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*ON THE TESTIMONY OF PHILOSOPHY TO CHRISTIANITY AS A MORAL AND SPIRITUAL REVELATION.* By the Rev. C. A. Row, M.A., M.V.I.

1. **T**HIS paper is intended to be closely related to the one which I had the honour of reading to this Society during the last session. Until the principles which I then laid down have been shown to be false, I shall assume them to be true. It will be remembered, that one of these was that, to invalidate a revelation on the ground that errors can be found in the vehicle containing it, it is necessary that those errors should affect the special subject matter of the revelation itself, and not be merely accessaries to its essence, or external to its great aim and object, and belonging merely to the mode of its communication. Errors, however, which are inherent in the special truths which the alleged revelation professes to communicate, are destructive of its claims to have come down from Heaven. It is evident that whatever other subject matter may be found in the Christian Scriptures, they make a special claim that they were designed to enlighten men on points spiritual and moral. If, therefore, philosophy can prove their teaching on these subjects to be erroneous, the conclusion cannot be evaded, either that philosophy is wrong and Christianity right, or that philosophy is true and Christianity false. It becomes, therefore, an inquiry, the importance of which it is hardly possible to exaggerate, what is the nature of the testimony which philosophy bears to the moral and spiritual aspects of Christianity. I mention these two terms in conjunction because, although I am well aware that the words moral and spiritual are often opposed to one another in common religious language, I am unable to see how they are to be separated in fact; and I wish it to be observed, in the course of this paper, that if I use one separately I always mean it to include the other.

2. My inquiry is intended not to be theological, but strictly

philosophical. On the province of theology proper I do not intend to trespass. I intend not to proceed a step beyond the bounds of a strictly rational inquiry. If theology embraces subjects beyond the legitimate limits of reason, I shall not attempt to enter on them. I purpose to consider the subject by the light of reason and philosophy alone. I am careful to state this, that no one may mistake the standpoint which I occupy in this paper.

3. The popular idea of moral philosophy is, that its function is to determine a complete code of human duties, and that one portion of it involves us in the endless mazes of the philosophy of casuistry. Most persons, if asked what was the end and aim of this science, would show, by the vagueness of their answers, that a greater ignorance prevails of its objects than of almost any other subject of human knowledge. Perhaps the general impression would be, that its proper function is to reply to the question, what is duty, and to enable us to apply this general knowledge to particular cases as they arise. Reflection, however, ought speedily to convince us, that even if this were its proper function, it is impossible to give an adequate solution of this question without descending to far profounder subjects of inquiry. It is impossible to separate the analysis of morality in man from the investigation of those forces which act on his moral and spiritual nature. If these are to be successfully analyzed, an inquiry into the relation in which they stand to reason is inevitable. As all moral actions are affected by the circumstances under which they are performed, the attempt to embrace them under a system of rules is one to which no definite limits can be assigned, and must end in disappointment. Nothing is more destructive of vitality of action than the attempt to regulate all possible acts by a definite code of laws. The reason of this is, that the form of morality in man to which his nature ultimately points is, not the creation of a moral machine capable of grinding out certain results with the precision of the working of a mill, but the production of a self-acting voluntary power, which is capable of being a law unto itself.

4. It would give a more correct idea of the aims of this science if it were described as that whose proper function is to analyze the entire active powers of the mind, to ascertain their proper function, the forces by which they are quickened into energy, and the causes of their misdirection and corruption.

5. Such a science ought to be no more confounded with metaphysics than any other. There is no science in existence which does not run up into metaphysical questions; but each

science rests on a basis of its own, which is quite independent of speculative philosophy. The sciences, as such, are founded on a body of facts, which are facts relatively to us, whatever speculative view we may take of their metaphysical character. Their function is the analysis of these facts, and this they accomplish quite independently of any higher metaphysic which examines the substratum of the facts themselves.

6. In a similar manner the science which, in conformity with usage I must designate that of moral philosophy, though I should prefer to call it the science of the active principles in man, rests on a basis of facts which exist independently of the metaphysic which underlies the foundation of these facts. There are five sources from whence they are derived—our self-consciousness and its testimony, our moral and spiritual nature, the history of man in the records of the past, the entire facts of his present experience, and the record of his thoughts, feelings, and ideas, as they have been unconsciously embedded in the structure and development of language. Out of these it has to evolve the nature and character of our moral and spiritual perceptions, their relations to our intellectual powers, the moral and spiritual forces which act upon us, the great principles of human obligation, and the means by which man can be made better or worse.

7. If this be a correct view of its functions, it is obvious that of all human sciences, it has the most direct bearing on the great question of a divine revelation. The science itself extends over a wider field than revelation; while it occupies a large portion of common ground. As far as revelation deals with man's activities, it must form a legitimate subject of the cognizance of such a science, and as far as it has affected man's moral life as it is recorded in history, the laws of its action are a proper subject for its investigation.

8. I assume, therefore, that the existence of a philosophy such as I have been speaking of is possible, and that the nature of the testimony which it bears to the discoveries of a revelation is of a most important character. If the conclusions of such a philosophy, founded on pure grounds of reason, are confirmatory of the discoveries of an alleged revelation, the union of this testimony with the independent attestation given to the revelation itself forms a most commanding evidence on which to test a conviction of its truth.

9. But here an objection will be raised against me, as has been done against similar views. Is not the concession of the possible existence of such a philosophy a death-blow to the claims of a revelation? If man can discover for himself, why

reveal? Does it not involve the whole question, Is a moral revelation possible? I answer, first, that the concession of the existence of such a philosophy by no means involves the concession that it either has discovered or can discover all that it is necessary for man to know, or that it is capable of enforcing its discoveries by such an amount of evidence as to impart a sufficient moral force to the active principles of the mind. Secondly, that after a revelation has been communicated it may become the subject of a sound philosophy, although its disclosures may have transcended the powers of philosophy to discover prior to its communication. Thirdly, assuming Christianity to be a divine revelation, its action on the mind of man has become a fact in the history of our race, and consequently its *modus operandi* as an historic fact has become a legitimate subject of philosophy. Let it be observed that there is no necessity that such a philosophy should be able to give a full account of its *modus operandi* to render its testimony important. Precisely as in other philosophies, it may run up into points which transcend the powers of the mind fully to analyze. The other objections, such as those of Mr. F. Newman, that the concession of the existence of an original intuitive power in man, whereby he is capable of perceiving moral truth, and of erecting a philosophy upon it, renders the idea of a moral revelation an absurdity—are so intrinsically irrational, that it is useless to waste your time on any prolonged investigation of the subject. It is evident that Mr. Newman thinks he has a moral revelation of some kind to make to mankind on points on which he considers himself more enlightened than they are, otherwise he would not have taken the trouble to write his books. He believes that the philosophy of which I have spoken is a possible one, and that he can impart an additional light on the subject to others. In the words of his opponent, Mr. Rogers, he can only vindicate his position by the assumption of the monstrous proposition, that the things which are possible to man are impossible to God.

10. I now proceed to the direct subjects of inquiry—1st. Are the teachings of philosophy, as far as they have extended, in agreement with the moral and spiritual revelation made by Christianity? 2ndly. Are the objections which have been urged by certain philosophical systems capable of substantiation?

11. As there is an ambiguity in the expression, “the moral law,” it will be necessary, before proceeding further, to define the sense in which I intend to use it. Moral law may mean either the great principles of moral obligation, obedience to

which man feels to be a duty ; or a moral code of duties, more or less perfectly elaborated, enforced with the sanction of law, and demanding a literal obedience. When I wish to express the former meaning, I shall use the term, "the moral law"; when the latter, I shall designate it "a moral code."

12. My first position is that philosophy has determined that man has a moral nature, capable of recognizing moral responsibility, accompanied with a sense of duty which, although it may vary in degree, is never entirely absent. Unless he possessed this, all revelation would be impossible. In proof of this proposition, it will be only necessary to refer to the papers of Dr. Irons, and to assume that he has demonstrated its truth until his reasonings have been proved to be unsound. I shall only make one additional observation. The contrary position is in direct opposition to the testimony of every language which has been spoken by man, and if it could be assumed as true, it would be necessary that every language under heaven should be reconstructed ; for it is impossible to express the views of my opponents in human language, without either altering the meaning of its terms or doing violence to its fundamental forms of thought. If the terms of language constitute a record of the universal experience of mankind, they yield a testimony, the force of which it is impossible to evade, that the whole human race have recognized the existence of the principle of duty or obligation, if not in an elevated, at any rate in a modified form. Let it be observed, that revelation never attempts to prove responsibility. It takes for granted that man feels himself to be a responsible agent, and that this knowledge exists independently of revelation.

13. Assuming the principle of responsibility in man, his ability to discover a moral law of some sort is a necessary deduction from it. The moral law which he recognizes may be extremely imperfect ; but his recognition of obligation of some kind is no theory, but a fact, to the existence of which all history and all language testify. In examining the facts with which she has to deal, philosophy freely admits that the standard of moral obligation which the bulk of mankind have actually recognized has been one of striking imperfection. It has varied greatly in different ages and countries. Its obligations may have been bounded within the narrowest limits, but within them they have been felt to be duties. The investigation of the causes of this, and the reconciliation of it with man's possession of intuitive moral perceptions, lies beyond the limits which can be assigned to this paper. Philosophy also, no less distinctly, recognizes the fact that whether

the moral standard be an elevated or a degraded one, man has always possessed principles in his nature which have impelled him to a course of action in violation of that law which he has yet recognized as binding. The facts are facts of history.

14. An imperfection in his knowledge of the moral law places man in a very different position from an imperfection in any other kind of knowledge. A man may hold a false or imperfect theory of astronomy, or geology, or music, without having the most important interests of his daily life compromised thereby. But an imperfect or false conception of the moral law compromises the very purpose of his being. An imperfect moral law stands to the spiritual world in the same relation as an imperfect law of gravitation would to the physical; *i.e.*, both would produce confusion in proportion to their imperfection.

15. In like manner, as a question of fact, and apart from all theory, philosophy has recognized that the superior reason or enlightenment of a small portion of mankind has enabled them to recognize a moral law of a far more elevated character than that acknowledged by the majority. Let it be observed, however, that no reasoner, however perfect, has elaborated a complete moral law, or a body of ethical doctrine. One has recognized one elevated truth, and one another; but as far as existing materials enable us to judge, the reason of no one man has enabled him to attain to the entire moral law of Christianity as a comprehensive whole. It is even questionable whether, in any writing composed independently of all Christian influences, we can discover a full enunciation of the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," although we can unquestionably find approximations to it. What has been accomplished is, that different philosophers at different times, and as parts of entirely differing systems, have evolved detached portions of the ethical system of Christianity. But it should also be carefully observed that these detached portions of the Christian moral law are often intimately united with foreign and even hostile elements, which greatly qualify the character of the principles themselves. However nearly many moral precepts found in the writings of Stoics and in the Christian Scriptures may agree in words, it is impossible rightly to estimate their real character without considering them not merely as separate moral aphorisms, but in relation to the entire system, ethical and theological, with which these are connected.

16. Philosophy has also distinctly recognized another fact of the highest importance in reference to our inquiry. However high may have been the standard of obligation, which a

few elevated minds have admitted theoretically, they have found their enforcement even on themselves a matter of the greatest difficulty. They have admitted the existence of a multitude of appetites and passions which vehemently struggled against the voice of reason, and which it was unable to restrain. They were unanimous in their despair of being able to commend their own lofty principles to the reason of the masses of mankind, or to provide any means except that of external coercive force, which would be capable of restraining their passions. It is not too much to say that the whole tone of philosophy, with respect to the possibility of the moral elevation of the masses, prior to the appearance of Christianity, is one loud wail of despair. Philosophy concerned herself only with the upper ten thousand, and even here contemplated the position of things with bated breath.—In every inquiry into man's moral constitution, there are three questions which require to be determined. First, what is the essential character and extent of moral obligation; secondly, how is it to be commended to the reason of the masses; thirdly, what are the forces by which the moral law, when recognized as obligatory, can be endowed with such a vitality as to enable it to become the regulating principle of human life. Christianity proclaims her ability to solve all these questions. What says Philosophy? Could she solve them? If not, does she give a favourable judgment on the solutions of Christianity, or the contrary?

17. In questions of this description, the only certain mode of determining what man can accomplish is by carefully ascertaining what he has actually effected. We have no data for arguing the point on mere abstract grounds; and the attempt to do so must land us in the regions of the clouds. If the issue be between Christianity and philosophy, the only safe mode of reasoning must be to ascertain what has been effected independently of Christian influences.

18. To the first question the experience of the past returns an answer tolerably distinct. It is an unquestionable fact that mankind, by a majority so overwhelming as to render the exceptions, even if they exist at all, of no appreciable value, has recognized principles of moral obligation, though they may have been imperfect both in their character and extent. Also it is clear, that, however elevated may have been the moral law, which has been accepted by individual philosophers, each has felt that his system has had so much of imperfection, and that the principles on which it rested have participated so largely in uncertainty, that he would have gladly hailed the

communication of any amount of additional light. So far as philosophy has entered on these subjects, it returns an answer in favour of Christianity with no ambiguous voice.

19. On the second subject the experience of the past enables us to return a most definite answer. However the principles of an elevated moral law may have commended themselves to an individual philosopher, he felt himself powerless to demonstrate them by such convincing reasonings as could carry persuasion to inferior minds, that they were the principles which ought to regulate human life. One or two philosophers may have approximated to a doctrine of the universal brotherhood of mankind, but the hint of it fell dead on the exclusive selfishness of the masses.

20. On the third and more important point, the testimony of the past is of a still more decisive character. The most elevated moralist was fully conscious that he possessed no moral force of sufficient potency to enforce the moral law, the obligation of which he recognized, even on himself. This philosophy has admitted in terms of the most definite character. The philosopher felt within him the presence of an antagonistic force which he earnestly sought a power capable of coercing ; and, although he tried many expedients, he found it not. The lower portions of his nature stood out in rebellion against the higher ones. With forces inadequate to enforce the moral law, even on himself, as regards the millions of mankind he felt himself utterly powerless. With respect to them, let it never be forgotten that the voice of ancient philosophy is one of hopeless despair, and that the doctrine of the ultimate and gradual perfectibility of mankind has only found a place in philosophic systems since Christianity has appeared. One fact is worth a thousand theories. Not only was this despair broadly expressed by ancient philosophy ; but the thought of preaching his own elevated system of morality to the vulgar, and enforcing it on them, never occurred as a possibility to any of the philosophers, and would have only provoked a smile. The nearest approach to an attempt to do so is the case of Socrates ; but his real efforts were directed to collecting around him a number of the most gifted youths. The only hope which philosophy could suggest with respect to the vulgar was in political legislation. If the public could be only persuaded to entrust the entire reconstruction of society into her hands, she would institute a system of training by the aid of the coercive power, and try to exert the power of habituation in favour of virtue. The views of the philosopher, however, were modest, for he only proposed to try this experiment in a small republic, on the Grecian model, con-

sisting of a few thousand citizens. He even considered that the presence of large multitudes would be fatal to the success of his experiment. The result with which his efforts would have been attended will remain for ever in those regions where to guessers all things are possible; for, alas! the public never could be persuaded to commit the reconstruction of any state, great or small, into his hands.

