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The Divine Education of Man: A Study in Ethical Progress.

By the Rev. G. S. STREATFEILD, M.A.,
Rector of Goddington.

I.

TO deal in any adequate way with the evolution of human character, or, as it might otherwise be expressed, the moral making of man, would require a volume rather than two short articles. All that will be here attempted is very briefly to draw attention to the progressive course of human history in regard to those moral and spiritual principles in which personal character is rooted, and from which, therefore, human conduct springs.

The subject is one beset with difficulty for more than one reason. To begin with, it is impossible to trace the earliest stages in the development of character, since we can only deal definitely with the annals of history, and the foundations of history are in the prehistoric past. Again, the Biblical records to which our appeal is chiefly made present problems which belong to the field of literary and historical criticism, and inferences drawn from those records are necessarily affected by critical considerations. For example, personally, I believe that the patriarchal narratives are substantially historical, and that they bear witness to monotheistic belief and worship previous to the Mosaic revelation.[1] I do not for a moment accept a criticism which represents the story of the patriarchs as almost the pure invention of the literary period of the Hebrew nation. But it does not necessarily follow that those who compiled and edited the ancient records, and threw them into their present form, did not colour the narrative, to some extent at least, with

[1] At the same time, the life of Jacob shows how narrow was the borderline between a primitive monotheism and the polytheism by which it was surrounded.

the religious conceptions of their own time.[1] Similarly, it would be unwise, considering the conditions of modern thought, to insist upon the traditional date of the Books which supply much of the material for our discussion; and until the chronological order of the codes of law incorporated in the Pentateuch is settled, it is impossible to use them with dogmatic confidence in an inquiry which is primarily, though not exclusively, historical. It is therefore necessary, in dealing with our subject, to treat it on the broadest possible lines, and we shall have accomplished the task we have set ourselves if we make it clear that the Christian character is the crown and consummation of historical development. Nor shall we now concern ourselves with the world at large, or the human race as a whole. Starting with the assumption of what has been termed "a central revelation,"[2] it will be our endeavour to show that one of the ways, indeed, the principal way, in which that central revelation declares its progressive nature, is in the type of character it has produced—in other words, in the moral and spiritual effect that it has had upon the nature of man.

We cannot, obviously, pass from the Pentateuch to the New Testament without realizing that there has been an onward and upward movement which places a great gulf between the times of the patriarchs and the Epistles of St. Paul. The ideal Christian is a very different man from the ideal patriarch. Much of St. Paul's ethical teaching would seem strangely out of place if transferred to the Book of Genesis. So, too, as we contrast the Apostle's conception of God and man's relation to the unseen with the spiritual ideas of the Hebrew as outlined in the narrative of the Pentateuch, we recognize, without effort, the fact that, in the one we are dealing with the childhood, in the other with the maturity of the human race.

There is, perhaps, nothing more difficult for the modern mind to grasp than the growth among the "chosen people" of the ethical conception—still more of the conception of holiness. For

[1] Thus much is admitted by Professor Orr. See "Problem of the Old Testament," p. 88.

[2] Gwatkin, "The Knowledge of God," i., p. 133.

the Christian, accustomed to interpret these ideas by the life and example of our Lord, it is hard, not to say impossible, to throw the mind back to the time when the early Israelite thought of ceremonial "cleanness" and "uncleanness" as involving moral distinctions, and regulated his worship of the Divine Being by what is best described as a system of taboo. It is impossible to treat this subject in detail, but it must be borne in mind that to the ancient as to the modern Semite[1] life did not possess the ethical significance that it does for us. From the promulgation of the law, however, if not from an earlier period, this ethical significance found place in the general religious and social life of the Hebrew. We see the rude and superstitious tenets of savage society becoming instinct with moral and spiritual power. Contrast, for example, the heathen conception of the Divine jealousy with that which was fostered by the Jewish prophets. While the heathen worshipper pictured his god as standing stiffly on a sense of personal dignity that could be satisfied with a strict observance of sacrifice and ritual, Jehovah's jealousy was viewed by the prophets from a purely moral and spiritual standpoint, and constantly urged as an incentive to a purer and higher life. Jehovah is represented as not merely jealous for His own honour, but also for the character of those who worship Him.

