not he is excluded from all possibility of advance. That men do not really think the evil-doer unpunished appears in the fact that no good and rational man would ever consent to change places with him.

He who does not look upon this degradation toward brute-hood as adequate and awful moral penalty simply reveals the fact that the higher life, from which he is thus shut out, is as yet no tangible reality to his thought. Ask Beethoven what it would mean to be shut out of the world of music. This moral law then, this moral penalty, is it not universal, is it not exact? May we not say of it as the Psalmist says of God : “ If I climb up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in the abyss, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.” Let me close by reading to you some lines from Coleridge, who has shown so deep and true an insight into this natural law :—

“ How seldom, friend, a good, great man inherits
Honor and wealth, with all his worth and pains ;
It seems a story from the land of spirits
When any man obtains that which he merits,
Or any merits that which he obtains.

“ For shame, my friend ! renounce this idle strain ;
What wouldst thou have a good, great man obtain ?
Wealth, title, dignity, a golden chain,
Or heap of corpses which his sword hath slain ?
Goodness and greatness are not means, but ends !

Hath he not always treasures, always friends,
The good, great man? Three treasures,—love and light,
And calm thoughts, equable as infant's breath;
And three fast friends, more sure than day or night,—
Himself, his Maker, and the angel Death."

NOTE.—The principle of this discourse applies to institutions, nations, and civilizations, as well as to individuals. And all history proves it.

Morality and Religion in the Future.

It is said that some years ago a man wrote a book describing the natural features, the products, and the inhabitants of Iceland ; and that, in devoting one chapter to the subject of snakes, he began it by the remarkable statement, "There are no snakes in Iceland." There are a great many books being written, sermons being preached, and review articles being published at the present time on the subject of morals and religion in the future ; and the main burden of a large part of them is that there are to be neither morals nor religion in the future. It seems to me, then, quite worth our while to look this matter squarely in the face for a little, before we proceed to our discussion.

Are there to be any morals or any religion in the future? Mr. Mallock, and the large school of thinkers and writers that he particularly represents, are telling us all the time that if science and the methods of science are to progress,—as they seem likely to,—and become dominant in the minds of men, that morality is to be undermined and overthrown. For he takes this remarkable position—and has argued it in article after article, and in one or two of his books—that there is no reason in the nature of things why people should behave themselves ; that the only reason why they should pursue one course of conduct and refrain from another is that the almighty power that controls this universe has asserted through an infallible Church that by and by, in some future condition, he will punish them, if they do not. He goes to the length of saying explicitly that this is the only reason on which morals can rest ; that there is no difference between honesty and dishonesty, between

loyalty and treachery, between purity and impurity,—no difference that men will naturally find out and discover it to be for their interest to regard, unless they can be certain that the one class of actions will be punished in the future life, and the other will be rewarded. And Mr. Goldwin Smith, whose sympathies, remarkable as it seems, are all with the liberal school of modern thought, and who believes that the instituted and systematic theologies of the world are undermined, and are bound to be overthrown, goes so far as to write gravely about the possibility of “a moral interregnum.” That is, he seems to think that moral character and action have been so intimately blended and bound up with the religious institutions of the world that, if once they are discredited, morality is gone, until a new religion can spring up and present men with proper and adequate reasons for their behavior.

Let us look at this, and see what are the facts. If men—every one of them or any large number of them—have been behaving after a certain fashion called moral, and refraining from immoralities simply because of certain ideas that they have held about God, of course it will follow that, if they lose these ideas, they will be likely, if they think it for their interest, to try the experiment of immoral conduct. In so far as a person’s conceptions of morality, ideas of moral behavior, have been blended with or modified by their religious ideas, of course they will be changed by the passing away of those religious conceptions. But, in every case, the experience of the world will demonstrate to them, first or last, that morality is something that does not depend either upon theology or religion, but inheres in the very nature of things. Let a man attempt to pursue a line of immoral conduct, thinking that he will find all smooth sailing, and that fair winds will blow his pleasure-yacht over sunny summer seas,—so soon as he attempts to go contrary to one of the eternal forces and laws, he will wreck himself as surely as the ship that runs upon a hidden rock. For what do we mean by morality,—by a good action or a bad