21. Nothing is more easy, now that a great light has come, than to assert that everything which it has disclosed could have been found out without its aid, if only sufficient time had been given for the human mind to operate in. A certain class of thinkers, when they get into a difficulty, at once draw a cheque upon the bank of eternity, and offer it in payment, as though it were a rational solution of it. I submit that this is guessing, and not reasoning. A plain fact meets us, and it requires explanation. The voice of history asserts that philosophers had not discovered a perfect moral law, and were destitute of a moral force adequate to make that which they recognized an actuality. This is a testimony of philosophy in favour of Christianity; and it is no answer to reply that, with the aid of an indefinite period of time, philosophy might have discovered everything which Christianity has disclosed. It is impossible to disprove that, with the aid of unlimited time, the meanest of the human race may not hereafter be endowed with faculties, compared with which those of Newton were childish. But it is equally impossible to prove it. Whenever men wish to prove that chance has been the evolver of all things, the bank of unlimited time is the ready refuge of the destitute. On this subject the voice of Buddhism is deeply impressive. I know that there are disputes as to the precise meaning of its doctrine of annihilation. But at any rate, absorptiou must carry with it the destruction of man's personal being. It is a fact, worthy of attentive meditation, that millions of our race have accepted the hope of this as a veritable Gospel of good news.

22. For the purposes of my argument I am entitled to assume the existence of Christianity as a fact, and to reason upon it as such. I now proceed to inquire whether philosophy recognizes that it has satisfied this last great want of mankind, by providing a force which can make the moral law an actuality; whether it supplies an illumination of which men were previously destitute; and whether the morals which it teaches, and the forces which it calls into exercise, will stand the test of a sound philosophy.\* It has been frequently urged against

\* It may be desirable to state, that by the term "moral force," as employed throughout this paper, is meant any or all of those powers in man which are capable of impelling him to action.

Christianity, that it contains no new discovery in morals. If this can be established, I admit that it is fatal to its pretensions as a revelation. The idea of a moral and spiritual revelation which contains nothing new, is self-contradictory. To the premises, however, I put in the strongest demurrer. It is also objected that it is not a perfect moral revelation. Relatively to man and his condition, I think that philosophy must admit that it is an adequate one. But even if the objection were admitted to be true, the denial that it is a revelation at all is not a legitimate conclusion from the premiss. God's revelations may be no less progressive than his works, and be made in reference to special conditions of human progress.

23. We must inquire what philosophy actually effected, and into the nature of the forces at her command. It is impossible to deny that between the time of Socrates and the Christian era no subject of philosophic thought was more earnestly discussed than the principles of morality and its obligations. They were handled with the utmost freedom of thought. However philosophers may have been hindered by prejudice from making progress in other departments of science, it had no influence here. There was no moral position, not even the most fundamental, even those lying at the very roots of human society, which philosophy did not call in question, and ask to show a rational ground for their existence. The results stand out conspicuous. I have already alluded to their general character. They were imperfect; but, as far as they went, are confirmatory of the moral law as enunciated by Christianity. The progress which was made in the discovery of a moral power, which could be brought to bear either on the individual or the masses, was almost nil. Traces were discovered of the manner in which such a force must act, if it could be brought to light; but the force itself evaded the powers of research which philosophy had at her command.

24. The limits within which the philosopher thought that he could exert a beneficial influence were narrow, and proclaim the imperfection of the instrumentality at his command. He required a large substratum of goodness to begin with. He could only act on those whose habits were comparatively unformed. He desiderated more than average intellectual power. The moral forces at his command were much weaker than, with our modern habits of thought, we should have expected. The whole course of philosophic inquiry had opened a wide gulf between morality and religion. The result of the application of rational principles to the popular religions convinced him that they rested on no foundation of evidence. He might occasionally vouchsafe them a kind of patronage;

but it was the patronage of scepticism and contempt, as valuable instruments for imposing on the folly of the vulgar, who were too degraded to be capable of worshipping in the temple of truth. A moral influence, founded on falsehood, must have been both weak and degrading; but to himself, and to minds of corresponding elevation, the popular religious notions had become utterly powerless. Nor did he succeed in discovering more elevated or influential ones in the place of those which he had justly discarded. In the first place, he was unable to discover evidence which could make the belief in the immortality of man a rational conviction. All his reasonings in favour of a belief in a future state were encumbered with innumerable difficulties, and probably no one was more fully aware of their inconclusiveness than himself. Even when he was disposed to admit it on speculative principles, his doctrine of immortality was so closely connected with pantheism as to deprive it of all moral force. If man be a portion of deity or evolved out of the divine nature, or if evil be inherent in matter, what becomes of responsibility? Even when he held a belief in the existence of God, his conception of Him contains scarcely an element of personality; and where this is wanting, the moral force of the idea approximates to zero. A deity conceived of as an *anima mundi*, or as coincident with nature, or as pure intellect, or as invested with attributes bearing no analogy to the moral nature of man, or as existing in a *pleroma* remote from the universe, is no moral force which can be brought to bear on our spiritual being. The philosopher, therefore, lost all hold on the unseen world as a power to act on man's moral nature. As far as man was responsible, he was only so to himself, or to society, or to an impersonality called the order of nature. The only moral forces with which he could act on the mind were those which can be derived from the nature of virtue itself and its influence on our present happiness. If he adopted the intuitional theory of our moral sentiments, he could only urge that holiness ought to be practised because it was right, and that self-sacrifice was a duty because of its inherent nobleness. But what if the mind failed to recognize this? Even when it recognized it, there stood in hostile array a mighty force of passion. How was this power to be overcome? In whatever form he presented the conception, whether as right reason, or the morally beautiful, or the subject of praise, or the nobility of self-sacrifice, its moral force was substantially the same. If he adopted utilitarian views of morality, the only force which he could bring to bear on the mind was the only one on which virtue, under that system, can be made to rest, that virtuous practice is the course best suited to conduce to the happiness of the

individual. The denier of intuitional powers of moral perception always has, and ever will be, compelled to centre the entire moral force by which virtue can be enforced on pure deductions of the intellect acting on the single principle of self-love, and, according to it, bad logic, must necessarily result in bad morality. But what if he thought otherwise? Against this conviction there arose before him, not a speculation, but a lamentable fact,—that which has tried even the patience of the holiest men in every age,—the prosperity of the wicked and the sufferings of the good. Such principles, surrounded by doubt and uncertainty, could form no moral force capable of overbalancing the might of the passions. Doubtless, the philosopher had much to say on the importance of subjugating them, and tried many devices for accomplishing it. Stoicism was the highest ideal of the deification of human nature, and wielded with the utmost force all the resources which philosophy held at its command; but even the most exalted speculator must have felt that the moral force with which he was acquainted was unable to effect the object of the Stoic philosophy, which may be not incorrectly described in a single sentence,—the elevation of a man into a god. Experience testified that to talk about virtue is easy; to practise it is hard. Of this, the philosophers were deeply conscious.

25. If such was the insufficiency of the moral forces when they were brought to act on the select few, they were totally inadequate to grapple with a state of corruption and confirmed vice. To enable these forces to act at all, it is necessary that the mind to which they are applied should be capable of appreciating them, and that they should bear some proportion to those arrayed in opposition to them. If a sense of the beauty of virtue is to become a moral force, the mind must be capable of perceiving its beauty, and that to such a degree as to overbalance the weight of the contrary principles. But how was this possible when the internal powers of spiritual vision had become corrupted, or the principle of self-control weakened? Philosophy also fully recognized the tendency of a state of moral degradation to become more intense, both on society and the individual, until the moral principles became absolutely darkened. But when corruption had once set in, she had no forces which were able to arrest its progress. The philosopher viewed his mission as being as nearly as may be the opposite to that which our Lord asserted to be the special object of His. While our Lord came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, the philosopher, as a spiritual physician, found that his medicines were possessed of efficacy only in the case of those who were comparatively sound.

26. But there is one moral force which we have not yet

considered, but which requires a careful examination,—the principle of habit. This was the most powerful force with which the philosopher was acquainted. It is, beyond all doubt, one of the mightiest which can be brought to act on human nature. But it is one of a peculiar character. It resembles the lever, which can only bring its power into active operation when it has a fulcrum on which to rest. With a suitable one it can move a world ; without one it can lift nothing. So it is with the principle of habituation as a spiritual power. Philosophy recognizes its existence. But to make it efficacious for the reformation of mankind, it requires a moral fulcrum on which to rest. That was precisely the thing which philosophy could not find, and which Christianity asserts that it has discovered.

27. The influence of habit on the condition of mankind is one of tremendous might. By its action on men in large masses it may be said to have made them what they are, and it is the most powerful influence which has been brought to bear on the individual. Man is born into a particular state of thought and feeling. Under its influences his character is usually formed. In that character, for the most part, he develops himself, grows to maturity, and dies. Even the most powerful minds which have succeeded in breaking through the conditions of their birth only imperfectly succeed in detaching themselves from the present and the past. If we each of us were to examine how much of our feelings and principles of action we owe to ourselves, and how much is the creation of habit, we should find the latter greatly to preponderate. Whatever changes can be effected by the aid of the principle of habituation, let it be observed, that from the nature of the case they must be of extremely gradual operation. Under the action of this principle, movement unquestionably exists in the moral world ; but it resembles that of a glacier. Its characteristic is slowness, and its reality can only be discerned when it is measured after the lapse of considerable intervals of time. Causes have existed in modern society which have imparted to it a more rapid movement than in ancient times. Among the chief of these has been Christianity, which has introduced a new mode of acting on the minds of men, as we shall consider presently. But the only mighty influence with which philosophy was acquainted, which was capable of effecting improvements in the moral and spiritual condition of mankind, was, as I have said, that of habituation. For the most part, however, this power was in the hands of her enemies. Hence the intense desire of the philosopher to create an ideal state. While his ideal state never became

an actual one, let us not forget that Christianity has created the Christian Church, thereby realizing an idea which philosophers saw only in mental vision. So far the testimony of philosophy to Christianity is unmistakable.

28. To enable us to estimate the full force of this testimony, we must briefly investigate the mode in which this mighty power acts on mankind. What is the result of repeated acts? Each time an action is performed, its repetition becomes more easy. But this is only one portion of the force which it exerts. Repeated action impresses a definite character on our moral nature. The cause of this lies deep beyond our ken; but we know as fact that the performance of good actions deepens the principles of goodness, and the performance of bad ones imparts an additional vigour to those of vice. Language also, in the manner in which it is learned by man, impresses on him the ideas, feelings, and sentiments of the past. In the act of learning it, they gradually become incorporated into our moral and spiritual being. We think after a particular type, and it becomes impressed on our intellect; we act thus, and similar are the results on our hearts. The counteracting power is the intellect. It is the only influence through which great changes in our moral and spiritual being can be effected.

29. Nothing has a stronger tendency than the existence of this power to preserve a virtuous society in the principles of virtue, if such a condition can only be once established. It is one also hardly less influential on the individual. When he is good and surrounded by good influences, it will be a most powerful instrument to preserve him in this state. But when the moral atmosphere has become vitiated, it becomes the most formidable obstacle to the improvement of mankind. What was to be done? Habituation was the philosophic lever, but where was the fulcrum? The philosopher had no truth to tell the masses which, by any power of evidence, could produce deep conviction in their understandings. Under the influence of habit alone, it was evident that mankind must go on in their old groove. The philosopher saw one way only of preventing this. If an external coercive force could be created which could supply a vantage-ground for the principle of habituation, something might be done. Philosophers might become the magistrates of a new state, where the practice of what was unhallowed should be proscribed by law, from which unorthodox poets and other corrupters of mankind should be excluded, and a training-school for virtue instituted. This philosophy proclaimed as the only means of regenerating society with which she was acquainted. The difficulty was, that whatever it might look

in theory, it was nothing till it could be set a-working, and work it would not.

30. But we must contemplate habit as a moral force acting on the individual. In one point of view it works at an advantage on society. Societies live through protracted periods of time. A power with indefinite time at its command, however slowly it may work in the changes which it produces, may in time effect considerable revolutions. But individuals live to-day and die to-morrow, and unless a moral force can be brought to bear on them which is rapid in its operation, it is impossible that one who has sunk into confirmed vice, and whose moral and spiritual vision has become darkened, should be changed into a virtuous character.

31. Let us consider the nature of the moral power which the philosopher could bring to bear on the individual through the agency of habit. As I have already pointed out, the first obstacle which he had to encounter arose from the manner in which the present and the past had entwined themselves with his being. He was unable to commence operations on him as on a *tabula rasa*. There had been imprinted on his being the whole influence of the past; and the moral and spiritual atmosphere with which he was surrounded was the only one which he had to breathe. The philosopher had either a state of moral corruption or of imperfect self-command to begin with. Even where the voice of reason was audible, against its dictates stood in fierce array the violence of the passions. How, then, was the work of habituating men to virtue to be begun? The reply, of course, would be, you will become virtuous by doing virtuous actions. But how was a man to do virtuous actions, when the eyes of his moral perceptions were perhaps darkened, or the violence of his passions were impelling him to vice? To use a very ordinary illustration: while the grass was growing, the horse was starving; and before it could become sufficiently high for him to feed on, he died. The power of habit to create virtuous principles would be slow under the most favourable conditions, even if there had been no passions to contend against; but against their violence it was nearly impotent. Habit is an admirable power, but it requires a virtuous state of morals to commence its operations with before it can exert influences for good. The only power which can supply such an influence, as we shall see hereafter, is conviction or faith, and without it it is nearly powerless. Where virtuous principles do not exist in some force, habit will confirm vicious tendencies instead of creating virtuous ones.

32. It was not therefore without reason that the most enlightened thinkers took refuge from the despair occasioned by

the contemplation of the present in speculation. They had no sufficient faith in their ideal or in the forces at their command to induce them to exert themselves to make it become the actual. Hence the unpractical character of all ancient philosophy. Still I maintain that the philosophers were right in their general principles, nor has the utmost extension of philosophy in modern times succeeded in invalidating them. They felt, and felt truly, that although a mighty moral power existed in the principle of habituation, the necessary conditions of its action to make it capable of reforming mankind were wanting, and that all other moral forces were inadequate to resist the energy of the principles which impel men to evil. The only other principle with which they were acquainted was that of pure reason, but they took a most imperfect view of its nature. With them reason was nearly coincident with pure intellect. They saw that reason had some relation to the moral nature of man, but their views respecting it were imperfect. Their divisions of man's intellectual and moral being were founded on arbitrary principles, and frequently split him up into as many distinct entities. Hence it was very difficult to bring it to bear as a force capable of influencing the moral nature of man. When she left the regions of pure intellect, her voice was uncertain. She produced no powerful convictions on subjects capable of acting on our moral being. On such points she cried, in despair, "What is truth?" Until truth assumes the form of a conviction it is incapable of stirring the depths of the inmost recesses of our spiritual nature.

33. But Christianity appeared and declared herself to be in possession of a new moral force, by means of which the good could be strengthened in their goodness, those who possessed an imperfect power of self-control could be delivered from the tyranny of the passions, and a new life could be infused into those who were morally corrupt. In a word, she proclaimed herself capable of doing those very things which the philosopher admitted that he did most imperfectly, or that he was incapable of accomplishing. She not only speculated, but proceeded to put her plan of action into execution. In her peculiar language she designated the spiritual power by which she acted on mankind by the word "faith." What has philosophy to say as to her principle and *modus operandi*? I answer that, as far as her testimony reaches, it is certainly in her favour.