No question has been, or still is, more keenly debated than the relative dates of the priestly and Deuteronomic legislation. On the one hand, it is contended that it is an anachronism to place the elaborate ceremonial of the priestly code after the more spiritual temper and teaching of Deuteronomy.[2] On the other hand, the internal evidence is unquestionably strong that pre-exilic Israel was unfamiliar with the greater part of the

[1] On the ancient Semite, see Robertson Smith, "Religion of the Semites," pp. 140-143, 249. On the modern Semite see Ives Curtiss, "Primitive Semitic Religion To-Day," pp. 66, 149. This lack of ethical enlightenment is not confined to the Semite, whether ancient or modern. Our missionaries in India tell us that the nearest approach to what the Christian knows as a sense of sin is produced in the Hindoo by the breach of ceremonial law and social etiquette.

[2] So Dean Strong in Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Ethics), i., p. 779.

Levitical code.[1] The truth lies, perhaps, midway between the two contentions. Without attempting to discuss this problem, it may, nevertheless, be pointed out that legislation on elaborately ceremonial lines for the post-exilic period can hardly be regarded as an anachronism in view of the fact that the Temple ritual served the important purpose of safeguarding the monotheistic faith of the Jew, and probably saved the Hebrew people from being absorbed into the surrounding nations; for, although it cannot be disputed that some of the ceremonial practices prescribed by the Levitical law were survivals from a prehistoric past,[2] others were emphatic protests against the customs of their heathen neighbours.[3] This, however, is certain, that the Jew, whether observing practices common to himself and his fellow-Semites, or those which differentiated his own worship from theirs, as from every heathen cult, was never allowed to forget that his worship was with a view to righteous living. Not only was Israel's ritual untainted by the moral pollutions that degraded alien religions, but it was an instrument for bringing the worshipper into contact with a God, who, above all else, was a God of righteousness. Thus, the idea of holiness which had its origin in superstition rather than reverence, in terror rather than love, developed an ethical significance commensurate with the increasing realization of the moral attributes of God.

However distinct, therefore, and separate in their origin were the two conceptions of holiness and righteousness, it is impossible to treat them separately in the history of revealed religion, for Israel's primitive ideas of duty were rooted in religious faith, and never dissociated from a sense of the Divine majesty. In the history of the nation the priest represented the principle of holiness, the prophet that of righteousness; and

[1] This is the central position of Wellhausen. For English readers it is effectively set forth by Professor Robertson Smith in "The Old Testament in the Jewish Church." See also Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Religion of Israel), Kautzsch, v., p. 612. The recent discoveries at Elephantinê seem likely to throw fresh light on this problem. See *Expositor*, August and November of last year.

[2] See "Religion of the Semites," pp. 140-143, and Note C, Appendix.

[3] See Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Unclean), iv., p. 827.

attention has often been drawn to the contrast between the priest and the prophet in respect of the religious life of the people. The contrast is more apparent than real. Unquestionably, a ceremonial conception of religion was the ruling principle of the priestly code, whilst righteousness was the burden of prophetic teaching; but it is a great mistake to think that the prophets set themselves against anything but a misrepresentation of the priestly office and the flagrant misuse of Temple-worship. What the prophet rebuked was not the observance of an elaborate ritual, but the self-deception that thinks to satisfy God by the externals of worship apart from conduct. Indeed, to the true Israelite holiness could not be divorced from righteousness, implying, as it did, the strict observance of law, both ceremonial and moral.