action? I have already told you abundantly and at length. I only wish to recall it here, to clinch this part of my argument. A bad action is an action which results in evil to mankind, that takes away from the well-being, from the happiness, from the life of somebody. A good action is one that helps mankind, that adds to the life and well-being and happiness. And these laws are the very conditions of our being. There is no more possibility of an interregnum of them than there is of an interregnum of the laws of chemical attraction or the laws of electricity or the laws of planetary motion. These laws of our life are the very conditions of life; and to break them means now and forever pain, disease, suffering, degradation, death. It makes no difference, then, what kind of God men believe in, or whether they believe in any at all, so far as the integrity and the eternity of these moral conditions of our human life are concerned. There is to be, then, a morality in the future. So long as the world stands, and so long as there live in the world creatures which are capable of feeling, of thinking, of willing, just so long morality will be a part of the very nature of things. It cannot be abolished except by bringing the world to an end.

But how about there being any religion in the future? The friends and the enemies of science, both,—or some part of them,—are telling us that religion and theology are only superstitions belonging to the childhood and twilight period of human development, and that they will be outgrown and left behind one day, when the world grows to its perfect humanity. Let us see what they mean. If you only question closely either one who is afraid of science, and so thinks it is going to destroy religion, or one who believes in science, and hopes it is going to destroy religion,—if, I say, you question either of these, you will find that what they mean by religion and theology is some particular religion, some particular kind of theology. And all this may be true. The intelligence and advancement of human thought and life have already destroyed ever so many theol-

ogies and ever so many religions, and left them outworn, empty shells, useful only as indicating certain stages of human progress in the past. But does this mean that theology and religion themselves can ever be outgrown and left behind? Let us clear our thought on this subject by simply asking ourselves the question what we mean by theology and what we mean by religion. Theology is nothing more nor less than the theorizing of men concerning the universe. Whatever name you give this universe, — whether you call it God or nature, it makes no matter, — it exists. Out of it we have come, on it we depend for life and breath and everything we possess, every moment of our lives. In its laws is life, in disregard of them is death. It makes no difference whether you think of this universe as possessing a separate soul that you call God, or whether you think of it as it exists in its totality, without any such distinction : in either case, it exists ; and every man who thinks must have some theory about it, and this theory that you have of the universe is your theology. So no class of men in the future, save idiots and the insane, can possibly escape having a theology. What do we mean by religion? Theology is the intellectual, theoretical view that we take of the universe : religion, on the other hand, expresses the imaginative, sympathetic, emotional relation, in which we stand to this same universe. It is the feeling that we have about this great being, of whose life we are a part, in whose presence we must forever abide,—the feeling we have about the universe or the power or powers that we suppose to control and govern it, and guide its destinies. So no matter what your thought may be about it, so long as man is capable of thinking and of feeling, so long he must have religion. As well might a bird escape the confines of the atmosphere by means of which it flies, as well might a fish outswim the limits of the sea, as well might a mariner outsail the horizon, as for thinking, intelligent, sympathetic human beings to escape from theology or religion. They will then remain. There will be then, in the future, morality, theology, and religion.