34. It may be objected that I am going to enter on subjects too sacred for philosophical discussion, which are within the province of theology, and not of philosophy. There are not

wanting those who will say that the mode in which Christianity acts on the mind of man cannot be reduced to the forms of philosophic thought. I readily admit that there are subjects in Christianity which transcend the limits of human thought to trace to their utmost depths. Some ultimate principles must be assumed or received as axiomatic. But this is no peculiarity of Christianity. It is common to it with every other subject of human thought. The refusal to submit our religious convictions to rational inquiry must end in a disastrous result—the belief that they will not endure such inquiry. If reason be denounced, I ask what are we going to substitute in its stead? It will, perhaps, be answered, faith. I answer, what is faith except another name for reason, exerting itself as a certain definite subject matter? Is it a mental conviction, or is it not? If it has some foundation on which it rests, it must be either a rational one or nothing. It may be said to be an intuitive perception. I answer that an intuitive perception is a rational conviction. If one man asserts that he has intuitive perceptions of which others are destitute, he cannot expect that they will accept them as verities on his unsupported assertion. If he wishes others to believe, he must adduce evidence; and he can only do this by appealing to reason. Some say that faith is a peculiar mental process, and that its essence is a reception of truth on authority. I reply, the admission that it is a mental process proves it to be a rational act, and that it is necessary that the terms of that which is proposed as an object of faith must be capable of comprehension by reason; and the authority on which assent is supposed to rest must be capable of approving itself to our reason. But as to the objection itself, it is evident that, as far as Christianity is an influence which exists in and exerts a power over the moral world, and constitutes one of its facts, it falls within the legitimate province of philosophy to examine its nature and the mode in which it is exerted. There may be lacunæ over which philosophy can erect no bridge. This happens in many other subjects of human thought, and does not hinder our philosophy, as far as it goes, from being real. It will be a great advantage if philosophy can be made to point out where these lacunæ, which lie beyond her powers to investigate, are to be found. I hope to point out one or two such in the sequel. What I contend for is, that as far as Christianity exhibits a power which influences mightily the springs of human action, and is brought to bear on man's outward life, her *modus operandi* is a proper subject of philosophical investigation; and if philosophy determines that it is in con-

formity with our highest reason, her testimony is confirmatory of the truth of the Christian faith. The question whether philosophy has been able to discover all that Christianity has revealed may be directly answered in the negative. But this does not prove that it is not her duty to take cognizance of it, or that she is not able to afford us powerful assistance in determining whether it is a true light or a fictitious one.

35. I have made these observations, lest any one should suppose that I deny the existence of an inward spiritual influence, the laws of the action of which philosophy may be unable to trace. Our philosophy may be a true philosophy as far as it goes, although it may be unable to penetrate to the profundities of things, in the same manner as our natural science may be perfectly true, although it cannot give the rationale of the principle of life. One thing it ought to be able to accomplish: if a lacuna exists, it may point out where it is to be found, and thereby confer on us an inestimable service.

36. I shall assume that that which distinguishes Christianity from all previous systems of moral teaching is the prominence which it assigns to the principle of faith as a power which is alone capable of effecting the regeneration of mankind; that it is the great instrument which it employs for that purpose; and that it is the mode by which the good man is to be strengthened in his goodness; and the morally corrupt is to be rescued from his corruption.

37. What, then, is faith? No little confusion of thought prevails, both in popular philosophical and theological language, respecting the character of those mental phenomena, of which the term is the current designation. Philosophers have not unfrequently used language which implies that there is a radical distinction between those convictions which are designated by the word faith, and those which we arrive at by the instrumentality of reason. It has even been represented as possible to yield assent by faith where it is impossible to do so by reason. Some have gone so far as to designate by faith a class of truths of which, while we are unable to image to our minds a distinct conception, we are yet capable of believing in, by some peculiar mental power which they call faith. On the other hand, popular, and not unfrequently theological language, describes the incomprehensible as being the peculiar object matter of faith. Others restrict it to truths of which the evidence is imperfect; while others go to the extent of saying, that the smaller the evidence is, the greater is the necessity and the merit of believing. Equally strong

is the tendency in such persons to represent the objects of faith, and the truths which we may be said to know, as mutually opposed to one another.

38. It seems to me that these and kindred distinctions are purely arbitrary, and point to no one fact in man's mental constitution. A searching analysis will prove that faith is the final act of all our mental processes, of which the search after truth is the object. Such a search must terminate in a conviction, and I am unable to understand in what it differs from an act of faith. In some cases we call the act a conviction, and in others faith, according to the subject matter; but this makes no real difference in the mental states themselves. Faith also, or conviction, accompanies every act of the mind by which it yields assent to our intuitions. It is the act of recognizing them as true, and forms the ground on which we conclude that they are realities, whether they be intuitions purely intellectual, intuitions connected with our moral nature, or those which lead us to trust in the perceptions of the senses as true, or the objects of the passions as desirable. Again, in all questions in which reason is involved, the final act is a conviction of or belief in the truth of the conclusion. This conviction is faith. It may vary through every degree of intensity; but it is founded on our reason. The subject matter on which it operates may be either demonstrative or contingent, but still a conviction is the result. If we are dealing with moral evidence, the force of it may approximate to the certainty of pure demonstration, or amount only to a low probability, and the strength of the conviction will vary accordingly. Of this kind are all those beliefs which are dependent on testimony; but the processes through which we arrive at them have their foundation in our reason, and therefore it is absurd to talk of an opposition between the conclusions of reason and of faith. Our belief in testimony rests on grounds which are purely rational, and every step of the process must be tested by reason. Faith has been often spoken of, as if it were identical with trust, and as such opposed to reason. Trust, however, is a conviction only differing from others in the nature of the subject matter. We trust, because we think that the object of trust is worthy of confidence. To this we can only attain by rational processes. If our trust is founded on anything opposed to these, such as prejudice, and anything which will not endure a rational inquiry, it is a mere chance if it is not entirely misplaced. Unless a man is prepared to assert that his belief or trust is founded on a direct inspiration, the basis on which it is founded must be either a rational

one or simple prejudice. It follows, therefore, that whenever the mind is in a state of active inquiry after truth, its various processes end in a common result,—a conviction, or belief.

39. Faith and knowledge have been often contrasted as mental acts. As far as I am aware, such contrast is nowhere made in the New Testament; nor can I see that it is consistent with any principle of sound philosophy. The former is a term of wider extent than the latter; but can it be said that an act of faith does not accompany every act of knowledge? Our intuitions are all subjects of knowledge, and all strict deductions from pure axioms are of the same character. Can it be said that we do not exercise faith or belief in our intuitive perceptions? I have the firmest belief that the whole is greater than its part. The processes by which I arrive at the conviction that Charlemagne once existed, and that some of the actions ascribed to him are facts, and others myths, are very different from mathematical deductions; but they may be quite as powerful to produce conviction. They are essentially rational and rest ultimately on principles, which are more or less of the nature of intuitions. The only valid distinction is not in the rational character of the process, but in the subject matter. It follows, therefore, that conviction is the final result of the whole of our mental processes which are involved in the search after truth; the term faith is more usually restricted to those convictions which have a decided bearing on our moral and spiritual being. The same line of reasoning will prove that there is no such distinction between those beliefs which we accept on testimony, and our other convictions, as to render it necessary that we should refer them to a distinct class of mental phenomena. When we believe in testimony, we believe because we think that it is supported by adequate evidence; that the person on whose testimony we rely is veracious, and that he possesses ample means of information. Our judgment may be bad, but this is a defect which may be common to every rational act. Here, however, it is necessary to keep carefully before us the distinction between unintelligible propositions and truths lying beyond the reach of our faculties to establish. Inattention to this distinction has been a fruitful source of error. It is a mere delusion to think that we believe in the former; all that we can do is to say that we assent to them. But a belief in the latter, if sufficiently attested, is highly rational. It may be beyond the reach of our powers, *e. g.*, to demonstrate the truth of a future state. But it is an act in the highest degree rational, to believe it on the testimony of one who must know the truth respecting it, *i. e.*, God.

40. It should be observed that all assents yielded by the mind are not convictions; and consequently that mere assents to truths are not acts of faith. I therefore define belief or conviction as the final stage of every rational act of a mind which is engaged in a search for truth. I add this latter clause because it involves the distinction between a dead faith, which is a mere assent, and a living one, which is a conviction. In the one case the mind is in a passive, and in the other in an active state. This distinction is of the utmost importance; and it is unphilosophical to confound two such distinct classes of mental phenomena under a common term. A large body of truths to which mankind give assent when they are not founded on prejudices which are mistaken for intuitions, are purely traditional, and are founded neither on evidence nor insight. Such assents are, for the most part, passive states of the mind, and are not convictions. Others approximate to the character of convictions when they are founded on prejudices which mental ignorance mistakes for intuitions. I will mention one instance of this. Multitudes of ignorant people think that it is a duty to believe, without inquiry, what their fathers believed before them. Such beliefs have frequently existed with sufficient force to have produced most disastrous consequences.

41. A large number of the assents of mankind are founded on a different principle, and one of which the complete analysis is not easy. They are the result of inclination or general tendency of mind, and therefore are of a character more or less intuitional; and they frequently settle down into positive convictions. Certain beliefs possess affinities with others to which the mind has already given its assent. This is what we call bias,—a principle which lies deep in our mental constitution. Let us take an illustration from politics. Two opposite tendencies of mind greatly influence men's convictions on this subject,—the one a tendency to conservatism, and the other a tendency to progress. A multitude of kindred beliefs are embraced for no other reason than their connection with this or that line of thought. A large number of religious and moral convictions are essentially of this description, and rest on a basis which is supposed to be intuitional, but which the mind diligently seeking after truth is bound reverently to question.

42. The whole of our beliefs divide themselves into two great classes,—one whose basis is purely intellectual; the other which, while the belief is an act of our reason, is directly connected with our moral and spiritual being. These beliefs constitute forces which act with various degrees of power on

our moral and spiritual nature. As the great subject of the Christian revelation is spiritual and moral truth, it is to this portion of our beliefs that the term faith is usually applied in Scripture. It is through this portion of our convictions that Christianity professes to exert a mighty influence on our moral and spiritual being, by bringing before us objects suited to generate them, or kindle them into a new vitality. Through them she calls into being a power which is capable of confirming the holy in their holiness, of restoring the power of self-command in those in whom it has been weakened, of rescuing the degraded from their degradation, and of kindling a spiritual and moral vitality in those in whom it was previously dormant. What has philosophy to say as to her method of procedure?

43. I answer, that as far as it goes, her reply is decidedly favourable, and that the method adopted by Christianity will stand the closest tests of rational inquiry. The voice of philosophical inquiry points to one conclusion—that if man is to be acted on for good, it is only possible to do so by introducing a light into his understanding. Such was the conclusion of pre-Christian philosophy, and all subsequent research confirms its truth. We have seen that the ordinary moral and spiritual forces at the command of philosophy, even when aided by the power of habituation, were wholly unable to recall a man from a state of moral and spiritual corruption to holiness, or, to adopt ordinary language, from vice to virtue. Philosophy again and again admitted her weakness to deal with what she considered even the higher classes of minds. No words can express the helpless condition to which she consigned the miserable and degraded. Her only hope of acting on the elect of mankind was through the intellect. She attempted to act by it with her utmost power. Her mistake was that she attempted to base her moral forces on purely intellectual convictions, instead of those having a direct bearing on the affections and the heart. Her method was right, but the forces at her command inadequate. The authors of Christianity have entered on a course which the philosophers saw only in dim outline; or, to use a phrase borrowed from her language, of that which they saw in the faintest type, Christianity has produced the complete antitype.

44. Let us give a brief attention to the analysis which philosophy has given of the relation of knowledge to moral action. She determined that in the strict sense of the word knowledge, when it was an active and not a passive principle, *i.e.*, when it exists in the mind with the force of a conviction, it

was impossible to do wrong contrary to its dictates.\* This conclusion, however strange it may seem to those who have never considered the subject, is positively true. That state of moral wickedness which Milton has attributed to the devil, when he puts into the mouth of Satan the words, "Evil, be thou my good," is not possible to man as long as he retains his human nature. His constitution compels him to will his own happiness; and he cannot deliberately will his own misery. It is therefore impossible for him to pursue a course of action as long as he retains a clear conviction, in active energy, that it is destructive of his own happiness. It is necessary to destroy the conviction before this evil course can be entered on. The truth of this will be admitted if we carefully analyse what invariably takes place, whenever a temptation is yielded to. The mind plays off a sophism on itself, the inclinations impelling it to do so. It knows that a particular act is wrong. Before it can perform this act, it is necessary either to destroy the conviction or make it become latent. This forms the first step in the process of yielding to temptation. We either persuade ourselves that the act is not so great a violation of the moral law as we took it to be; or that though it may be abstractedly a violation, it is not so under the particular circumstances. We then persuade ourselves that the observance of the moral law is not only not essential to our happiness, but that in restraining us from the particular gratification it is subversive of it. When we have arrived at this stage the act becomes a possibility, but not till then. Let us take as an example the case of a man who yields through temptation to the solicitations of intemperance. He has a conviction that drunkenness is contrary to his well-being. As long as this exists as an active conviction in his mind, he is withheld from the gratification. Such a conviction, in the language of Christianity, is faith. He knows, however, that the particular act will be pleasant. Before he can yield he is compelled to extinguish the conviction by contemplating the pleasure of the particular act. The power of resistance, or the contrary, is determined by the degree in which the conviction or the particular act is contemplated by the mind. The one is the victory of faith, and the other of vice. The strength of the desire acquires additional force by the act of contemplation, until our moral vision becomes darkened, and practises on itself a deliberate act of self-deception.

45. This analysis of temptation, which is strictly in con-

\* Such was the conclusion arrived at both by Plato and Aristotle.

formity with the principles of ancient philosophy, proves that the resisting principle in man is a rational one, standing in the closest union with his moral nature, and that the thing necessary to render resistance successful, is to deepen and intensify the force of the conviction. The freedom of man consists in the power possessed by the will to concentrate the attention of the mind on the conviction or the opposing principle. Such a conviction, to render it efficacious, must be in the closest connection with the always true, and an evil line of conduct is only possible when the mind is out of this relation, and causes the conviction to become latent. Human degradation becomes complete when, through reiterated acts of vice, the perception of the obligation of the moral law gradually ceases to exist, or its fulfilment is no longer recognized as conducive to our happiness. This analysis brings us into close contact with a portion of the principle of faith as taught by Christianity, and proves that it is a development of man's rationality. Philosophy recognized its truth, but it wanted a power to create convictions, and to maintain them in a state of activity.

46. But the principle of faith exerts a far wider influence on human nature than that which has been already assigned to it. It is co-extensive in its action with all the activities of man. According to popular views, it is almost entirely confined to subjects connected with religion. Such a view will not stand an analysis of the springs of human action. Language itself testifies to the contrary; for we are constantly compelled to speak of it as extending its influence to things completely secular.

47. When we analyze the springs of human action, we find that all action is invariably grounded on a conviction of some kind. This conviction may be, and is often, false; but without one all action is impossible. It forms the rational part of that which we designate motive. If a man will investigate the nature of his motives, he will find that they are always connected with convictions which are either rational, or which he supposes to be so. A man can only act when he believes that the action is desirable under the circumstances, and he is impelled to action by that belief. This belief differs in nothing which I can discover, from that which the New Testament designates faith, except on the subject matter on which it is exercised; the one being on the palpable realities of this life, the other the unspeakable ones of the spiritual world. What is it which impels man to action? The only reply which can be given is, a conviction, belief, or faith, which are names of the same thing under different modifications. What imparts

intensity to human action? I answer, increased conviction. It may be said that it is desire. Beyond all doubt the affections and desires of our moral nature are the springs of our actions; but they can only impel us to action when a conviction exists in our minds that their objects are attainable, the means of realizing them within our grasp, and that if we succeed in attaining them it will promote our happiness. Some persons allow themselves to talk as if the different parts of man's nature, which we conceive of as distinct in thought, were distinct in fact, and constituted as many separate entities within him. Hence language is habitually used as though man as a moral being, the subject of affections, appetites, and desires, is a distinct being from man as an intellectual and rational one. The truth is that God has so closely compacted together man's moral and intellectual nature, that the one constantly acts and reacts on the other, rendering it a vain attempt to sever what the Creator has indissolubly united. The intellect acts on the affections and the passions, and these react on the intellect.