This ethical connotation of holiness is forcibly illustrated in the call of Isaiah to the prophetic office. "Woe is me!" cries the prophet, "for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. vi. 5). Isaiah's first thought as he heard the song of the Seraphim was, probably, one of ceremonial unfitness: he is "unclean"; but that first impression passes into an overwhelming sense of his moral unworthiness to stand in the Divine presence. The cleansing fire must be applied before he can accept the commission and say, "Here am I, send me." Fitness for God's presence and service, by the time that Isaiah came upon the scene, was felt to be ethical rather than ceremonial, "Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart" (Ps. xv. 1, 2).

It is in the study of the prophets and the Psalms that we can best trace the progressive nature of Israel's morality. The whole strength of the prophetic order was thrown into the endeavour so to link the principles of righteousness with the character and attributes of God that holiness and righteousness should be indissolubly united. "The ceremonial order and the

ethical code are two co-ordinate developments of the one principle—the holiness of Jehovah," so that "the central feature of Old Testament morality is that it is religious."[1]

The burden of the prophetic message was the triumph of the Divine righteousness. The horizon extended in the course of the ages. More and more clearly was it seen that the victory was not to be achieved in the history of the chosen people only, but also in that of the world at large. Nor is it unworthy of note that that section of the New Testament which breathes most of the spirit and reproduces most of the letter of the Old—namely, the Book of the Revelation—takes up, in the language of allegory and figure, this message of the prophets, and with it closes the canon of Scripture, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

When we come to examine the prophetic conception of righteousness, we find that the sins against which Israel was warned were chiefly those by which their neighbour would be injured. Injustice, oppression, treachery, adultery, luxurious living, extravagance, drunkenness, are denounced by prophet after prophet. And it must be remembered that Israel alone of the nations learned that every breach of the moral law was an offence against God and man alike. "Sin," says St. John, "is lawlessness" (1 John iii. 4). Sin is the transgression of a divinely ordained law. Such, too, was the teaching of the Old Testament. To live a righteous life was to "walk with God"; the unrighteous man has departed from God. Even in the records of patriarchal history it is the narrator's aim to show that unbelief is the root of sin. It is from this point of view that idolatry presents itself to the successive teachers of Israel as the worst form of sin, because the most complete departure from God.

In dealing with the subject before us we must be on our guard against the fallacy, into which criticism often falls, of "measuring the average man by the leaders of thought." The moral standard of the Book of Judges is, to all appearance,

[1] Hastings' "Dictionary of the Bible" (Ethics), i., p. 783.

unquestionably low; but it is not to be concluded that that Book represents the highest ethical knowledge and conduct of the period it deals with. Indeed, the contemporary Book of Ruth gives a very different conception of social morality existing side by side with that depicted by the writer of Judges; and no greater surprise need be felt at the picture that has come down to us of Hebrew life in the days of Jephthah and Samson than at the morality, public and private alike, of the Middle Ages, or the ethical standard of Highland Chiefs at a much later date. When we come to the prophetical writings, nothing is more obvious than that the prophets are recalling the people from ways they know, or ought to know, to be wrong. Their teaching was always too spiritual for the masses. It has been said that Jesus Himself could add nothing to the words of Micah, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Yet the picture that Micah draws of his social surroundings is one of the saddest in the Old Testament.

At the same time, it is impossible, in reading the Bible, to miss the principle of development in moral perception, and, consequently, of character. The standard and ideal of one age are not those of another. The morality of the Decalogue is higher than that of the patriarch, that of the prophet higher than that of the Decalogue. Every part of the Old Testament, but the prophetical books in particular, teaches us that "human history is a moral process," and we only have to call to mind the ideals of the prophets to see the forward movement that was to find its consummation in the teaching of the New Testament. Polygamy, for example, was not forbidden by the Mosaic law, but the principle of monogamy is exalted, and inculcated by the frequent employment of the conjugal relation to represent Jehovah's union with His people; and thus was the way prepared for the New Testament to make polygamy an impossibility in the normal life of Christian communities. War—war, moreover, with all the savage accompaniments of pre-Christian times, is never forbidden, often encouraged by

