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**SIN AS A PROBLEM OF
TO-DAY**

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SIN AS A PROBLEM OF TO-DAY

By

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“La foi chrétienne ne va principalement qu'à établir ces deux choses: la corruption de la nature et la rédemption de Jésus Christ.”—*Pascal*.

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Preface

THE scope of this book is sufficiently explained in its opening chapter. The doctrinal ideas are the same as in those parts of the author's previous works where the subject of sin is treated of, but they are here followed out on a distinct plan in relation to more recent literature and the living issues in contemporary philosophical and scientific thought. Theological discussion is as far as possible avoided: only so much being said on the several topics as suffices to set forth the Christian position for the purpose immediately in hand. Reference in such cases is frequently made to books—the author's and others—in which the subjects thus briefly touched on are more fully considered. The conviction which pervades the volume is that

expressed by Julius Müller in the Preface to his own learned work on the subject—"That everything in Christianity is connected more or less directly with the great facts of Sin and Redemption, and that the plan of Redemption, which is the essence of Christianity, cannot be rightly understood until the doctrine of Sin be adequately recognised and established. Here, certainly, if anywhere, Christian theology must fight *pro aris et focis*."

JAMES ORR.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM . . .	1

CHAPTER II	
SIN AS MORAL TRANSGRESSION—THE PRIMARY CERTAINTIES	29

CHAPTER III	
SIN AND THE DIVINE HOLINESS—THE MORAL END	62

CHAPTER IV	
SIN IN ITS PRINCIPLE AND DEVELOPMENT . . .	97

CHAPTER V	
SIN AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY—THE ISSUES	129

CHAPTER VI

SIN AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY—THE ORIGINS .	163
---	-----

CHAPTER VII

SIN AND HEREDITY—THE RACIAL ASPECT .	195
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER VIII

SIN ORIGINAL AND ACTUAL—THE DEPRAVED STATE	224
---	-----

CHAPTER IX

SIN AS GUILT—THE DIVINE JUDGMENT . . .	252
--	-----

CHAPTER X

SIN AND THE DIVINE REMEDY—ETERNAL ISSUES AND THEODICY	283
--	-----

CHAPTER I

NATURE AND MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

WHAT we name sin is, from the religious point of view, the tragedy of God's universe. What it is, how it came, why it is permitted to develop itself into the havoc and ruin it surely entails, what is to be the end of it, above all, how its presence and working are to be reconciled with goodness, holiness, love, in the God who has permitted it—these are the crushing questions that press upon the spirit of every one who thinks deeply on the subject. In its very conception sin is that which *ought not to be*; which ought never to have been. How, then, or why, is it here, this awful, glaring, deadly, omnipresent reality in human history and experience?

For sin *is* here: this conscience and universal experience attest. The evidences of its presence are not slight or intermittent. Men may belittle it, try to forget it, treat it

as a superstition or disease of imagination—there are, as we shall see, no lack of such attempts in the thinking of to-day—but the grim reality asserts itself in the dullest consciousness, and compels acknowledgment of its existence and hateful power. Drug conscience as deeply as one may, a time comes when it awakes. Turn in what direction one will, sin confronts one as a fact in human life—an experience of the heart, a development in history, a crimson thread in literature, a problem for science, an enigma for philosophy.

Sin—moral evil—is but a section of the larger problem of evil generally in the universe. But it is the hardest part of it. The strain of suffering and death in the natural system, the physical ills attendant on sentient life, are difficult enough facts to explain, and one knows the use to which they are often put as arguments against the wisdom, benevolence, and omnipotence of the Creative Power.¹ Theodicy cannot leave these facts