48. I maintain, therefore, that every action presupposes belief; and this is alike true of the philosopher, the theologian, the merchant, and the mechanic, and that each acts in proportion to the intensity of his beliefs. As far, therefore, as Christianity proposes to act on men through the instrumentality of faith, it extends into the religious world the same principles which govern the active one. In the latter, philosophy cannot help recognizing the power of the principle. So far her testimony is in favour of the application which Christianity makes of it in the former. Where Christianity has advanced beyond philosophy is, that she has formed a plan for the moral and spiritual regeneration of the human race, and created a moral force for that purpose—a thing which philosophy earnestly desiderated, but could not accomplish. Nor has this been a mere speculation. He that formed the plan was convinced that it was a practicable one, and proceeded to put it into execution; and, as it must be allowed even by his opponents, with a marvellous success. The history of nearly nineteen centuries testifies, whatever we may think of Christianity, that it has acted as a moral and spiritual force on the mind of man, with a might compared with which all previous efforts sink into utter insignificance.

49. I shall not be trespassing on grounds which are strictly theological if I enumerate the chief spiritual forces on which the author of Christianity relied for accomplishing the purpose which he had in view. In the first place, he enlisted into his service every moral power with which philosophers were

acquainted, and imparted to them a force derived from his own person, of which they were previously destitute. He invoked the moral force of all things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, of virtue and praise, and of the principle of enlightened self-love, which is inseparable from our being. But in addition to this, he invoked the whole force of the religious principle in man, and brought it to bear as a definite conviction on his moral nature. He discovered the relationship which exists between man and God, thereby imparting a mighty force to the principle of responsibility, and reinforced it by disclosing the fact of his immortality, and that he was himself appointed to be his future judge. A future state was with him not a speculation, but a fact; and he confirmed his teaching respecting it by himself rising from the dead. He also exhibited in his own person the ideal of every perfection, divine and human, and crowned it by surrendering his life for man. By the ideal of goodness, and by every divine and human perfection exhibited in his life and death, he proclaimed himself worthy to seat himself on the throne of the conscience, and to occupy the highest place in the affections; and taught that the most powerful principle of holiness was the steady contemplation of himself. The greatest peculiarity of Christianity is that it professes to centre the affections of man in a living person, that person being an exhibition of the supremest goodness, holiness, and loveliness, and to make him supreme, above every other moral force. If we read the New Testament as we would any ordinary literature, we must admit that this is at least an outline of the method by which the first propagators of Christianity proposed to act on mankind. I do not pretend to give a complete enumeration of all the forces to which they have appealed. By such agencies they have also communicated a more active force to the principle of habituation, and created the Church as the instrument for its application.

50. Such is a general outline of the method adopted by Christianity for the improvement of mankind. Is the testimony which philosophy gives to it favourable, or the reverse?

51. Philosophy fully recognizes the truth that the only mode in which a state of moral corruption can be changed into one of holiness, is by the introduction of an idea into the mind which had no previous existence there. Otherwise things must go on in their old groove. If we wish to divert the course of a river, it is necessary to dig a new bed for it. Conviction is the only force by which such an idea can vindicate to itself a standing-place in our minds, and if the force of opposing passion be great, the conviction must be proportionably deep.

The new conviction awakens corresponding emotions in our moral nature; and, according to the laws of our mental constitution, generates a variety of kindred conceptions and emotions. The more the idea is contemplated, the greater is the moral force which it acquires. When opposing principles exist, a struggle necessarily arises between the new and the old, each striving to obtain the mastery over our entire moral being. All men who have not sunk into a state of hopeless degradation testify to the reality of this struggle within them. The mode in which good triumphs over evil is by intensifying the depth of the conviction. The principle of habituation aids in intensifying the power. Every time a successful resistance is offered, its moral force is augmented. Christianity, by her revelation of religious truth, has enlisted the whole might of the religious tendencies in man into the service of what is good and holy, thus creating a mighty force, which is brought to bear on our spiritual being, which could not be evoked in the exclusive regions of morality.

52. Let us now briefly analyze the mode in which it is connected with the intuitional powers of the mind. An idea of excellence, producing a firm conviction of truth, is presented to our reason. The rational powers either embrace it or reject it. These are closely connected with certain emotions in our moral being, and are awakened by the ideas presented to the reason. I need hardly observe that this forms the highest aspect of faith as it is exhibited in the New Testament. The ideal of goodness is the divine person of its Lord.

53. The principle is one of extensive application. Between large classes of our ideas and our moral and spiritual affections there is the closest connection. The one mutually awakens and generates the other. The presence of the conception in the intellect calls the affection into play, or awakens it if previously dormant. The more the conception is meditated on, the more powerful is its influence to kindle the affection in the one case or to awaken it in the other. It should be observed here, that if a man is sunk into a state in which a divorce has taken place between rational conviction and moral emotion, and the presence of the conception in the intellect has no tendency to awaken the corresponding affection in the heart, he is fallen into a state of hopeless moral corruption. There are no means of curing such a man by any instrumentality of which philosophy can detect the *modus operandi*. Here she recognizes a lacuna. As the inquiry into this involves nothing of a practical character, it lies outside our present investigation. It is sufficient for our purpose, that such is

not the condition of the great majority of mankind as we meet with them in actual life. Whenever such a condition exists, philosophy at once recognizes that reformation is only possible through the agency of what we must designate a moral miracle, and that it lies entirely beyond the range of any law which it is within her power to trace.

54. Let a new idea or conviction, then, be brought into the mind from a source external to the mind itself. This I assume to be possible in fact. How it is effected lies beyond our present inquiry; and if I were to enter on it, it would involve us in a metaphysical discussion from which it is very doubtful when we should emerge. To render it efficacious for the production of holiness, it is evident that it must involve a higher ideal than that previously existing in the mind. Let the mind meditate on it until it recognizes its reasonableness and its excellence. It will then awaken emotions in our spiritual being capable of revolutionizing it. This is one of the mental conditions which Christianity designates by the term faith.

55. I need hardly say that ancient philosophy made many an effort to realize a high ideal of moral beauty, and taught that the steady contemplation of it, if only it could be attained, was an efficacious means of infusing holiness into the soul. It is no less certain that she utterly failed to create anything analogous to the conception of a Christ, which, if its elaboration be of human origin, is the solitary achievement of the fishermen of Galilee. Yet, if the so-called rationalists are to be believed, notwithstanding the profundity of their philosophic power, and their moral and spiritual elevation, they were the prey of the most unbounded credulity. But the philosophic ideal was a low one when it emerged out of the shadows of mysticism, within which it was too frequently enshrouded, and one not suited to enlist the sympathies of our moral nature—not to say that it was utterly incapable of penetrating to the profundities of our spiritual being. Many of its features violated the fundamental principles of human nature. The loftiest speculations connected with these subjects are to be found in the writings of Plato and of kindred schools. This philosopher fully recognized the importance of contemplating the ideal of goodness as a means of improvement in virtue. But although he maintained the existence of such an ideal, he could only conceive of it in a form so abstract that its moral influence as nearly as possible approximated to zero. The attainment of a view of it by the mass of mankind was absolutely hopeless. It was the ultimate reward of the select disciple, after years devoted to the long and patient

study of philosophy; and even then I am afraid that the view to be attained was a very hazy one. What could come from the contemplation of the *αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν*? In the form in which it was conceived of by him, it was a pure intellectualism, incapable of being presented to the mind in an objective form. I cannot understand how he conceived it possible that man could get a glimpse of it as long as he continued subject to bodily conditions. It was to be found nowhere in the generated or sensible world. It existed only in that of ideas beyond the boundaries of time and space in the regions of eternal truth. Wherever they were situated, or how they were to be scaled, the philosopher either did not teach, or, if he did, it will take us long years before we shall be able to understand his method of arriving at it. Still, however, we have gained a most important point. The general principle of Christianity was admitted and seen in dim vision by philosophy.

56. What philosophers sighed after Christianity has accomplished. What Plato aspired after as the privilege of the choicest of human spirits, Christianity has made the possession of universal man. The philosophers talked of contemplating the *αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν*, or the idea of good, through a remote participation in which the imperfectly good things which are in the world possess their goodness. This ideal was banished to a lofty world of *οὐσῖαι*, where corruption or generation entered not. Christianity presented Jesus to mankind, a living entity on the theatre of human life. He is its *αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν*, fitted to be contemplated by every member of the human family; and an overwhelming majority of the wisest of mankind have been unanimously of opinion that the essence of perfect goodness shines brightly in his person. In him the philosophic *αὐτὸ ἀγαθόν* has become a reality in the sphere of the changeable and the corruptible; the objective embodiment of the highest idea of goodness; the goodness which can be conceived of as belonging to God, and that which can be imaged as belonging to man. So far, then, I contend that Christianity, as a moral and spiritual revelation, is in accordance with the soundest principles of philosophy. But it transcends them. It is the filling up full, of that of which the highest philosophy only saw the most feeble and most unsubstantial outline.

57. It will, perhaps, be objected that this reasoning presupposes that the moral and spiritual powers of man are able to form a conception of the ideal of goodness; and therefore that any discovery of it from any external source, such as a revelation, is unnecessary. If the mind can recognize the

conception of the ideal of goodness when presented to it, it can create it. This I deny.

58. Let us illustrate this subject by means of one which is sufficiently obvious—the nature of our conceptions of the beautiful, both in nature and in art. All men have ideas of the beautiful, more or less perfect. It matters not for our argument whence they are derived, or how created. It is sufficient that they exist in fact. When an external object is presented to us, by means of these ideas we judge whether it is beautiful or the contrary. We are also capable of recognizing that it has a higher form of beauty than anything with which we were previously acquainted. Let us take as an example the beautiful or magnificent in scenery. A beautiful or magnificent object is presented to the eye. The mind recognizes it as such. The scenery may be of an inferior character. Still it recognizes the beauty or the magnificence which it contains. Out of objects of inferior beauty which have been presented to the eye, it is capable of creating conceptions of a higher perfection than can be found in any one individual object. It effects this by putting together the highest forms which it has seen and rejecting the inferior ones. This forms the art of the painter when he endeavours to embody on his canvas conceptions of ideal beauty. This process, however, can only be carried on within certain limits. The mind, out of the objects of beauty which have been presented to it, may form an ideal more beautiful than any one single reality which it has ever contemplated. But if it has never seen anything but ordinary scenery, it by no means follows that out of such it could create the realities of a Switzerland. Yet it is a fact, that if a Switzerland is presented to the eye it is at once capable of recognizing it as transcending in beauty and magnificence all such objects which it has either previously seen or been capable of conceiving.

59. The same reasoning will hold good if we substitute moral and spiritual goodness for physical beauty. Between them, as far as I can see, the analogy is perfect. Our ability to recognize an object as a high ideal of moral goodness, when it is presented to the mind in an objective form, by no means proves that it is within the power of our subjective conceptions to have created it. The mind recognizes the idea which is presented to it as the realization of that which was existing there in an unconscious or dormant state.

60. This is the cause of all great mental revolutions. Mighty changes in our moral being are caused by the flashing into it of some unknown or previously unrecognized

truth. Light bursts on the mind. It bows before its all-commanding power. It awakens corresponding sympathies in our spiritual being. We discern that our former course of action was wrong. Our feeling of responsibility is intensified by all the forces of religion being brought to bear on it. Our reason contemplates the relationship in which man stands to his Creator. It becomes a conviction. Corresponding emotions are generated in the mind. It contemplates our relationship to God in Christ. The profoundest emotions are generated in the soul. It bows before the image of perfect goodness. At length, in the intensity of conviction, he becomes the centre around which its affections turn. Such are the moral forces employed by Christianity.

61. The case stands thus. Our Lord said, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Philosophy teaches that the only way in which man can be made better is by creating in the mind a firm conviction in conformity with that which is always true. Philosophy produced few deep convictions. Christianity has generated profound ones. Philosophy sighed after an ideal of goodness, but could not create one. Christianity portrayed a Christ, and exhibited on the sphere of life one who stands in solitary grandeur, to whom no subsequent speculation has produced a fellow. Philosophy spent itself on speculations in the schools. Christianity nerved the missionary's arm and sent him into the world. Philosophy looked on the multitude with contempt. Christianity expended on them the resources of her spiritual power. Philosophy placed all her hopes of acting on man for good in the acquisition of a coercive power, but no state would entrust her with the power of legislation. Christianity has not only penetrated to the depth of individual being, but has created a spiritual State, the Christian Church. Philosophy gathered around her a select few. Christianity has influenced the destinies of man. The whole course of history has been modified by her influences. To all these her acts, philosophy, when she tests the deep springs of human actions, affixes the stamp of her approbation, though she was unable to discover them. The investigation of her principles proves that Christianity has produced the antitype of what philosophy saw in type. Is this the work of fishermen and peasants?\*

62. But let us suppose that a man is fallen into such a state that when a moral or spiritual idea is introduced into the mind, no corresponding force is kindled in the affections.

\* The state of the question as between all previous human thought and Christianity is fully discussed in "The Jesus of the Evangelists."

Here, then, is a great lacuna which philosophy is unable to bridge over. She has no remedy to propose. She can do no more for him than she can for the man on whose eye a ray of light has never shone. Christianity pronounces that unless a divine power is breathed into him from without, she has no remedy which can reach his case. So far both are in agreement. Philosophy recognises the fact of man's power to darken his moral and spiritual affections by repeated acts of vice. Christianity does the same. Philosophy leaves him in that condition. Christianity evokes mighty influences, and brings them to bear on him. She says, "Fear not, only believe."

63. But there is another aspect of this question to which it is necessary that I should advert, but which it is impossible that I should discuss in this paper. I cannot pass it over in silence, lest it should be supposed that I do not assign it an important place in the philosophy of those moral forces which have been evoked by Christianity. She has imparted to the principle of habituation an efficacy as a moral power capable of aiding in the improvement of mankind, to which it was previously a stranger. To use the metaphor which I have already employed, she has supplied it with a fulcrum, by which it is able to act as a powerful lever in the spiritual world. That lever is faith, as the purifying and sanctifying principle of human nature. We have already shown that what habituation wanted was a standing-point on which it could commence its operations. This is supplied by Christianity when she introduces powerful convictions into the mind. The philosopher found the influence of this principle one of the most powerful obstacles to human improvement. Christianity has rendered it a power equally available for good.