the prophets; yet the prophetic ideal is not only national but international peace. The *lex talionis* stood written in the Law till the time of our Lord, and was doubtless defended by those who sacrificed the spirit to the letter; but from the later portions of the Old Testament, especially from the Book of Proverbs, we should infer that a kindlier view of life came, in course of time, to prevail. Imprecatory psalms may retain their place in the Hebrew book of devotion, but more and more clearly, as time went on, was the note of mercy sounded and the horizon of charity extended. The avenger of blood could claim support from the law-books of Israel[1]; but as the national life became more settled and civilized, the exercise of this right gradually fell into desuetude, and, by the middle period of the monarchy, all cases of bloodshed were referred to a court of justice.[2] To give one more illustration of this onward march of thought—although the rewards of obedience were, throughout the Jewish dispensation, regarded as of the earth, earthy—there is a growing tendency on the part of the prophets to lift the mind of their age to the spiritual and transcendental.

II.

The upward, progressive moral movement, of which we have before spoken, is the unique characteristic of the religion of Israel. By Divine impulse, direction, constraint, Israel trod a path of moral growth, which, explain it as we may, was not opened to other nations. Alone of the several branches of the Semitic race, they believed in a righteous God, a God opposed to sin, a Lord good and upright, and who will therefore teach sinners in the way (Ps. xxv. 8), a God whose purpose is educational and redemptive. In the religion of the Israelite there was a sense of sin and guilt to which their heathen

[1] It must be remembered that the harshness of this custom in Israel, as compared with other nations, was from the first greatly mitigated by the distinction drawn between accidental and wilful homicide (Exod. xxi. 13, 14), and by the provision of cities of refuge (Deut. xix. 1 *et seq.*).

[2] See 2 Chron. xix. 10. Many critics would dispute the historical value of this statement; but at least it is clear that in the chroniclers' time the practice of blood revenge had become illegal.

kinsmen were strangers. "The people" (*i.e.*, the heathen Semites), says Professor Robertson Smith, "were satisfied with their god, and it was taken for granted that, under ordinary circumstances, their god was satisfied with them. There was no aiming at an unattained ideal of righteousness."[1] We should look in vain in the annals of any other part of the East for such an episode as the historian records in 2 Sam. xii. 1 *et seq.* David's sin was Oriental, its sequel uniquely Jewish. Up to the appearance of the prophet upon the scene, says Dean Stanley, "the story belongs to the usual crimes of an Oriental despot. Detestable as was the double guilt of this dark story, we must remember that David was not an Alfred or a St. Louis. He was an Eastern King, exposed to all the temptations of a King of Ammon or Damascus then, of a Sultan of Bagdad or Constantinople in modern times. What follows, however, could have been found nowhere in the ancient world but in the Jewish monarchy."[2]

Coming to the prophets of the exile we find an attitude to religious truth which is not only much in advance of previous teaching, but also an indispensable step in the direction of New Testament ethic. It was the individualism of Jeremiah and Ezekiel that opened the way and prepared the ground for the work of Christ and His apostles. It is easy to exaggerate the lack of individualism in the religious life of a remote antiquity, to make so much of the solidarity of life as almost to exclude the personal element. Even if we could accept the view of those who allow no historical value to the patriarchal narratives and little to those of early Israel, we are, nevertheless, brought in those records into contact with a literature earlier than the exile by some centuries; and it is impossible not to see a strongly individualistic and personal element in the religious character of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, and many others whose portraits are given in the earlier parts of the Old Testament. Moreover, although it is quite probable, if not

[1] "Religion of the Semites," p. 237.
[2] "Lectures on the Jewish Church," 2nd series, p. 108.

certain, that the more introspective Psalms are post-exilic, it is by no means necessary to assign so late a date to all those portions of the Psalter which express the sentiments of a deeply personal religion.