¹ J. S. Mill's indictment of Nature in his *Three Essays on Religion* (pp. 28 ff.), and the theological consequences he draws from it, are familiar. Hume had already said nearly all that is to be said on the subject in his *Dialogues on Natural Religion* (x.-xi.). As a modern specimen,

out of account, and is not at liberty to minimise them. One stands appalled, sometimes, at the terrific and seemingly indiscriminate way in which Nature hurls about destruction in the earthquake, the tornado, the avalanche, the flood, the thunderstorm.¹ Physical suffering, however, is, after all, only a relative evil, save as moral considerations are connected with it; whereas moral evil, as Kant would say, falls under the unconditional "ought not" of the imperative of duty. The connexion also of physical evil with moral evil in the sphere of humanity is often very close—closer than is always realised. Eliminate from the sum of human suffering in time all that is due to the play of forces that are morally evil—to the follies, the vices, the inhumanities, the oppressions and cruelties of men themselves—and the problem of natural evil becomes reduced to very moderate dimensions. One has only to cast the mind abroad, and think of such facts

see St. George Stock's essay on "The Problem of Evil," in the *Hibbert Journal*, vol. ii. pp. 767 ff.

¹ An interesting account of the celebrated controversy of Voltaire and Rousseau on the Lisbon earthquake, which is typical here, may be seen in Appendix V. to Janet's *Final Causes* (E.T.).

as the horrors of the slave-trade, the devastations and brutalities of wars, of Congo atrocities, of barbarian feuds and savage immolations, of the misgovernment and oppression under which millions of the race groan, of Armenian massacres, of the connexion of poverty and distress among ourselves with drunkenness and vice, of economic evils, as "sweating," due to selfish greed of gain, to feel the force of this consideration. Cure moral evil—sin—and the root of most of the evils that afflict society will be removed; the problems that remain will prove comparatively easy of solution.

This deep-seated presence and baleful operation of moral evil in the world, prolific of such untold mental and physical anguish, has pressed as a frightful burden on the minds of men in all ages, and has given rise to every sort of theory and effort—to great world-systems in thought and elaborate penitential and propitiatory devices in religion—for its explanation and alleviation. What an array of speculations and of methods for obtaining deliverance and peace, arising from this cause, has the world witnessed—witnesses still! Who shall recount them—dualisms, Gnosti-

cisms, asceticisms, Manichæisms, pessimisms ? As instances in religion it may be sufficient to name the Persian Zoroastrianism, and Indian Brahmanism and Buddhism. The Jewish and Christian religions are penetrated by the sense of sin in a way that no other religion is, or can be ; of this we shall speak after. Sin, therefore, is a terrible fact, the reality, seriousness, and universality of which cannot reasonably be gainsaid.¹ It is possible to exaggerate the aspects of natural suffering, as, in the opinion of many modern evolutionists, is done in the over-emphasising of the keenness of "the struggle for existence" in the organic world (the "Nature red in tooth and claw" view of things) ;² but it is, in soberness, hardly possible to exaggerate

¹ Professor J. H. Muirhead, writing from a different standpoint, says in a discussion on the subject : "There can be no question of the reality and significance in human life of the sense of sin. Controversy can only be concerned with the manner of interpreting the relation in which sin places us to the Father of our spirits, and of the nature of the process of reconciliation" (*Hibbert Journal*, iii. p. 32).

² Cf. R. Otto, *Naturalism and Religion* (E.T.), pp. 183-4. There is sound sense in Paley's remark : "It is a happy world after all. The air, the earth, the waters, teem with delighted existence" (*Nat. Theol.*, chap. xxvi.). Cf. also Dr. H. Stirling's *Darwinianism*, pp. 205 ff.

the persistence, the gravity, the depraving and destroying power of this evil thing we call sin.

It is a gain in studying any subject when one is able, as here, to start from a basis of assured fact. Jesus, in meeting the questionings of Nicodemus, expressed surprise that a Jewish teacher should be ignorant of those things of which He spoke. "Verily, verily," He responded, "I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you heavenly things?"¹ In dwelling on the need of regeneration by the Spirit as the condition of seeing, or entering into, the Kingdom of God, Jesus had been speaking of things the evidence of which lay within and all around His hearer ("earthly things"). If these were not understood or credited, how could Nicodemus understand or believe when He spoke of matters relating to His own mission, and to God's purpose of love in man's salvation ("heavenly things")? It is because sin is an "earthly thing" in the sense of being evidenced and

¹ John iii. 11, 12.

verified in human experience, that we have a sure $\pi\omicron\upsilon\ \sigma\tau\hat{\omega}$ in dealing with the thoughts of the day about it.