64. But this is far from being a full statement of what Christianity has effected. As we have seen, the only hope of a reformation of mankind which the philosopher could bring himself to entertain, was placed by him in the possibility of getting possession of the legislative powers of political society. If he could do this, it afforded him the possibility of using the weight of the principle of habituation as a powerful influence for good. He therefore sighed for the creation of a state in which, by the sanctions of law, he could enforce his own ideal of virtue, and educate men in the practice of it, and coerce the refractory. Now it is impossible to deny that, although the philosophic conception was alloyed with many and great imperfections, it rests on a substantial truth. It is not too much to say, that whatever truth it contained, is fulfilled by Christianity in the creation of the Christian Church

as a great moral and spiritual society, for the purpose of using the principle of habituation in the formation of human character. Under its influence habit reacts on faith and faith on habit, and each strengthens the other as a moral force. The subject is a very tempting one, but I must forbear entering on its further discussion, and content myself with observing that the institution of the Christian Church, as a moral and spiritual society, is in conformity with the teaching of sound philosophy. The more thorough is the investigation, the more strong is the proof that whatever philosophy saw in dim outline, Christianity has realized as a substantial reality.

65. I must now offer a few observations on objections which have been made to particular aspects of the moral teaching of Christianity. It has been urged as an objection, by persons who cannot have carefully considered the question, that it does not contain a complete moral code. The fact that it does not contain a complete one, I admit, and maintain that it was never intended to do so. That the absence of one can be made an objection on any principle of sound philosophy, I deny.

66. A code of morals which will supply a rule of action, in all the complicated relations of life, is as great an impossibility as a coat which will fit every man under all circumstances, or a dress which will be exactly adapted for all seasons and countries. However minute may be the code of morals which is elaborated, the mind of man will go beyond it, and burst the bonds with which it is attempted to be encircled. This is proved by every attempt which has been made to elaborate a system of casuistry which shall determine beforehand the course which duty dictates, under all circumstances, and meet the case of all consciences. With whatever degree of minuteness it may have been elaborated, universal experience has proved that it is necessary to frame one involving finer and finer distinctions, until all inward life expires under the influence of a minute system of hair-splittings, and a burden is imposed on the conscience which is utterly intolerable. The healthiness of moral action consists in the unconsciousness with which great principles are applied to particular cases. In this point of view, there is a striking analogy between our moral and physical nature. The healthiest condition of the latter is when our conscious perception of it is the least. A constant watching of it, and turning our eye inward upon it, is inconsistent with its well-being. So it is with our moral nature. It acts as it ought, when we are content to allow great principles unconsciously to evolve their own result. A

constant probing of them is not only a symptom of disease, but a means of aggravating it. Nothing is more subversive of profound moral convictions, than to be constantly dealing with cases of casuistry.

67. A perception of freedom is inseparable from all healthy moral action. Its true idea is self-sacrifice under a profound sense of obligation. Hence it follows that the only sound condition of moral feeling is when, under the influence of certain great principles of obligation implanted in the conscience, man becomes a law to himself. But the existence of a moral code implies that obligation is contemplated as a mere objective rule, and assumes the form of bare legality, an aspect of moral obligation which stands in distinct opposition to it as a spontaneous act of self-sacrifice. The moment we view obligation as mere hard, definite law, imposed on us by an external power, we convert it from a law of freedom into one of slavery.

68. It follows that a moral law of an elevated character can never be specific in its precepts, or attempt to embrace the whole round of duty. It need not have any specific precepts at all. When it has them, it can only employ them as illustrations of great principles. Thus they are useful as showing the mode in which general principles should be worked out in practice. But a precept being only part of a great objective rule of action, if it stands by itself, and is without reference to the remainder, it is not only incomplete, but very frequently misleading. In all cases it is impossible to get an accurate view of a great system, of which the parts are mutually dependent, without the ability to take a view of it as a complicated whole. A moral law which is suited for a free agent must content itself with dealing with great principles and entrust the working out of details to the healthy action of the mind, in conformity with the ever-varying character of circumstances, which affect the moral character of particular acts.

69. These considerations effectually dispose of objections against Christianity on the ground of alleged omissions of certain duties in her moral teaching. I fully admit the fact that she does not attempt to evolve a moral code, or even a complete system of ethical doctrine. Her omission to do so is her greatest glory. If she had attempted it, she would have stood self-condemned before the tribunal of philosophy. I think that it is true that she does not even attempt to evolve a moral precept in the form of an objective law. Her morality is purely the morality of the spirit, and not of the letter. Her principles are all-embracing, not so her precepts.

If such be her character (and it is one which true philosophy will assent to), it follows that many duties may exist which she has passed over in silence. As a fact, no one can doubt that her precepts, and special embodiments of the great principles of duty are always called forth by particular circumstances; and the idea that she designed to enunciate an abstract code of morals applicable to all time is inconsistent with her structure, her teaching being always fragmentary. If this were not so, it would have been impossible to stop short of the elaboration of a complete moral code and a system of ethical doctrine. To have done the latter would have converted her from a revelation into a philosophy.—I maintain, therefore, that Christianity is philosophically correct: 1st, in the absence in it of a positive code of morals; 2ndly, in being content with laying down the great principles of moral obligation, and presenting to the reason a succession of convictions adequate to impart to them vitality; 3rdly, in allowing the mind which has been penetrated by her principles to become a law to itself.

70. But what with regard to many of the precepts found in the Gospels? Are they intended as definite laws for all time? I answer that such cannot be the intention of even those which are stated in the most absolute terms; because, when they are applied as simple rules of action, they are impossible to be applied in practice; and, what is more, the person who uttered them did not himself so apply them. Nor is it possible that any person could have been so ignorant as to imagine that they were capable of such application, except in an ideal state of human society, where they would be useless, because they would not be required. It is utterly absurd in those who assert that Christianity is of purely human origin, to attribute such stupidity to its author. The more completely human is the origin which we assign to it, the more necessary is it to admit that a profound wisdom superintended its elaboration, unless we are prepared to assert that folly and chance can effect what all the powers of philosophical research have failed to accomplish.

71. These considerations will sufficiently dispose of most of the difficulties which have been urged by Mr. Lecky, in his recent work on "The History of Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne," with respect to some features of the moral teaching of Christianity. In mentioning with disapprobation any portion of this most important work, I think it due to its author to express my concurrence in the larger number of the positions maintained in it, subject to different degrees of qualification. This, in many cases, is absolutely required.

Many of his statements are too broad. It also seems to me that some of his omissions have rendered his treatment of portions of his subject imperfect in breadth of philosophical thought; and from some of his conclusions I entirely dissent. I will select, as an example to which these remarks are applicable, the mode in which he has treated the question of patriotism and Christianity. Let it be understood, however, that I wish to speak of Mr. Lecky's important work with deep respect. It is the product of a mind which is deeply convinced that truth exists, and which evidently seeks to discover it.

72. Mr. Lecky seems to be of opinion that this virtue has received no recognition in Christian ethics. At the same time, he takes a most favourable view of it as it is taught by heathen moralists, and of the place assigned to it in their systems. We must not forget, however, that while he pronounces this censure, he expresses the warmest sympathy with that portion of Christian teaching which sets on a firm basis the principle of the universal brotherhood of mankind. I have selected this special virtue for consideration because, according to the general view of Mr. Mill, and to some of his positive assertions, I apprehend that he maintains that Christianity, taken as a whole, is unfavourable to the existence of the political virtues; and not only so, but that it is only through the elaboration of a type of virtue different in character from that on which Christianity has set the seal of her highest approbation, that the moral improvement of mankind can be effected, and that this is imperatively called for by the wants of modern society.

73. In the first place, I deny that in Mr. Lecky's sense of the term, the New Testament contains a system of ethics, or that it was intended to do so. He uses the words, not in the sense of an elaboration of the great principles of obligation applicable to all circumstances, but very nearly in that of a code of morals, or, at any rate, of a complete system of ethical doctrine. If my view of the moral teaching of Christianity is correct, there is no necessity that the virtue of patriotism should have obtained any distinct recognition in it; and under the special circumstances of the times it was highly desirable that, if noticed at all, the reference to it should have been a very general one. I admit that little or nothing is said in the New Testament directly bearing on it, though a reference to it is not so entirely wanting as Mr. Lecky seems to suppose. Still, there is no attempt to apply the great principles of obligation to this specific virtue, or to enforce it by exhortation. On the contrary, the efforts to restrain and keep in due subordination the principles on which

it rests, when, as was frequently the case in the ancient world, instead of a virtue it became a vice most opposed to that great subject of Christian teaching, the universal brotherhood of mankind, are clear and unmistakable.

74. Secondly, I answer that the patriotism of the ancient world was far from being a pure form of virtue which Christianity could encourage without a large amount of very complicated qualifications. If Christianity had attempted specially to enforce this virtue, it would have been necessary to lay down the qualifications, or her moral teaching would have been in the highest degree misleading. These are so numerous that they would have required a considerable amount of space for their elaboration, and a degree of formal statement utterly alien to its structure. It is a striking confirmation of the view which I take respecting the nature of the precepts of the New Testament, that they are never accompanied with qualifications, without which no precept is directly applicable as a rule of life. It is impossible to assert that patriotism, as it has been generally exhibited in ancient or even in modern times, is a pure unmixed virtue. Equally so is it to deny that the spirit of patriotism has produced a great amount of evil, and that whatever improvement it has displayed in these latter days is due to Christianity itself. I am ready to admit that when we contemplate ancient patriotism in certain aspects, and carefully remove others from our view, it contains an element both grand and noble. The self-sacrifice which it involved possesses a deep fascination in the dreary annals of human selfishness. Still, much of the glory with which it has been invested disappears when it is subjected to a rigid analysis. Self discloses itself as a very predominant feature in it. I will not deny that it may have existed in a few minds in the form of a pure love of country, though this is very doubtful; but in the great majority it consisted in the identification of the life of the individual with that of the state, of which, in the small republics of ancient times, he formed a very appreciable portion. The glory and prosperity of his country was his own. This point is very distinctly brought out in the funeral oration of Pericles, and forms its most striking characteristic. The utmost efforts of the orator are employed in identifying the glory of his country with that of the individual, and the highest point to which he elevates himself is in proving that a speedy death in battle is a small evil compared with the greater good which men enjoy in their country's glory. When states consist of a few thousand citizens, in many respects they resemble a joint-stock company, in which the share of the

individual is large. In proportion to the size of the community the intensity of the feeling of patriotism has always diminished.

75. But if there is a bright side to patriotism, it is impossible to deny that the reverse is a very dark one. In ancient times the patriotism of the citizen meant holding double or treble their number in the bondage of slavery. It meant the sovereignty of the state of which he was a member, and the keeping of all others which he could master in a state of political subjection. It too easily degenerated into devotion to his party, and the trampling his opponents in the dust. In Greece it led to unceasing warfare and desolation. With the Roman it meant the lust of universal empire and universal plunder, and the shedding the blood of the non-citizen like water. Where it took a different form, as in the Jew, it produced contempt for all of an alien race. Even among Christian nations many of its results can only be contemplated with awe. Its spirit has freed men from the sordidness of many of the baser forms of selfishness, by identifying self with the interests of the community. Still it is a principle of which selfishness forms an essential ingredient.

76. If this be correct, it is a principle which is so strong in human nature that it requires no adventitious aid for its support. Mr. Lecky's commendations of this virtue require very considerable qualification; but when he remarks that its gradual extinction in the Roman Empire was coincident with the rapid progress of Christianity, it seems to me that he mistakes a coincidence for a cause. To what was the extinction of Roman patriotism due? I reply, to the enormous extent of the empire itself—to its crushing of the separate nationalities; and in the latter period, when the feeling of patriotism became nearly extinct, to the utter corruption of the Government, which destroyed the interest which the individual had in the state. I will not deny the influence of the principle of asceticism on the final dissolution of the empire. But I must reply that the principle of asceticism forms no portion of New Testament morality. But while Christianity did not enforce this virtue in the direct form of precept, it announced principles exactly suited to counteract its defects. One alone it will be sufficient to quote: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and it declared that our neighbour was not only our fellow-citizen, or the member of our own political party, or our fellow sectarian, but every brother man who needs mercy at our hands. Paul, the most devoted missionary, was also an ardent patriot in the largest and best sense, free from a single taint of selfishness. While society

was crumbling, she erected a state, the universal Church; and in favour of it she evoked a self-sacrificing devotion which ancient patriotism never equalled. But society has been recreated; and Mr. Lecky cannot deny that many men whose characters have been deeply penetrated by Christianity in modern times have displayed a sublimity of devotion to their country which will bear a most favourable comparison with the greatest examples of it in the ancient world.

77. But it is urged that the teaching of Christianity tends to assign a low place to what, for want of a better name, we must designate the heroic or political type of virtue, if not entirely to ignore it, and in place of it to bring into the greatest prominence the virtues of the milder and more unobtrusive character. These Mr. Lecky, by a singular misnomer, has designated the servile virtues. He owns the importance of her elevation of the latter, but seems to think that she has unduly depreciated the former. Let us investigate how the case actually stands.

78. It is an unquestionable fact that the virtues of the heroic type have occupied the highest place in every ancient system of morals; and as far as virtue has received the homage of mankind, their admiration has been confined to this aspect of it. Some of the milder virtues have received a feeble meed of praise; but to one of them, humility, I do not know that any recognition has been given either in popular or philosophic systems of morality. It is no less remarkable that to these virtues Christianity has assigned the highest place in her spiritual temple.

79. This is a fact demanding the most attentive consideration. The whole current of pagan thought, whether popular or philosophic, I may add, one prominent aspect of Jewish thought, was in favour of the heroic or political aspect of virtue. The most prominent aspect of the Jewish saint is unquestionably formed on the heroic type. Yet, despite of this concurrence of opinion, the authors of Christianity have unhesitatingly assigned the highest place to the milder virtues, and the general judgment of mankind since they have done so has concurred in opinion that they were right. Such a fact is worthy of attentive meditation on the part of those who pronounce the Gospels to be a body of myths invented by boundless credulity.

80. I fully agree with Mr. Lecky, that the high position assigned by Christianity to this class of virtue has had the effect of elevating those portions of society which the dominant classes crushed with an iron tyranny; but I cannot concede that there is anything in the character of mildness, meekness,

humility, compassion, and the whole constellation of similar qualities, which can justify the application to them of the name of the servile virtues. What she does for the slave is to convert him into a spiritual freeman; and, until this is effected, he is incapable of anything which she can recognize as genuine virtue. It cannot be disputed that these virtues exercise an influence on the well-being of mankind, out of all proportion greater than those of the heroic or political type. If the epithet of grand can be applied to the one, that of morally beautiful is the peculiar characteristic of the other. Against these latter it may be truly said, "There is no law;" but this is certainly not true, without great qualification, with respect to the former. When the virtues of the heroic type are separated from the milder ones, and assume the highest place in our mental constitution, they frequently exhibit themselves as splendid vices. I have often been tempted to think that when Aristotle sketched the character of his *μεγολόψυχος*, or magnanimous man, who is designed to be the embodiment of all the heroic virtues, he intended a kind of parody. He may be described as a portraiture of human greatness, untempered by a particle of mildness, meekness, humility, or love. Every reader instinctively feels, that when the philosopher attempted to depict the character of the great heroic, scarcely leavened as it is by a single trait of the milder virtues, he fell from the sublime into the ridiculous. Later Stoicism somewhat softened the picture. Mr. Lecky says that the stoical conception of virtue exhibited it in the most disinterested form in which it has ever appeared among men. The Stoic, doubtful about the reality of a future state, acted without hope of reward. I think that it might be more correctly stated that, of all the aspects of virtue, that of Stoicism was the most intensely self-conscious.

81. It must be conceded, therefore, that the elevation by Christianity of the milder type of virtue to the highest place in her spiritual temple is justified on the soundest principles of philosophy. The whole constellation of the milder virtues shining, as she exhibits them in their respective places and proportions, is the most perfect manifestation which we can conceive of moral loveliness. The heroic type can only assume the aspect of holiness, when it is in the closest union with the milder virtues.