One thing seems very strange and curious to me. I can hardly understand the state of mind into which a man can get, who at the same time believes in God and is afraid of the progress of knowledge. Only think for a moment what it means. These brains of ours, if there be a God, are the work of that God; and this whether the theory of creation or evolution be true, it makes no matter which. And by means of these brains, and by them only, can we attain to any knowledge of the world, of humanity, past, present, or future. For, though people talk a great deal about sympathetic knowledge and heart knowledge as separate from that of the intellect, all that they mean by it or can mean is the sympathetic side of intellectualism; for man without any brain, though he might have ever so much heart,—be all heart,—could never know anything, or have even one single thought. All our knowledge of the universe, then, comes through the brain. God, on the supposition of those who believe in him, is the author of that brain. He is also the author of the universe that we are trying to become acquainted with. And yet there are thousands of persons who firmly believe these things, who seem to think that, if by some fatal mischance or effort we find God out, morality and religion are to go by the board. What kind of a conception can they have of God? That he is a sham that it is not safe to probe too deeply? That he is playing a game of deception with us, and that, if we find out what he is really doing, we must lose our confidence in and our respect for him? Can it be that men can have lurking in the depths of their nature a thought of a being like this as a God, and still have the face to go through the farce of offering him worship! And if he be genuine, and if he has made a genuine universe, then is it not true that, the more we know about him and about his work, the more we shall wonder, admire, and love? I, for one, if God really has been cheating us all these thousands of years,—though it would be ever so painful,—would like to find it out. It seems to me, then, that, if we really have trust in God, we must believe that morality and relig-

ion, and all good and true and beautiful things, will only be increased by the advancement of human thought and the broadening of human discovery.

Having, then, settled, as I trust, to our satisfaction, that both morality and religion are permanent elements of human nature and human life, let us go on now, and ask ourselves the question as to what form, in the future, morality and religion are likely to assume, and what their probable relations to each other will be. Have we any way of forecasting the future thus? It seems to me we have, so far as the general trend and development of human life are concerned. If I stand on the banks of a great river, it makes no difference whether I know just the particular direction in which it flows below me or not: if I do know where it has come from and the general outline of its course so far, I can, with a certain degree of probability, determine its future flow. And so, judging by the past progress of man and the laws of human thought, it seems to me that we can forecast, within certain degrees and limits of probability, the shape that morality and religion must assume in the future, and what their ideal relations to each other must be.

First for morality then. It needs no farther argument,—for it springs out of and depends upon all that I have told you concerning moral principles throughout this whole course,—to prove that morality, the laws of life, will be permanent and enduring. It will abide forever, it will be universal, it will be self-executing: it cannot be escaped. It will cover human life, and it will depend simply upon itself, standing upon its own laws, a part of the eternal order of things.

Next, this morality of ours will not be a fixed standard of action. It will be rather a movable and progressive ideal. Let me make this matter clear, if I can, so that you may see the importance of it. The principle underlying moral actions as I have told you before, is unchanging and eternal; that is, it is now, it must have been always, and it always must be in the future, the duty of every man to

pursue such courses of conduct as shall minister to the welfare, the progress, and the happiness of men: that principle is eternal. But what particular thing I shall do under particular circumstances depends upon those circumstances themselves. So that morality will be a progressive thing. As man grows, as his view of the world, of human life and human possibility, enlarges, so his moral ideal will grow, and be ever a light to lead him on, a constantly progressing approximation of his thought to the reality of things. So, I say, there will be no fixed standard of morality: there will be no time in the history of the world when a man can sit down, and in a book write out a set of maxims that shall be final to apply to all classes and conditions of men. He may write down a principle; but the application of it is a progressive application, changing as human life changes, rising as human life rises: so that the moral life of man shall become higher, fuller, more comprehensive, sweeter, tenderer than it is to-day, ever keeping step with the progressive life of the human soul.

Another thing will characterize the morality of the future. The trouble with the moral laws of the past and of the present lies in the fact that men do not appreciate, have only as yet partially learned, that it is really for their interest to keep them. There has been in the past, and there is wide-spread all over the world to-day, a sense of conflict between self-interest and right. And religion—lamentable it is—has done its full share in creating this sense of false antagonism; for it has been telling men for ages, as Mr. Mallock is telling them to-day, that there is no reason in the nature of things why they should do right, but that they must obey some imaginary law which only tends to divert human thought from the reality of the eternal laws of righteousness. But we may expect in the future that men will more and more completely learn that they cannot by any possibility make it pay to disregard the slightest of all these moral principles. Men will progressively learn more and more completely that, if they injure some one else under