What sin is in Christianity will become clearer as the discussion advances. It is enough at this point to observe that it is connected with two ideas, without the right apprehension of which it cannot be properly conceived. The one is the idea of the *Divine Holiness*; the other is the idea of *Moral Law*. To these may perhaps be added a third—the idea of the *Moral End*, of the Chief Good, identified, as Ritschl rightly held,¹ with the Kingdom of God. Transgression of moral law alone does not give the full idea of sin in the Christian sense; even as the moral law itself, in Christianity, cannot be severed from the idea of the holy God, whose law it is, and whose character is expressed in it. Sin, in other words, is not simply a *moral*, but is peculiarly a *religious* conception.² Sin is transgression *against God*; the substitution of the creature will for the will of the Creator; revolt of the creature will from God. It is this relation to God which gives the wrong act

¹ *Justif. and Recon.*, iii. (E.T.), pp. 35, 329 ff.

² Ritschl, *ut supra*, p. 27.

its distinctive character as *sin* (cf. Ps. li. 4). It is, therefore, only in the light of God's character as holy—perfected, in Christ's teaching in the aspect of Fatherly love,—and of God's end for man, that the evil quality and full enormity of sinful acts can be clearly seen. Hence the impossibility of so much as discussing the Christian teaching about sin without reference to the divine holiness, and to man's relation to this. Hence also the vital importance, as Christ's words to Nicodemus suggest, and as will afterwards be seen, of just conceptions of sin for the right understanding of the higher Christian doctrines. It is in inadequate and mistaken views of sin that the root of so much misapprehension of these doctrines lies.

I

This leads now to the fact which it is a main object of this series of studies to take account of, viz., that in a large part of the thought of our time there is *a wide, often a complete departure* from these presuppositions of the Christian doctrine of sin, with, as the result, a serious alteration—a weakening down, sometimes almost an obliteration—of the idea of sin itself. There is need, indeed, for guarding

here against exaggeration, and also for reminding ourselves that this defection from Christian ideas is not, as some would seem to imagine, a peculiar product of the twentieth century, but is a phenomenon constantly reappearing, with altered intellectual and moral conditions, in the course of the ages. There are tens of thousands to-day in all the Churches, many of them as intelligent and well educated as others, to whom sin is as serious and vital a fact as ever it was; who are not deluded into underestimating it by the "winds of doctrine" which blow on them from so many different quarters, but who go on their way, and do their Christian work, with ever-growing assurance of the truth of the Gospel on which their faith reposes. It suits the objector largely to ignore this class; he is too busy digging the grave of Christianity, and looking about for a substitute for it, to notice their existence.¹ But they are there, the

¹ One is reminded sometimes in reading articles of this class of Professor Huxley's caustic comments on Mr. Harrison's advocacy of Positivism: "There is a story often repeated, and I am afraid none the less mythical on that account, of a valiant and loud-voiced corporal, in command of two full privates, who, falling in with a regiment of the enemy in the dark, orders it to surrender under pain of instant annihilation by his

force behind most of the earnest, self-denying, religious and philanthropic work done in the land, and they have too fixed an experimental ground for their conviction to be readily moved away from it. As regards the past, there has ever been plenty of denial and perversion of the Christian idea of sin—in early Gnosticism, at the Renaissance, in the Deism and Rationalism of the eighteenth century, whenever there has been a decay of religious life, with marked change in mental and social conditions. It is hardly necessary to recall Bishop Butler's often-quoted words in the "Advertisement" to his *Analogy* on the prevalence of unbelief in his age; but a sentence of David Hume's in one of his Essays may show that it was not reserved for the iconoclasts of our own time to trumpet the downfall of Christianity. "Most people in this island," writes the philosopher, "have

forces; and the enemy surrenders accordingly. I am always reminded of this tale when I read the Positivist commands to the forces of Christianity and of science; only the enemy shows no more signs of intending to obey now than they have done any time these forty years" ("Agnosticism," in *Nineteenth Century*, Feb., 1880). We would not, however, as seen below, minimise the very formidable character of the attack, from various sides, on Christianity.

divested themselves of all superstitious reverence to names and authority; the clergy have lost much of their credit, their pretensions and doctrines have been ridiculed, and even religion can scarcely support itself in the world.”¹ Yet a mighty spiritual movement, with the sense of sin in the heart of it, soon came, as had happened before at the Reformation, and has happened frequently in the history of the Church since, to change the omens, and render the description of the prince of sceptics obsolete.