82. But it will be objected, that while the elevation of the milder type of virtue is strictly philosophical, it may be charged on Christianity that she unduly depresses the heroic one, and that this aspect of virtue occupies a most important place in the constitution of man. I freely admit the im-

portance of the heroic forms of virtue, and I think that I fully appreciate their grandeur. But I deny that this depreciation exists, and assert that the entire objection is owing to the absence of a sound philosophy, which has prevented us from appreciating the character of its teaching.

83. The objection is based on the misapprehension to which I have already alluded, that Christianity professes to elaborate either a complete body of ethical doctrine, or a perfect moral code; and that if circumstances have compelled her to bring one class of virtues into prominence, it amounts to a depreciation of those which are not. Let it be observed that the heroic virtues are those which are pre-eminently suited to flourish on the soil of human nature, and have a tendency to degenerate into vices. Every instinct of man, when he is not a prey to the basest sordidness of selfishness, is in their favour. The contrary is the case with the milder ones. The whole force of the passions runs counter to them. Christianity, therefore, concentrates all its moral force on the side of the weaker power. But it is not true in fact, that the great moral principles which she inculcates are not favourable to the growth of these aspects of virtue, when they are placed in due subordination to those of a milder type. Two of these are sufficient to prove this,—her principle of faith and that of self-sacrifice, which constitute the chief corner-stones of her system of morality. Faith is the very foundation of courage. Without it the virtue cannot exist, except as a mere animal passion. Self-sacrifice occupies the same position in reference to all political virtue. Both together produce the highest forms of nobleness of character. One particular aspect of the principle of faith which she inculcates, not only produces the courage of the martyr, but it forms the highest ground on which to base the calmness of the politician, or the pure elevation of spirit of the hero.

84. Whatever may have been the impelling principle which induced such multitudes of Christians during the fourth and fifth centuries to forsake their duties as citizens, and retire into the desert, it is impossible to justify their conduct either by the spirit or the letter of the moral teaching of the New Testament. I ask, Have not those who have been most completely penetrated by the spirit of Christianity exhibited the political virtues in their highest forms? What single influence had pagan virtue to produce for the amelioration of man's social condition capable of being put in comparison with the spirit of self-sacrifice which the author of Christianity has infused into the breasts of multitudes of men and women? Will the cold abstraction of philanthropy or public spirit ever kindle a

flame of devotion equal in intensity to that which he has succeeded in exciting towards himself, and brought to bear in improving the condition of humanity? Mr. Mill's assertion, that there is a need for a type of virtue to be called into play different from that which is recognized in the New Testament, proves either that he has not meditated with profound attention on the subject of Christian morality, or else that he has viewed it through the spectacles of prejudice.

85. Before I conclude, I must draw attention to that aspect of Christian morality, against which the objection that it is at issue with the principles of philosophy may be urged with the greatest speciousness,—its special teaching on the duty of almsgiving or charity. It has been frequently asserted that its teaching on this subject contradicts the principles of political economy.

86. It is impossible to deny that the teachings of theologians on this portion of Christian morality have been extremely indistinct, and are founded on no consistent principle. They have been far more ardent students of the arcana of dogma, than of the philosophy of morality. Hence has arisen the confusion which prevails in the popular mind as to the nature of this duty. The so-called rationalist has taken abundant advantage of this, and done his best to represent the principles of the Gospels on the subject of property as approximating to those of modern communism. I need not inform those who are at all acquainted with the literature of this subject, that the Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are in especial favour with that class of writers as substantiating their views, while at the same time they give their author very little credit as an historical authority. But other portions of Christian teaching are implicated in the charge. Its whole weight consists in the incorrect popular notions, which are widely diffused on this subject, and is dissipated as soon as we make a systematic examination of the principles of Christian morality.

87. Theologians have been far too much inclined to view the precepts of the New Testament as portions of a fully-evolved code of morals, binding in the letter, instead of carefully studying their general bearing and character. Hence it has become a matter of general belief that the principles of Christianity are unfavourable to the accumulation of wealth; and that although indiscriminate almsgiving may not be exactly a Christian duty, yet that almsgiving itself occupies so high a place in Christian ethics that the purely Christian character of the act itself may be pleaded in bar of any censure to which the want of discrimination may be fully

liable. The principle of giving to everybody that asks, if fully carried out in practice, carries with it its own correction; still there is a very general impression that liberality, irrespective of any attention to the results which may flow from it, is a virtue enjoined by the principles of Christian morality.

88. On the other hand, the science of political economy teaches—and I think on evidence which is as trustworthy as a mathematical demonstration—that the progress of society is dependent on the accumulation of capital; that capital consists of accumulated savings; that it is the only source from whence the funds for the payment of labour can be provided; that savings invested in a reproductive form provide the means not only for the employment of labour in a permanent form, but when the investment is a profitable one, of increasing the amount of such employment; that such reproductive investments are highly beneficial to society, and that they are only possible where the expenditure is less than the income, and would become impossible if the entire excess of income were devoted to the purpose of charity; that expenditure which is not reproductive provides employment for labour, and is a means of subsistence for those who are destitute of property; that expenditure in luxuries is attended with a similar result; and that if the whole of the funds which are devoted to the above-mentioned purposes, and those which exceed what is necessary to supply us with a bare subsistence, were given away, the effect would be that we should pauperize the whole community by depriving of their subsistence those who are now earning it by honest labour, and bestowing it on a class of a wholly different description, besides putting an effectual stop to all the material improvements of society.

89. Let us put the case as between political economy and the popular view of the duty of almsgiving. A man gives away every shilling which he possesses beyond what is necessary for his own bare subsistence. He is credited with the virtue of the highest generosity, and is considered as a man pre-eminently good. He would be worthy of that designation if virtue could be considered as consisting in the excellence of one half of our nature without any reference to the other half. The money is spent on the recipients, who create nothing in return for it. It only forms a fund, however, for the payment of labour until it is exhausted. Another man invests the same sum on reproductive works. By doing so, he maintains a certain number of labourers while the works are in the course of construction. After they are finished he can repeat the process. The profit becomes an addition to the labour fund. Our railway system is an illustration of this. Our railways

have been created out of surplus profits which have been invested as savings. Not only have they been the means of the employment of labour in their construction, but are the ever-increasing means of providing the payment for additional labour. It is evident, that if the whole of this money had been expended in almsgiving, instead of having been invested as savings, every person whom our railway system, either directly or indirectly, partially or wholly, supplies with the means of subsistence, would have been left destitute of it. But this would not have been the only evil consequence attending it. Honest industry would have been discouraged, and idleness promoted. As at least one half of mankind would gladly desert labour if they could be supported by the other half, if all our superfluous means were expended in almsgiving, the virtue which is popularly designated that of generosity would result in the demoralization of society.

90. While such is the teaching of political economy, and while its general principles are unquestionably laid on a firm basis of scientific truth, it must not be forgotten that both human nature and human society are many-sided, and that we can never arrive at ultimate truth unless we take into consideration the manifold aspects which man presents, and qualify our general conclusions by their results. To this kind of correction all moral and political reasonings are necessarily subject; and unless this be carefully attended to, a partial truth will, in the moral world, certainly become a great falsehood. A large portion of the nature of man would be left a blank if the whole of the superfluous expenditure of society were limited to that particular form which is called remunerative. Man has not only to live, but to live well; and if the supposition in question were to become a reality, many of his highest and noblest aspirations would possess no corresponding object. Admitting also the fact, that a very large portion of human misery is occasioned by human folly, yet it is undeniable that society, as at present constituted, is liable to evils which lie beyond the control of the individual, and which the principles of political economy are incapable of effectually meeting. Our world is full of sorrows, misfortunes, accidents, diseases, death, and innumerable other ills for which this science can provide no sufficient remedy. The most industrious and the most virtuous man may become engulfed in sudden ruin, and his family left in utter destitution, without any deficiency of foresight on his part. Hence the principles of a sound philosophy are compelled to recognize the fact that society presents a twofold aspect, and that there is a wide and legitimate sphere for the exercise of the kindlier feelings; and that the principles

of this science, although they give a true account of the great facts of life, yet, owing to the many-sided aspects presented by the condition of man, are incapable of regulating the entirety of human action. In the infinite complications of society there must not unfrequently arise a conflict of obligations, when the higher ones of mercy ought to outweigh those of an inferior character.

91. Within these limits the science of political economy must admit that a wide sphere exists for the exercise of the virtue of charity, and that the demands made on us by the miseries of mankind may be so powerful that they ought to outweigh all considerations derived from the duty of promoting the employment of labour. It follows, therefore, that no question can arise between the teaching of Christianity and science, unless it can be shown that the teaching of Christianity counteracts and condemns the principle of accumulation on which the fabric of society rests, or that it enjoins indiscriminate almsgiving as a duty.

92. For the solution of these questions we must revert to first principles. The principle of accumulation is one which is so deeply impressed on man's constitution that it requires little external aid to stimulate it. If it were not that man has many passions which urge him in a contrary direction, it would act with a universal potency. On the other hand, the kindlier feelings are the weaker portion of our moral constitution, and are especially liable to be overborne by the violence of selfishness and of passion. As I have often observed, Christianity does not enunciate a moral code. Her business is to proclaim great principles, and to bring powerful moral forces to bear on those parts of our nature which are comparatively weak. Now, although I maintain that it is not true that the duty of accumulation is not recognized by her, I allow that it occupies a place far from prominent in her teaching. But as this was not designed to elaborate a complete system of morals, and as the principle in question had been firmly planted in man's moral constitution as the foundation on which society rests, it might well be left to take care of itself. Firmly imbedded as it is in the principles of our nature, Christianity has taken ample care for its well-being, when it applied the powerful forces at its command to the uprooting of those passions by which it is overborne. On the other hand, the kindlier feelings are not only weak in themselves, but are in constant danger of being overpowered by the selfish ones, and also by the violence of the passions. Christianity, therefore, has pursued a perfectly reasonable

course in strengthening with all her power the compassionate and kindlier feelings in man.

93. If the authors of Christianity had intended to embody in it a complete system of ethical doctrine, I readily admit that many of those duties which political economy teaches, ought to have been more completely worked out, and to have been assigned a distinctive place and value in its teaching. But if we consider what this would have involved, the scientific aspect it must have assumed, and that it would have compelled Christianity to enter into the arena of discussions involving a political character, it will be at once apparent that it must have altered its entire form and character. It cannot be too carefully observed that Christianity, though highly philosophical, is not a philosophic system, and that her purpose is to create moral forces, not ethical systems.

94. It seems to me that many of the remarks which may be found in the writings of Mr. Mill, which imply that there is a deficiency in the moral teaching of Christianity to meet the requirements of the present condition of society, are founded on a supposed opposition which exists between them and the principles of social science. If the previous reasoning is sound, Mr. Mill's views are founded on the misconception that the design of Christianity is to elaborate a carefully adjusted system of ethical doctrine, instead of a body of moral principles and moral forces, nicely adapted to meet the actual wants of human nature. To effect the former is the proper function of philosophy. Another cause of the position taken by this class of thinkers in relation to the moral teaching of Christianity is, that they are of opinion that outward forces and circumstances act more powerfully on the improvement or deterioration of mankind than inward principles. The discussion of this would open on us a very wide subject, which it is impossible to enter on in the present paper. It is an unquestionable fact that in principle Christianity and this class of thinkers stand opposed as to the correct modes of operating on human nature. Christianity commences with that which is within, and operates from another externally; not that she scorns the aid of the other method of procedure. The others would take the reverse course. Which of the two is the more philosophical, I think that past history determines with no very dubious voice. The truth is, the moral principles of Christian teaching render him who receives them ready for every good work.

95. It would swell this paper into an undue length if I were to attempt to determine what is the precise teaching of

Christianity with respect to the virtue of almsgiving; or to answer the objection that it favours indiscriminate charity. Even if space were not a difficulty, the determination of the question would involve me in discussions of a theological character, which I wish carefully to avoid in the present paper. I shall only observe that in my opinion the teaching of Christianity fairly interpreted on principles of a sound exegesis, are not liable to the objection; and that the principle which I have already laid down as to the character of moral teaching generally, and that of Christianity in particular, are quite adequate for the solution of any other difficulty with which the subject may be attended. Want of space also utterly precludes the attempt to deal with any other difficulty which has been alleged to exist in special details of its moral teaching. I would only emphatically draw attention to one fact which I have already noticed, that the moral precepts which we find in the New Testament are always given without qualification, and that this alone furnishes a distinct proof that they were never intended to occupy the position of separate precepts of a moral code, applicable to all times and circumstances.

96. In conclusion, therefore, I would very briefly review results. As far as the philosophers by their utmost efforts succeeded in exploring the depths of the moral and spiritual being of man, the authors of Christianity, by the use of methods wholly different, and without coming into contact with them or their discussions, arrived at the same conclusions. Where the one saw a half-truth, the other discovered a complete one. While the moral principles of the one are obviously incomplete, those evolved by the other recognize everything which was really true in the speculations of the former, and give them a completeness which they evidently wanted. The philosopher saw the need of additional moral forces to act on man's inmost being, but could not find them; the authors of Christianity recognized and created them. The convictions which philosophy could create were weak and vague; those generated by Christianity were powerful and definite. Philosophy destroyed religious belief; Christianity created a new one, founded on the most powerful convictions. Philosophy destroyed the connection between religion and morality; Christianity imparted to religion a moral force, which penetrated to the depths of man as a spiritual being. The philosophers contemplated the improvement of the masses of mankind with despair; the authors of Christianity brought to bear on them a mighty power exactly suited to their needs. Philosophy saw in dimmest outline and the faintest shadow

the truth that the great instrument of man's improvement was the introduction of ideas and convictions into his reason, and the steady contemplation of them; Christianity at once produced the perfect antitype of philosophic speculation, the embodiment of all that is holy in human form, and exhibited it with power, not only to the contemplation of the elect, but to the masses of mankind. The philosophers speculated; the authors of Christianity acted. What the one sighed after the other realized. The one evolved perfect constitutions for states in his study; the other created a church, which has left its impress everywhere on the pages of human history, and will do the same in ages yet to come. Philosophy recognizes that Christianity has embodied in her teaching all the truths which she had succeeded in discovering, and penetrated beyond her into her innermost temple. To that which ancient philosophy could not attain, but which Christianity has since discovered, the whole current of modern thought has affixed the seal of its approbation. I ask to what does this testimony point? We have but two alternatives before us. Christianity has either been evolved by forces purely human, or it has come down from Heaven. Modern unbelief is outwardly respectful. It has long ceased to assign conscious deception as its origin. Modern unbelievers only invoke the aid of a few acts of untruthfulness when they are positively compelled to do so by the necessities of the position which they have assumed. The authors of Christianity, as they tell us, were good and holy men, who only occasionally invoked the aid of conscious falsehood. While they are compelled to pronounce large portions of Christianity fabulous, those who created the mythic stories of which it is composed were deceived and not deceivers. While its authors possessed the loftiest of moral ideals, and have displayed genius of the highest order, they were yet unable to decide between the creations of their own minds and the realities without. Notwithstanding the high ideal of their moral character, and the profundity of that genius which has invented Christianity, there is no conceivable amount of credulity or superstition with which they are not chargeable. How, then, did they work? Like as in this physical universe, if we can believe the dogmas of certain men who claim to themselves the monopoly of the name of philosophers, the forces of nature acting through infinite time have produced the divine Kosmos of the universe, so the forces of the moral world, acting in entire unconsciousness during a brief period of time, the limits of which can be clearly defined, have elaborated not only the entire moral teaching of Christianity,

but its embodiment of the ideal of perfection in Jesus the Christ. The philosophers were men of great intellectual powers; the whole mass of previously acquired knowledge was open before them; hard did they labour, deeply did they speculate, and we have before us the result of their labours. If Christianity has an origin purely human, its authors were Jewish fishermen and peasants, to whose minds ancient culture had never penetrated, and philosophy was unknown. If not impostors, as our adversaries concede that they were not, except on occasions too tempting to be resisted, their credulity must have exceeded that which is common to man. Whatever other influences aided the movement, credulity, occasional falsehood, high morality, genius, a power of spiritual intuition never before attained, and profound ignorance constituted the foundation. Yet the philosophers evolved their philosophy after painful efforts; and the early Christians spontaneously generated not only the moral and spiritual aspects of Christianity, but a Christ. Surely, if this be the case, one's strength is to sit still. It is the only alternative before us to believe this, or to believe that Christianity, testified to as it is by the highest philosophy, has in it something more than human.