the fancied idea that they are benefiting themselves, they are only cheating their own souls, that they are only injuring their own well-being and happiness. That is, man shall learn what God has made everlastingly true, that it is for the interest of every man to do right, to do it always; that it is for his well-being, that it is for his happiness, and that any advantage he takes of another in disregard of these moral laws shall prove itself a curse, a whip of scorpions to lash him until he comes again into accord with the everlasting nature of things. Men, I say, in the future may be expected to learn this. And, when they do learn it, see what a change! This intellectual antagonism overthrown by the truer knowledge, then the power of human self-interest shall become attached to the car of God's eternal righteousness, and shall drag on, with a speed and success never before seen, the progress of the world's life, welfare, and happiness. This may be expected. It will be discovered one day to be literal truth, that no man—except through ignorance, through insanity, or through such a subjection to his passions that he is not a responsible being—has ever yet done wrong. And, if to-day you are capable of doing wrong, it means one of these. It means that you are either under the influence of your passions, or it means dense ignorance of the nature of things; one of the two. It shall be seen, then, in the future—out of this springs our grandest hope of human progress in morals—that human interest lies in the direction of righteousness forever, and that it cannot lie in any other direction.

What may we expect of the form that the religious life of the world shall assume in the future? Remember, if you please, that, in discussing this part of our theme, I am only dealing with principles. The religious life of the future may be expected to express itself in outward institutions and rituals in various ways, just as it has in the past. That is, it is not a thing essential to religion that there should be cathedral or church or meeting-house; that there should be ritual or public service; that there should be this thing,

that thing, or another thing. Only it is perfectly natural that these things should exist, because what a man is in himself it is natural that he should give external and material expression to ; and this expression, I say, we may expect to see varied according to the tastes, the feelings, the fancies, and the emotions of the world's inhabitants.

But what, in its essential, underlying principles, will the religion of the future be? I do not believe that it will be exclusively either one of the religions of the present or the past. The religious life of man is something larger than any one religion. If it were not, it would have expressed itself in that one, and in no other. We are not, I think, to look upon the religions of the world as one of them being absolutely true, and all the rest absolutely false, any more than we are to look upon a particular school of art as being absolutely true and all other schools absolutely false. The religions of the world, at least in the first instance, were the honest, devoted, earnest endeavor of man to express the religious side of his life. All these religions may be grouped under three main classes. Whatever their manifestation, however perfect or imperfect, they fall naturally into one of these three. In the first place there is Paganism ; that is, the worship of isolated, detached manifestations of the universe, whether of power or beauty, or what not. But these isolated manifestations apart from the sum total of things is Paganism. Then there is the worship of humanity. The highest specimen of this is Christianity ; for Christianity, if you will think of it, is simply the highest type of the worship of humanity, because God himself in Christianity is conceived of in the image of the ideal and perfect man. Then there is another form of religion that may be called scientific or cosmic. The object of its wonder, its awe, its admiration, is the universe considered as a universe ; the unity, the mystery, the wonder, the power of this great being of whom I have spoken, out of whom we have come and on whom we depend. I believe that the religion of the future, the ideal religion,

will combine in itself all these. It will take up into itself the admiration, the beauty, the might that manifested itself in Paganism. It will feel kindly toward art, and toward all the manifestations of this mysterious life of nature, whether under our feet or over our heads. It will take up into itself all that is good and beautiful and perfect in Christianity, the worship of the ideal moral, loving, tender man. It will take up into itself that larger unity, of which both Christianity and Paganism are only parts,—this cosmic worship of the universe.

The religion of the future, then, I believe, will combine all three. It will be the worship of the true and the beautiful and the good in one grand ideal. And it, in the next place, like morals, will be progressive. The great fault of the religions of the past has been that they have anchored; that they have conceived of themselves as complete and final revelations of God; and that the idea has grown up that it was impious to improve them. Thus for a while they have held back, until daring and apparently irreligious men have strode forward and compelled the religious progress of mankind. But when men remember, and remember permanently—not for a few minutes, to be forgotten after a little while—that God is infinite, that man is the finite creature of an hour, and that man's best and highest thought of God must be unspeakably below him, then, I say, man will see the folly of anchoring himself to even the grandest thought of the last century or of the present one, and will feel the necessity of keeping the ideal of God ever as a guiding light, an ideal to lead on the progress and elevation of the human race. So religion will take up into itself all of good and true and beautiful that the world shall progressively discover. Instead of supposing that there was one final complete revelation in the past, the true religion of God will believe in a permanent revelation, a revelation forever unfolding, as the mind of man, in its discoveries and thoughts, is able to gain new and fresh and higher glimpses of the great life and power of things, that we call God.