It is, however, beyond dispute that the later prophets inaugurated a new era in the spiritual life of the Jew. National calamities rapidly succeeding one another had predisposed the Jewish mind to a less collective and therefore more personal view of Jehovah's relation to His people. The violent interruption which the Captivity caused to national life had shattered the conviction of security under the protection of Jehovah. And out of disappointment and disaster religion came forth purified and intensified. With Jeremiah the relation of man's soul to God becomes much more personal than with earlier prophets. The actual bringing in of the New Covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31 *et seq.*) may, to his mind, have been much nearer than in fact it proved to be; but the description that he gives of that covenant reveals his inmost thoughts in regard to religion, and shows that his ideal was personal and individualistic; "I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (verse 33). Ezekiel, Jeremiah's contemporary, strikes the same note, but goes far beyond Jeremiah in the expression he gives to individualism (xviii. 1 *et seq.*); nor does he hesitate to modify the teaching of the Decalogue in his reiterated declaration that the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, thus affording a conspicuous illustration of that law of development which underlay and determined the moral history of the race.[1]

Such teaching as theirs, it needs scarcely be urged, placed

[1] "The emancipation of the individual soul, whether from a doom inherited from a former generation or from one entailed on it by its own evil past was, perhaps, the greatest contribution made by Ezekiel to the religious life and thought of his time. He probably reached his individualism by reflection on such events as the downfall of the state, leaving now no place for religion except in the individual mind, and on the sentiments which he heard expressed by men around him. His contemporary, Jeremiah, reached the same truth from another direction, from his own experience of the *inwardness* of the relation of God to men. The very nature of this relation required that the religious subject should be the individual mind."—A. B. Davidson, "Book of the Prophet Ezekiel," Cambridge Series, Introduction, p. li.

sin in a truer light than that of earlier times. The solidarity of Israel was not lost sight of by the later prophets; far from it. They point forward persistently to a Redeemer of the nation rather than of the individual; but the individual rather than the nation is the unit with which they deal, and to which they address their teaching. The individual is responsible before God for his own conduct; no one is involved in another's guilt; the guilt of sin is before all things personal; it is the sinner whom God calls to repentance; it is through the individual that He henceforth deals with the nation (Ezek. xviii. 27, 32).

When we pass from the Old to the New Testament we are, from the first, in the presence of a perfect moral and spiritual standard as exhibited in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Sin had obscured, but not destroyed, the moral vision of man; and when a perfect ethical standard presented itself the world was not slow to recognize the true ideal and goal of humanity. That which is perfect had come, and in the light of perfection, imperfection was seen and realized as it never had been before; sin was felt to be more exceeding sinful than the law had ever made it, for man has always formed his ideas of moral evil by the principle of comparison and contrast. What Christ's coming did was to substitute an absolute for a relative standard. The relative had waxed old and was ready to vanish away. "In a world where all develops the true nature of each thing is to be seen, not in the germ it starts from, nor even in the successive, intermediate stages of its progress, but in the perfection of the final end."[1] The *perfection of the final end* had appeared in Christ. The prophetic teaching, in progressively revealing the moral attributes of God, had made increasingly clear the distinction between good and evil, and laid bare the true nature of sin, as the contradiction of an all-holy Will. But here, in the person of Christ, were those moral attributes manifested without a flaw in a sinless human life.

Nor, I would point out in passing, is there anything inconsistent with the principle of evolution, as expressed in the history

[1] Illingworth.

of the past, in this sudden appearance of a perfect type of humanity. That there was a prodigious leap in the world of moral and spiritual experience in the person of Jesus Christ will be denied by few even of those who would dispute the objective reality of that spiritual world which was so intensely real to Christ. Doubtless, like others, I bring presuppositions to the consideration of the subject, but nothing appears more certain to my mind than that our Lord's humanity was not the natural, evolutionary product of His age. Here, however, there is no inconsistency with the general principle of evolution, any more than there is in the transition from inorganic to organic, from unconscious to sentient life, from sentient to self-conscious life. There have been critical and formative moments in the history of our planet of which naturalism can give no account, and the greatest of these epochs, in the judgment of the Christian, is that of the coming of Christ.