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sure you will all feel that we ought to return our best thanks to Mr. Row for this very important paper, which I am sure will be a most valuable addition to our Transactions. (Hear, hear.) It is a paper which I am certain none of us could master from simply hearing it read. Its real importance will only be fully felt when we have studied it in our *Journal of Transactions*. Still, perhaps, some gentleman present may be somewhat prepared upon the subject; and I therefore call upon any who may have any observations to make, and I hope we may have an interesting discussion.

Rev. Mr. TITCOMB.—It appears to me that this long and complex, but let me add, very valuable paper, may be said to turn upon two propositions, as upon two pivots. The first is, that true philosophy, apart from revelation, only has power to know the good, but has no power to influence it or to produce any of those moral forces by which the good can be advanced and carried out into practice. Of the truth of that we shall none of us doubt. Any one familiar with the writings of Socrates, Seneca, or Epictetus will be quite satisfied of the immense perception of moral and spiritual truth which they possessed. Indeed, those writings are so allied to the statements of revelation, that it is no wonder that many of the rationalistic and infidel teachers set the one by the side of the other, and declared each equally good. At the same time, while these philosophers advocated all that was noble and generous, and great and good in human nature, they added little

or nothing to those moral forces which call into practical action the higher qualities of mankind. It reminds me of the celebrated and oft-quoted remark of the Latin poet :—

——“Videor meliora proboque,  
Deteriora sequor.”——

Mr. Row has properly drawn attention to this in his paper. What does Christianity do in contrast with old heathen philosophy? It not only restates all that is good, morally and spiritually, with even more perfectness than the heathen philosophers stated it, but it supplies mankind with moral forces by which all the good can be made to operate so as to perfect mankind. (Hear, hear.) And it has this great advantage, that whereas the heathen philosophy only operated upon a select circle of minds, the pure cream of the intellectual life of the period, and could do nothing amongst the poor ignorant and degraded, but rather looked upon them with contempt; Christianity reverses the process, and, beginning with the lower stratum of mankind—with the poorest, the humblest, and most ignorant—achieves a grander triumph, passes by philosophy, and supplies, by faith in the living Christ, the moral power to do the good which philosophy could only point out, but could not do. This paper is very valuable in dealing with this point, which is, as I have already said, its first pivot, and the conclusion of the writer is one with which we shall all agree, that philosophy must bow her head to Christianity, and say “You have really beaten us in the controversy.” Christianity has done that which philosophy was confessedly unable to do. It might say, with Julian the Emperor, “O Nazarene, thou hast conquered!” for philosophy *is* conquered by Christianity in that respect. (Hear, hear.) The other pivot of the paper (contained in the latter part of it) is, that as philosophy was not intended to provide a complete code of human duties, but simply to deal with the moral forces which govern them, so Christianity must not be expected to produce any practical, and pre-arranged and scientifically formed code of moral duties, but simply to supply the principles on which they rest, and by which they shall be governed and directed; and there I think we have what I may call a strict analogy with nature; and in that respect nature and revelation go together. You do not see botany arranged scientifically in any of the fields or woods of any part of the world. You do not see any arrangement of flowers and trees according to botanical plans, in classes and subdivisions. All that is left to man to do. So with Christianity; the grand principles of action are provided or set forth, and it is left to man to subdivide, to arrange, and to evolve for himself out of the principles laid down in the revelation of the gospel, all that code of human action which our various wants, weaknesses, temptations, and duties may require. If it had been evolved and arranged scientifically in revelation, that would have gone far to prove it of human and not of divine construction; for we may expect the law of revelation to be in harmony with the law of nature. This has reference to that part of the paper which Mr. Row did not read, having reference to the objections made

as to the absence of certain details belonging to the moral code in Scripture such as patriotism and the political virtues. The author of the paper, in his valuable remarks on patriotism and his defence of Christianity in connection with it, might, however, have given greater credit to Christianity as even propounding the political virtues; but I quite understand his motive. The limits of the paper forbade it, and it might have been too purely theological. I think, for example, that when St. Paul claimed his right as a Roman citizen, he did really appeal in the most practical manner to the political rights and virtues of the community; and that in his doing so we may conceive Scripture as setting forth his adherence to those virtues and principles. When we are exhorted that prayers shall be offered up for kings and those in authority, and again, when it is said "Fear God, honour the king," we have another appeal to political principles which should not be overlooked; and to patriotism also. It is part of our Christian requirements to have this principle; and Christianity lays down the basis on which it rests. So with regard to the heroic virtues. You will remember that St. Paul says, with commendation: "Yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die;" and it strikes me that that is in strict keeping with what we speak of as moral heroism. The heroism which would have a man to die for his faith, is like the heroism of Marcus Curtius, who leaped into the gulf out of devotion to his country. All this would make a framework of Christian patriotism, even from the Scriptures themselves. The same may be said with regard to political economy, which was dealt with in a part of the paper which Mr. Row omitted in reading. Here I should like to make a few remarks of a supplementary character to the paper. It is sometimes charged against Christianity that the laws of political economy are not laid down in the Scriptures, and that as almsgiving is stated in the Scriptures to be a duty, there are wanting those principles of true political economy which are really for the happiness of mankind. Now, I believe in the true doctrines of political economy and in the importance of the accumulation of property for the general interests of mankind, and in the benefit of investments, and so on. The question is, whether or not Mr. Row might not have gone further into this matter——

Mr. Row.—The reason that prevented me was, that it would have swelled the paper so much. The paper would have been quite half as long again.

Mr. TITCOMB.—I quite understand that; but I want to state to our friends a few points which I think might very appropriately have been brought in here. In the parable of the talents, our Lord seems to teach that Christianity really sanctions the accumulation of property and the putting out of money to usury in a proper manner. When St. Paul says that children should not lay up for their parents, but parents for their children, it is the foundation of political economy, for it involves the principle of a man investing money for posterity. Then it is said:—"If any man will not work, neither let him eat;" and "Owe no man anything; provide things honest in the sight of all men." You also have the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, and, "Have I not a right to do what I will with mine own?"

All these points bristle up in the Scriptures ; and there is much to be said on this side ; for although Christianity does not propound any system of patriotism or political economy, it is sufficient for me and for all Christian minds to feel that, taught by the Spirit of God, there are thoughts, truths, and principles there recognized, which, if applied practically, and worked out in life, will do quite as much as any political or moral system of ethics brought out by man. And the two things meet harmoniously ; the one is sent from Heaven as a revelation, the other is the light in man of what was once given in nature, and which is still spared to him mercifully, notwithstanding his sin. They meet on a common platform : they meet in the sight of God. (Cheers.)

Mr. REDDIE.—I feel that I am in an unfortunate position compared with Mr. Titcomb, for I cannot altogether profess a general approval of this paper. Certainly I agree with its conclusions and with the main scope of the argument ; but I am bound also to say that I think Mr. Row has rather exaggerated and overpressed almost all his arguments. But I agree generally with the remarks which Mr. Titcomb has made. No doubt, political economy may be said to have its principles acknowledged in some slight degree in the Scriptures. You have, for instance, the passage, “Charge them who are rich in this world ;” which shows that the Apostle recognized that there were rich Christians. But Mr. Titcomb’s remarks, while elucidating the paper, have fallen short somewhat in the same way as the paper itself. Where I think Mr. Row has made his gravest mistake is, in dissociating Christianity too much from the Jewish system and from what may have been true in the “philosophy” which he puts in contradistinction to Christianity. But the truths of Christianity must not be treated as something that came for the first time from God to man, nor must it be considered that man had not in himself the principles which would enable him to judge what is right——

Mr. Row.—I think I have said so.

Mr. REDDIE.—There are many things in the paper that are no doubt quite in accordance with this view ; but there are other parts which are quite contrary to it. That there is a sharp contrast drawn between all philosophy and Christianity, can scarcely be questioned ; but there is also a contrast brought out in this paper between Christianity and that which really belongs to it—the old Jewish system. Mr. Row says :—

“It is even questionable whether, in any writing composed independently of all Christian influences, we can discover a full enunciation of the precept, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,’ although we can unquestionably find approximations to it.”

I suppose the approximations alluded to are those we find in Plato, put into the mouth of Socrates, in Seneca, and probably in Epictetus,——

Mr. Row.—And in the Stoics.

Mr. REDDIE.—But Mr. Row has omitted to observe that those very words which he has quoted are themselves a quotation from the Old Testament——

Mr. Row.—Certainly they are.

Mr. REDDIE.—Well, they were “composed” long before Christianity; and I think it a pity to dissociate Christianity so completely as Mr. Row thus appears to do from that first part of divine revelation; for Christianity is only a part of revelation, as we may see on the very face of the Christian writings themselves. Christianity came in continuation of the law and the prophets, and is only the completion of that revealed truth which had gone before. And there is another point: when Mr. Row alludes to the selfishness of the Jews, he forgot that the 19th chapter of Leviticus, where the text just referred to occurs, as to the second of the two great commandments of the law, also actually enunciates a principle the very reverse of that which Mr. Row attributes to the Jews. It not only tells them to love their neighbours as themselves (v. 18), but in another passage (vv. 9, 10) it says: “When ye reap the harvest of your land thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest . . . thou shalt leave them for the poor and *stranger*.” That shows, that however the Jews may have neglected what they were taught, the theory of the Jewish law was not of that rigid and extremely selfish kind which Mr. Row attributed to them, and which would have been the case had they really acted consistently with their Scriptures, in hating all other nations than their own. But St. Paul condemned them for that: and the whole preaching of the prophets really taught the great brotherhood of nations, although, for a special purpose, and for a time, the Jews had had special privileges and favours. I think that when Mr. Lecky and Mr. Mill make these unfortunate antitheses between Christianity and what is true in philosophical systems, the proper thing to do is to tell these modern philosophers that Christianity professedly takes up all that is good and true in those systems:—“Whatever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report,” and all that is good in human nature, as parts of Christianity; and that this is really the key to explain what is a kind of difficulty for which Mr. Row has to account,—namely, that Christianity has not set forth a formal code of morals. But Christianity has done better, in this way: it has set forth principles which will generate proper feelings and grounds of moral action, and it recognizes everything that is good in human nature itself. So also with regard to faith. I am inclined to criticise and question very much the accuracy of Mr. Row’s definition on this point. I object to his confounding faith with knowledge, and resolving all conviction into faith; and also to his statement, that all faith must rest on reason. I was gratified, however, to find in one sentence that he did recognize that there is such a thing as credulity in the world! I fear, indeed, that a great majority of faiths in this world are adopted in despite of reason; and yet no one can say that they are not strong convictions on the part of those who hold them. It would require too much time to pick out all the passages where some of these strange expressions occur, but I think I know pretty well the sense in which Mr. Row meant to employ them; and in that sense there is a kind of truth, though I must say that precisely as they are written they are not accurate

and—I must use the word—not true. Mr. Row says, for instance :—“ Without conviction all action is impossible ;” but in his account of temptation there was one little word which throws a light on the whole of the maze into which he has brought himself by using too strong terms, and not balancing the *pros* and *cons* of the case. He alluded to the ancient philosophers, and to the declarations of Plato and Aristotle, that it was impossible to do wrong except by acting contrary to the dictates of reason and knowledge. But that is recognized, so far as it is true, in Christianity, and throughout the Scriptures ; for there people are said to speak wrongly and to do evil “ because of the ignorance that is in them,” while it is taught that true knowledge would enlighten and guide them. But Mr. Row says, in the case of the drunkard, that he has to get rid of his convictions altogether—he has to extinguish them ! Now the real state of the case is, that the convictions are not destroyed—they only “ become latent,” as Mr. Row, in the one passage I have referred to, truly states. And in the case of the drunkard, the man will tell you that while he takes the glass in his hand, he knows and feels that his act is contrary to his own convictions of what he ought to do—

Mr. Row.—I may explain that all that part of my paper is merely an analysis of the seventh book of Aristotle’s Ethics.

Mr. REDDIE.—I venture to question Mr. Row’s agreement with Aristotle ; especially as we have a statement in another passage of the paper as to the unpractical character of all ancient philosophy. Now Aristotle begins his Ethics by telling us that his treatise is entirely practical ; and I cannot conceive that any one can read it without thinking it entirely practical in its whole aim and object. Epictetus and Seneca are also eminently practical ; and I must say that I join issue with Mr. Row most thoroughly on that point ; and I wish to have this placed on record, because neither Mill nor Lecky, nor any of our opponents with whom Mr. Row joins issue—and, as a rule, so manfully and ably—will agree with him here. I do not wish to depreciate the consideration due to Mr. Row’s paper ; but it is only right that we should state our opinions openly and fairly ; and that no paper containing erroneous opinions or reasoning should go out from the Institute without some contradiction being also placed on record. There are some other parts in the paper which I think were not necessary for Mr. Row’s working out his main thesis, and which would have been better left out ; and it is on these parts that I feel obliged to speak ; but I think that in some of them Mr. Row is contradictory to himself. I do not think he gives a fair account of the ancient moralists when he says that their only principle of moral improvement was habit. No doubt, the importance of habit is dwelt upon by Aristotle, and, indeed, no moralist could fail to see its great importance. But I cannot understand Mr. Row’s way of putting it. He talks as if the principle of habituation were the only principle of moral *improvement* among the ancients. He says :—

“ The only mighty influence with which philosophy was acquainted, which was capable of effecting *improvements* in the moral and spiritual condition of mankind, was, as I have said, that of habituation.”

Now habit is precisely what they were too acute not to know, never could effect "improvements;" for by habit you can only go on as you are —

Mr. Row.—Indeed?

Mr. REDDIE.—Certainly. Of course I know that habits may be broken off, but that must come from a new principle, and is the reverse of habit. If there were nothing but habituation, men could have no improvement. Then Mr. Row, speaking of traditional beliefs, says, people never take up with a new philosophy in which they meet with new beliefs or the reverse of the traditional ones. But look at spirit-rapping: that is a new thing coming in our own time, not inherited, and not from Christianity. Have not some people a conviction of that? Why, some people actually believe they have seen Mr. Home flying in the air! I cannot understand why Mr. Row should thus only emphasize traditional beliefs and ignore others, when our every-day experience shows us that people are rather prone to take up with new and false notions. All bubble companies are supported very much through this tendency to ignore experience: people have strong convictions that so and so will be a success, however new-fangled, and often chiefly because quite new! But Mr. Row seems to think that the only disposition is to believe as our forefathers have believed before us. We know, of course, that there are also such traditional beliefs, but I must deny that they are the only ones, or even that they always have the greatest influence. I think that in some of Mr. Row's elucidations (put forward in the very best spirit and with the best intentions) he has not done justice to Christianity. I am sorry to say that; and I feel sure he will be glad to correct one passage (which may be merely obscure), so as to leave no doubt upon it. He says:—

"It has been frequently urged against Christianity that it contains no new discovery in morals. If this can be established, I admit that it is fatal to its pretensions as a revelation."