And then that other feature of religion that we in the restlessness of the present time are so much in danger of losing will come to the world, I believe, and give it rest. What do I mean? I mean that trust in this universe—whatever name you give it—that bases itself on the facts of the past history of the world, and is able to read with clearness the truth that God has always been “the power not ourselves that makes for righteousness”; and a faith based on this past experience that shall make him able to believe that the future will be only a more and more complete unfolding of the same power that works for righteousness. Thus man shall feel that he is not alone in the world, an orphan; that he is not dealing with a power about which he knows nothing, is not dealing with a power that is antagonistic to him; but will learn to believe, what I think is a truth that all past history witnesses and all knowledge to-day only confirms, that the universe is forever and of necessity on the side of right; and that the man, in the midst of whatever difficulties, who stands for the right and the truth, may feel assured that the universe is at his back and that omnipotence is on his side. Law-keeping—and that means simply obedience to this God of whom I am speaking—always has meant, and always must mean, life and power. The only power that any living man has to-day, the power of his body, the power of conquest over nature, the power by which he chains the steam, by which he makes the lightning his errand boy, by which he makes the water-courses turn his mills, the power by which he makes the winds and the waves of ocean serve his purposes,—all the power man has simply comes from knowing so much about God, and obeying him. There is no other possibility of power. And when man learns to know God completely, and to obey him completely, he will wield the power of omnipotence like the omnipotent son of the omnipotent God.

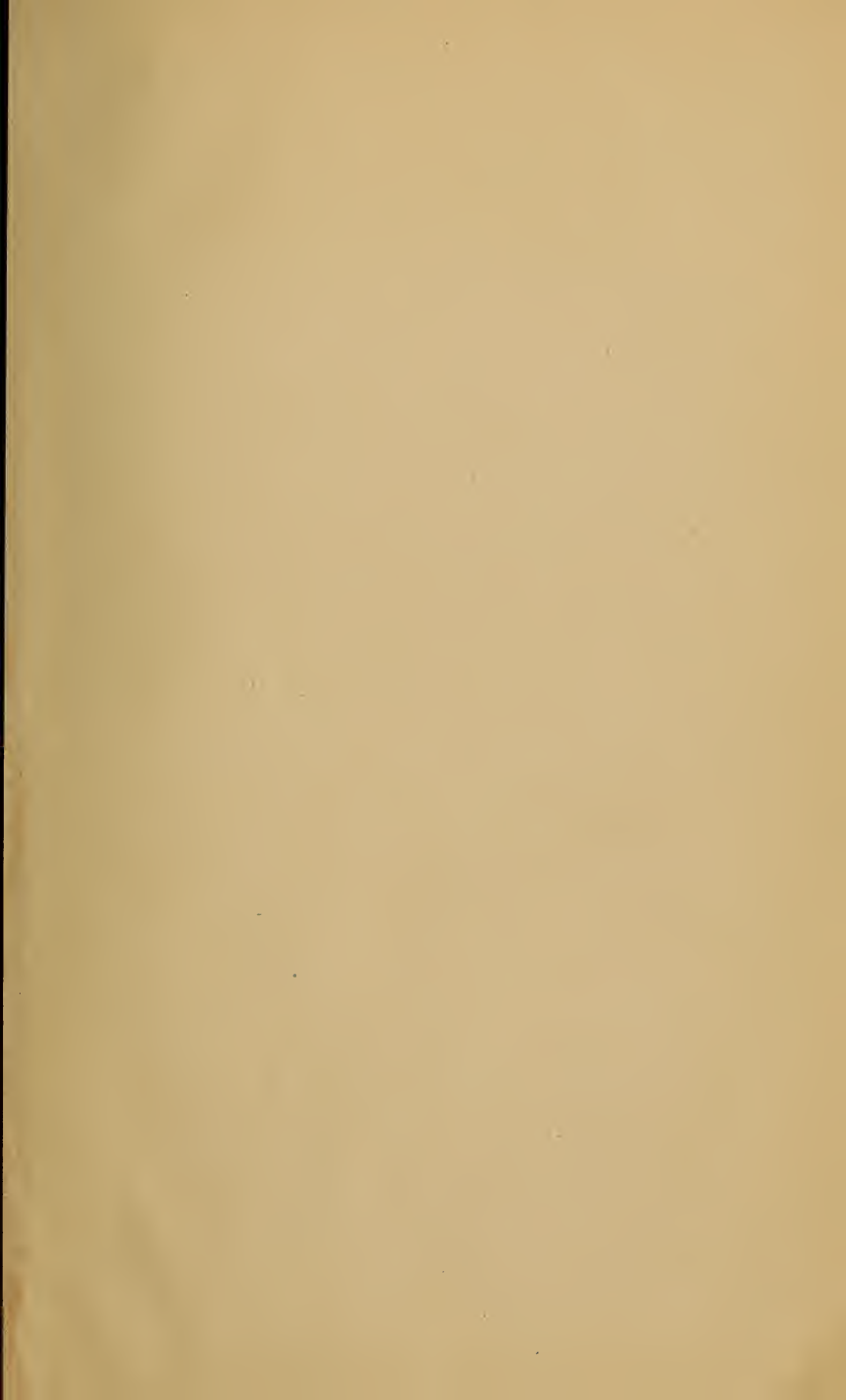
Such, then, I believe to be some of the principles underlying the progress of religion in the future. Now for a word, in closing, as to the relations which morality and religion are