To return to our main subject, we see from the Acts and the Epistles that the Church, from the first, took Christ Himself as its object-lesson. "As ye have received Christ, so walk in Him." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "Even Christ pleased not Himself." "Leaving us an example, that we should follow His steps." Thus was met the general, if not universal, need of man. "The vast majority of men are utterly unable to understand an argument; all can appreciate a character."[1] It was on this principle, consciously or unconsciously, that the first disciples acted. Although practical precepts for the direction of life, both individual and collective, abound in the New Testament, there is no carefully reasoned and formulated code of ethics, no philosophy of life; but Christ had lived; the cherished memories of His life are the Christian's rule of living—his vade-mecum that can be applied to every circumstance, to every experience.

And, as we stand in the presence of Jesus Christ, we are aware of something more than a vast stride in the growth of knowledge—knowledge, that is, of good and evil, truth and falsehood. It is a new departure. It is not merely a perfect

[1] W. S. Lilly, "On Shibboleths," p. 44.

example of the highest existing ideal of goodness that we see. Our Blessed Lord, both by His teaching and example, introduced into the world a new type of excellence. It is quite true that the best representatives of Judaism approximated in life and spirit to the New Testament standard. In the heart-religion—the expectancy, the unworldliness, of Mary, Simeon, Nathanael, and many another—there was, when our Lord came, a seed-plot for Christianity; but mixed with these higher elements was much of the legal spirit which had been strengthening its hold upon the Jew ever since the return from Babylon; so that the typical Jew of New Testament times, especially in Palestine itself, was above and beyond everything else a legalist. His conception of righteousness was obedience to specified directions and commands. The more commandments he could obey, the greater his righteousness. "Why did God give so many commandments?" is one of the questions asked in the Talmud; "That He might multiply Israel's merits," is the reply. No wonder, then, that tradition multiplied the commandments until thirty chapters of the Mishna were filled with directions concerning the use and purification of vessels. The superficiality, the externalism of the righteousness which Christ rebuked and repudiated is forcibly illustrated in the ready, self-complacent reply of the rich young ruler, who came running to Jesus with the question, "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" "If thou wouldest enter into life, keep the commandments." "All these things," returns the ruler, "have I observed; what lack I yet?" (Matt. xix. 17 *et seq.*). *All these things have I observed;* yes, and many more. The same characteristic temper, only in a far more offensive form, is exemplified in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

At the same time, although our Lord rejected the Pharisaic conception of righteousness as worse than inadequate, and by a single sentence repealed the Levitical regulation as to "clean" and "unclean" in respect of food (Mark vii. 18, 19, R.V.), He did not break with the past. It was not a beginning *de novo;* it was rather a notable and decisive new departure in the history

of development; final, indeed, in one sense, because it brought to the world a sinless life, and therefore a perfect model for all time; not final, but progressive, in another sense, because a growing conformity to that model was thenceforth to be the end and aim of human history on its spiritual side. "It is difficult to see how the Christian morality can ever be brought into antagonism with the moral progress of mankind; or how the Christian type of character can ever be left behind by the course of human development, lose the allegiance of the moral world, or give place to a newly emerging and higher ideal. This type, it would appear, being perfect, will be final. It will be final, not as precluding future history, but as comprehending it. The moral efforts of all ages, to the consummation of the world, will be efforts to realize this character and to make it actually, as it is potentially, universal."[1]

There was, then, no break with the past; Christ came "not to destroy, but to fulfil"; there was much, indeed, that was new, much, on the other hand, that was old; so that "every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old" (Matt. xiii. 52).