Now I must say that I cannot agree with that, and I am sorry that Mr. Row makes the concession. Probably Christianity does not make any new discovery in morals—certainly the greater part of its morals was not new; but I do not think that that is fatal to its pretensions at all. Christ did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil, and to reinstate what were originally the primary moral principles which mankind knew, whether by revelation or by intuition. In correcting a laxity in the Mosaic Law as to divorce, you remember he says: "From *the beginning* it was not so." And St. Paul says virtually the same thing in arguing that "nature itself" teaches us so and so. That is actually stated by St. Paul; he appeals to what *nature itself* teaches; and our Lord Himself further says:—"And why *even of yourselves* judge ye not what is right?" I think, therefore, that it would be fatal to say that there was no moral principle in man apart from Christianity, because—

Mr. Row.—Do I say so?

Mr. REDDIE.—Not quite; but let me finish my sentence. I was going to say—because, if so, I do not see to what principles in man the teaching of

Christianity would have to appeal. But Christianity, without propounding any new discovery in morals, may yet have put forward something new and of the greatest importance; and it did so in proclaiming the universality of God's mercy through the sacrifice of Christ. Mr. Row's next point will not hold water at all. He says:—

“The idea of a moral and spiritual revelation which contains nothing new is self-contradictory.”

“Nothing new” is indefinite. But supposing that it did not contain anything new in morals, still the great historical facts of Christianity culminating in the sacrifice of Christ—all these are revelations, and, although they are not moral precepts, still, moral precepts of the highest kind may be and are based upon them. Then, in another part of the paper, we are told that “philosophy destroyed religion.” That is in a rather rhetorical part of the paper (more especially considering that it comes from Mr. Row, who is generally hard-headed and very thoughtful in his remarks); but there he certainly is anything but accurate in his language. He says:—

“Philosophy destroyed religious belief: Christianity created a new one.”

When St. Paul preached at Mars Hill, did he find that philosophy had destroyed religious belief? He said, on the contrary, that he found the men of Athens were in all things too superstitious. They believed too much, and they evidently had convictions without reason, which Mr. Row seems to think impossible. But even if the result of philosophical teaching had been the destruction of religious belief, you must not charge philosophy with that, or what would become of Christianity, when in the last days “faith will not be found on earth”? Truth is truth and right is right, whether people believe it or not. In this paper of Mr. Row's we have a mixture of esoteric and exoteric matters; and, indeed, the paper is altogether a very unphilosophical one, or, at all events, it is scarcely framed with that philosophical consistency which I should have expected from Mr. Row. I am glad that he has found modern unbelief to be outwardly respectful; but I am sorry to say that my experience has been different from that (hear, hear); and if any one can find anything very respectful in Mr. Francis Newman's books, and especially in his last book in reply to Mr. Rogers's most able work, “The Eclipse of Faith,” all I can say is, that it will very much astonish me; for a more offensive and unnecessarily disrespectful and blasphemous work I think I never read. Then in another passage Mr. Row tells us that—

“Faith and knowledge have often been contrasted as mental acts.” Adding, “As far as I am aware, such contrast is nowhere made in the New Testament.”

Now, on the contrary, I say that this contrast is made throughout, and especially in what may be called the reasoning parts of the New Testament. What Mr. Row calls “knowledge” is called expressly “sight” in the Scriptures, and they are put in direct antithesis *totidem verbis*. But I do not agree

(apart from the Scriptures altogether) with the definition which Mr. Row gives of faith. We arrive at some conclusion, and Mr. Row says that is necessarily faith; but I deny it. I have not *faith*, for instance, that Mr. Row is sitting on that chair opposite. I *know* it; if we are not to make use of words in a sense that destroys all sense. But, on the other hand, I have faith or believe that the gentleman who went out of the room half a minute ago is now going downstairs or is in the street. I do not know that, but I have a conviction or faith that it is probably so. We know what our Lord himself said to St. Thomas after the resurrection, when he said he would not believe till he had seen and felt our Lord's wounds. There we have an express illustration of the difference between actually seeing or knowing a thing and believing. I might have found one or two other passages in the paper to comment upon; but you will readily believe me when I say, that it is not the most pleasant thing for me to have to make remarks of this kind on a paper which has come from one for whom I entertain such great respect, and who has given us such valuable papers before. And I am most glad to admit that Mr. Row has done something to show that Christianity has taken up all that was good in nature and philosophy, and all that was good and true and intended to be permanent in the older revelation, and that he has put these matters on a fair basis before his opponents. With the exceptions I have pointed out, I agree generally with his conclusions; and I think, as Mr. Titcomb has very well said, that the paper shows that unquestionably all mere human philosophy must bow its head before Christianity. (Hear, hear.)

The CHAIRMAN.—I am sorry that I cannot altogether agree with Mr. Reddie in his observations on this paper. I have come up from the country to-night, and I have not had time to study the paper carefully; but I cannot help thinking that when Mr. Row comes to reply he will say he has used the word "Christian" in a general sense for the whole of what we call the Christian revelation, and that where it occurs it occurs as a general term to include the whole of God's revelation to man in the Old Testament, and, therefore, all the law and the prophets—

Mr. Row.—Certainly; that is so.

The CHAIRMAN.—And that when he speaks of Christianity, it is as a complete development of that revelation which was gradually unfolded to man from the fall until our Lord appeared. If Mr. Row did not include all that, I fully endorse the censures of Mr. Reddie; but I think Mr. Reddie has been mistaken in his view—

Mr. REDDIE.—I beg to say that I have very carefully read the paper, and I did not mean my remarks as censures; but I could not help noticing those passages where Mr. Row has distinctly spoken of Christianity as actually opposed to Judaism.

Mr. Row.—I was not running a parallel between Christianity and Judaism in the least degree.

The CHAIRMAN.—I think the main spirit of the paper is exceedingly valuable for the principles which Mr. Row has enunciated, and that we are

very much indebted to him for it. He has shown us most completely that however high philosophical thoughts may have been among the ancient philosophers not under the Jewish dispensation—for the ancient philosophers of Greece were not under the old Jewish dispensation—the ancient philosophy was utterly unpractical, and could be nothing else. It might have influenced the thoughts of a few scholars above the general mass of the people, but was utterly incapable of doing anything for the masses of mankind themselves. Mr. Row, I think, has rather led our thoughts up to a consideration of what was done under the old dispensation. Under the old dispensation the Jew was a man whose morality might compare very favourably with the Christian's, and under the dispensation of those who enjoyed a direct revelation from Heaven we find that morality had the practical effect with religion of raising man to the highest pitch of excellence that his fallen nature was capable of attaining. This is important when men construct philosophical systems not from the power of philosophical thought simply, but with the advantage of the light of revelation, and then refuse to allow the influence of that light to have its due weight in their minds, saying: "We have something far better than Christianity to show." What has been the practical effect of Christianity? Why its practical effect has been to do for all the great mass of mankind what philosophy could only do for a few select students; and not only that, but, as Mr. Row has pointed out, Christianity does its work for the most degraded and lost among the masses of mankind. (Hear, hear.) But I will not take up your time at this hour by any further observations of my own, but will simply call upon Mr. Row to reply to the observations which have been made.

Mr. Row.—I must own that I heard Mr. Reddie's remarks upon my paper with uncommon amazement, because I thought he would argue better and not indulge in such a mass of sophistries. I read to-day an article in the *Edinburgh Review* on Calvin, in which it says that he was so fond of finding fault with everything at school that he got the name of "the accusative case." At Oxford I knew another man of a similar tone of mind, and he obtained the name of "the walking *ἐνοστασις*," which means "objection:"—in other words, he was "the walking objection." I think Mr. Reddie would have thoroughly deserved that name. For example, he proceeded to deal with my observations on Judaism. Now it is really incredible to me that any one should have thought I was running a parallel between Christianity and Judaism. I would recommend Mr. Reddie to read the paper carefully again, and, if he does, he will find that it is not open to any of his remarks on that point. I have spoken of the narrow morality of the Jew, and is not that a plain fact in history? I do not speak of the Old Testament teaching, but of what the Jew was practically. The very precept I myself quote is taken out of the Old Testament Scriptures. Then we come to another point where Mr. Reddie puts in an objection to my remark that, "if it can be established that Christianity contains no new discovery in morals, I admit that it is fatal to its pretensions as a revelation." Surely if there is no new discovery in morals in the New Testament it is worth-

less; and you know I have used morals in a very large sense, as including the motive as well as the mere moral rule. That is a very important point, because that assertion forms the foundation of the 5th chapter of my work, *The Jesus of the Evangelists*; and that is a work which has been referred to by Dr. Payne Smith at page 18 of his "Bampton Lectures," and I think his remarks contain much more weight than Mr. Reddie's, and my views have never yet been found fault with at all except by Mr. Reddie himself. I must therefore beg Mr. Reddie to reconsider such an assertion as the one he has made respecting my observation that if Christianity does not contain anything new in morals it is worthless. I am sure that every one will agree with me that if it does not contain any new discovery in morals, it might as well have been spared, if it was intended to make us wiser and better. Then Mr. Reddie says there are various portions of heathen philosophy which assert Christian truth. But that is the very thing I have said over and over again. He seems to imply that I thought there was a radical opposition between the morals of reason and of revelation, but it is the very foundation of the paper that no such thing exists, and I am quite astonished to find any man making such an observation. Then I join issue with him again when he criticises my assertion that ancient philosophy had destroyed all sense of religion. Philosophy thoroughly upset the whole of the ancient religions, and Juvenal says: "No person believes in a God nowadays except a child in swaddling-clothes." Does Mr. Reddie say that that is not so? If so, he must be most ignorant of the history of the time, for it is so patent and so well known that I heard him make his assertion with astonishment. Let any one read Gibbon: he says the very same thing. Every one else admits that the effect of the investigations of philosophy was to destroy utterly all belief in the current religions of the day. Let any one read the dialogues of Plato, and say whether the argumentative dialogues do not go to the upsetting of all then-existing beliefs. I was surprised to hear Mr. Reddie, with regard to new discoveries and beliefs, refer to spirit-rapping. I certainly thought that that was nothing new. I do not deny that in form it is new; but it has an old body; indeed it is not 200 years ago since we burnt witches in this country—

Mr. REDDIE.—You have misunderstood me. It might be as old as time itself, and yet what I said was correct, that it came as a new thing to those who now believe it. They did not inherit their faith in it.

Mr. Row.—But the same identical spirit was involved in the belief in witchcraft in the middle ages—

Mr. REDDIE.—That does not subvert what I advanced.

Mr. Row.—Yes it does—

Mr. REDDIE.—Oh! not at all.

Mr. Row.—We may vary in our outward dress, but we are the same persons notwithstanding. It is not a variation in the coat which makes a variation in us, and so with respect to many more objections which Mr. Reddie has raised. I was astonished to hear Mr. Reddie speak of the con-

trast between faith and sight in reference to the resurrection of our Lord : it seemed to me to be *non ad rem*. What I say is that faith is a conviction, and that a conviction is the result of all our reasoning processes ; and I guarded the paper by saying, "those processes of the mind involved in the search for truth." Mr. Reddie has spoken of ancient philosophy with regard to habit. Will it be believed that Aristotle's definition of virtue is :—  
 "ἔστις προφρητικὴ ἐν μεσοτήτι οὕτω τῇ πρὸς ἑκάς ὠρισμένῃ λύγῃ, καὶ ὡς ἀνὸ φρόνημος ὀφίσειν."

Mr. REDDIE.—I do not dispute that virtue is a habit.

Mr. Row.—What I have distinctly laid down in the paper is this, that the only principle with which the ancient philosophers were acquainted which was capable of powerfully acting on the human mind was that of habit ; but Mr. Reddie says "You can do nothing whatever new by habit." Mr. Reddie has a great deal of new in him that has grown out of his habits since he was a boy, both mentally and morally ; and for any one to say, therefore, that nothing new can originate out of the power of habit, is to me incomprehensible. The power of habit is the only one I know of which the ancient philosophers recognized as having any real power for working upon society at large, or upon the individual, and it is the very essence of ancient ethics from one end to the other. Mr. Reddie has also criticised the passage in which I simply analyzed the 7th book of the Ethics,—where I spoke of knowledge, and said that it is not possible for a man to do wrong while knowledge is existing in his mind except it be in a latent state. I carefully analyzed that book, and it is evident that no man ever does fall into any kind of vice until he has made the knowledge become latent. That is all I meant—

Mr. REDDIE.—To that extent I agreed with you.

The Rev. C. A. Row.—Then so far we are agreed, that against the existence of positive knowledge contemplated by the mind it is impossible for a man to do wrong, and that the first thing he has to do is to suppress that knowledge and make it latent. I assert that the passage is a direct analysis of that in Aristotle. The whole passage is a very remarkable one, considering that it was written by a heathen before Christ. It occurs in the 7th book of Aristotle's Ethics, and from the time I first read it at Oxford to this day I have looked at it with wonder as the work of a heathen. I have only now to say that I cannot see one point of conclusiveness which Mr. Reddie has established against the reasonings I have adopted. He has taken a most limited view of my observations in some points, for no man can believe, for instance, that I was running a contrast between Judaism and Christianity. It is to me astonishing that any one could read my paper with any care and not see that what I discuss is revelation taken as a whole. The contrast I make is between the spirit of ancient philosophy and Christianity, and instead of having denied that man has intuitive moral perceptions, I have repeatedly reiterated that he has. There are passages over and over again in the paper to that effect, and I hold those views most strongly ; but any one would suppose I was almost a rationalist from what Mr. Reddie has

said. I have now only to thank you for your attention. The subject is one that requires a very great amount of thought, and I quite agree with Mr. Mitchell that the paper requires to be read more than once before it can be effectively understood. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. REDDIE.—Let me endeavour to mollify somewhat the wrath with which Mr. Row has received my observations. (Laughter.) I qualified what I said very carefully, and quoted what I objected to; and with regard to the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, I said nothing of the kind which Mr. Row attributed to me, as to any general parallel between them being drawn; neither did I question anything in the abstract from the 7th book of Aristotle's Ethics; and I also said distinctly that there seemed to me to be certain parts of the paper which were contradictory to others, and, of course, I agreed with the parts that contradict what I opposed. For instance, Mr. Row himself says (in § 29), "Under the influence of habit alone, it was evident that mankind must go on in their old groove." And yet, when I said just the same thing, Mr. Row exclaimed, "Indeed!" and has since declared it incomprehensible! But *littera scripta manet*. When this discussion is printed, it will be seen how far my observations are justifiable or not. However, Mr. Row has very much misunderstood me if he thinks there was any personal feeling in what I said. I spoke, and said that I spoke, with pain in criticising the paper as I felt bound to do; and I think his personal attack about "walking objections" and "accusative cases" scarcely exhibits the spirit in which we should approach the discussion of our papers here, and it will have no effect in preventing me as freely discussing any other paper in future. (Hear, hear.)

The meeting was then adjourned.