to sustain to each other. I told you in the second sermon of this series, in which we considered the morality and the religion of the past, that they started independently of each other; morality had its own root in human life and human experience; religion started elsewhere; how sometimes through the course of human history they had been in accord with each other, but that many, many times there had been religions that had nothing of morality about them, were either non-moral or immoral; and that there had been schools of morality that utterly ignored the existence of religion. But it seems to me that this is not the ideal relation in which they should stand to each other; and so I believe that in the future, in some grand sense, morality and religion shall be regarded as one,—each of them manifestations of a part of the life of the universe that we call God: morality, that side which turns its face toward humanity; religion, that side of human thought that looks out toward God. But, no longer being distinct, in the future they shall be one, and man shall feel that there can be no religion worthy of the name that does not take morality into itself as a part of it. And something more than that: the religion of the future shall not only make morality a part of itself, but the morality shall be the head and front and crown of the religion. For man shall more and more see that character and conduct are more important than anything else; and so his ideal of God shall be that of a moral being first and foremost, of a being who cares for righteousness, who upholds and executes his laws, of a being of love, of tenderness, and of pity,—a being who holds in his heart all those divine human manifestations that sweeten and beautify and lift up our life. They shall be one, then, in the future,—only morality shall be the highest, noblest, most central part of religion.

And one other thing. This religion, this belief to which I have referred, that the universe is on the side of law-keeping, that God is at the right hand of him who does right, that God is his friend and father and elder-brother, and that, in so far as he obeys law,—that is, does right,—he is a co-

worker with God,—this faith shall be in man the mightiest of all possible motives for true and noble living. However much the tide and current of things at the time may seem to be against him, he shall know that any current that flows against the right is only an eddy, and that the great sweep and flow of the universe are the other way. And so this religious faith and trust shall be in his heart a stronghold of belief, and a mighty and all-controlling motive in thought and conduct. Thus man shall be dignified,—at the same time moral and religious, a brother of all his fellows, a child of God,—he shall be dignified to the office of co-worker in the present endeavor and struggle of both man and the universe, which shall at last culminate in that

“One far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”









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