It is with the new that we are now concerned. The Sermon on the Mount occupies a relation to the kingdom of Christ similar to that which the Sinaitic law held to the Old Covenant. And in reading this sermon we are at once aware of a profound difference between the spirit of the old dispensation and that of the new. The sermon opens with the Beatitudes which "describe what a man is in the secret springs of his motives and dispositions." As we listen to the voice of Christ in these epoch-making words, we do not wonder at His declaration that the righteousness of His kingdom must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. At whatever period of our Lord's ministry the various parts of the sermon may have been spoken, they form, as they stand in the Gospel, an introduction to His teaching; and we are made at once, at the outset, aware of the advance that is

[1] Goldwin Smith, quoted from a lecture by Bishop Westcott in "Historic Faith," p. 231.

made upon the Old Testament conception of righteousness and of character. The rightness or otherwise of conduct is made to depend upon thought and motive; it is no longer the outward act alone that breaks the Divine law, but the wrong desire, the indulged inclination towards evil. It is in this spirit that our Lord deals with the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, together with the law of perjury. At the same time He enjoins, in striking contrast with the past, love to enemy as well as friend. Love, universal love, is to be the root of conduct; and St. Paul takes his stand on the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount when he says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Such, in a sentence, is New Testament ethic. God is love; man made in the image of God must be like Him; "Ye shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect"—"Sons of your Father which is in heaven; for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust" (Matt. v. 45, 48). And it was no mere sentimental love that Christianity planted in the world; it was a love that made men brave to act, brave to suffer, brave to serve. It was this love that evangelized the world; a love that realized the brotherhood of man through the revelation of the Fatherhood of God.

It is this principle of universal love revealed in Christ that accounts for the conspicuous contrast between the motives which characterize the two Testaments. Self-interest is taken for granted in the one; it is forbidden in the other. When we turn from the Book of Deuteronomy or Proverbs to the Sermon on the Mount or the twelfth chapter of Romans, we are breathing a different atmosphere, we have risen to a far higher plane of religious thought and experience. You could not transfer the promises of temporal reward for righteous living which abound in the Old Testament to any part of the New without rousing a sense not merely of incongruity, but of contradiction. The assurance of worldly prosperity was a trusty weapon in the hand of the Old Testament moralist; it has no place in the kingdom of Christ. Love from the New Testament point of view is its own reward. In passing from Old Testament to New we pass from carnal to spiritual.

Nor, in conclusion, must we forget that the ethic of the primitive Church, as reflected in the Acts and the Epistles, is inseparably bound up with faith in Christ, as the Divine Redeemer. The believing Christian's relation to the world was the corollary of his relation to Christ. To reproduce the mind which was in Christ Jesus was the aim, the ambition, of each member of the Church; but this only through union with the living Head of the Church. "By the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 10), "Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). So St. Paul described himself; so would he have described every true brother and sister in Christ. It was an ever-living, an ever-present, an essentially Divine Christ that he realized in his own experience and preached to others.

It has been already pointed out that the Sermon on the Mount holds something of the same relation to the Christian covenant as the Sinaitic law to the Jewish. We may go a step farther, and say that to Christ Himself is assigned in Apostolic thought a position, an authority, not inferior to that of Jehovah in the Old Testament. This was but to carry on the teaching of our Lord Himself, as recorded in the Gospels. It is His own kingdom that He proclaims, His own Church that He founds and builds, His own servants that He sends forth, His own presence and power that equip them for their work. And as the rejection of Jehovah is, from the prophetic standpoint, the root of sin and failure, so the rejection of Christ is regarded in the New Testament as the cause of all that contradicts and opposes the will of God. "He must reign till He hath put all His enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. iv. 13). Such was the vision that inspired the evangelistic labours of St. Paul; for he knew that when Christ has drawn all men to Himself and made them like Himself, then indeed will the kingdom of God be come, because His will will then be done upon earth as it is done in heaven.