Nevertheless, it cannot be questioned that, for the present, a large, meanwhile perhaps a growing, section of our modern thinking has definitely broken with the presuppositions of the Christian teaching on sin; and that in the *spirit* of the time, as reflected in current speech, books, and discussions, there is a notable and unfavourable change in the manner of the consideration and the treatment of the fact of sin itself. What are the peculiarities of this changed temper of the times, what forces have contributed to its production, and how should Christianity relate itself to it?

¹ *Works* (1854), iii. p. 51.

II

A particular *diagnosis* is not easy. It is becoming common to hear it said that the world no longer troubles itself about sin, and there is a truth in the statement, though it is not one to rejoice over. A good deal of this apparent change, possibly, is more on the surface than in reality. It may spring from new modes of thought and altered ways of expression, rather than from a really weakened sense of the evil of wrong-doing. Something may also be set down to love of smart phrases and paradoxes—to rhetorical flippancies and clevernesses, which are not to be taken *au pied de la lettre*. No earnest mind, one would hope, can really be insensible to the gravity in a moral system of deliberate transgression. If Sir Oliver Lodge, a serious thinker, jars on us by saying: “As a matter of fact, the higher man of to-day is not worrying about his sins at all, still less about their punishment; his mission, if he is good for anything, is to be up and doing”¹; this has to be taken with what he says elsewhere of “Divine wrath as a real and terrible thing” against “blatant” sins: “I am sure

¹ *Man and the Universe*, pp. 220, 239.

what may without irreverence be humanly spoken of as fierce Wrath against sin, and even against a certain class of sinner, is a Divine attribute.”¹ If Mr. R. J. Campbell makes merry over the absurd notions of “ordinary Church-going people,” who actually think of God as “stationed somewhere above and beyond the universe, watching and worrying over other and lesser finite beings—to wit ourselves. . . . This God is greatly bothered and thwarted by what men have been doing during the few millenniums of human existence. . . . He takes the whole thing very seriously,”² he must pardon those who charge him with inexcusable levity in dealing with so grave a subject, but he would

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 249-52. In explanation: “When we are speaking of the sin against which God’s anger blazes, we do not mean the sins of failure, the burden of remorse, etc. . . . There are many grades of sin; and any one may know the kind of sin which excites the anger of God by bethinking himself of the kind which arouses his own best and most righteous anger. . . . The fierce indignation that would blaze out if one were maliciously to torture a child or an animal in view of an ordinary man or woman, would surely be a spark of the Divine wrath; and we have been told that a millstone round the neck of a child-abuser is too light a penalty” (pp. 13, 14).

² *The New Theology*, p. 18; cf. pp. 52-3. Mr. Campbell has no room for the “wrath” which Sir Oliver Lodge is willing to recognise.

resent the imputation that he thinks more lightly than others of selfishness, ingratitude, or crime. If there is here and there the open denial of sin, attempts to explain it away, wilful revolt against the restraints on individual liberty which the opposite doctrine imposes, it is to be granted that far oftener one meets with serious attempts—inadequate enough, perhaps—to understand this condition of vice and misery in humanity, and trace it to its causes—to explain it, to work out a solution of it. This effort confronts us in all directions—in science, in psychology, in philosophy, in literature, in sociology—and if the theories which are its results are not always Christian, are often violently antipathetic to Christianity, they are yet evidences of how profoundly the problem exercises the mind of the age.

Two leading tendencies, in fact, will, it is believed, make themselves apparent to every careful observer of the time on this subject of sin. There is the tendency already noticed to *weaken down* the idea and sense of sin, to belittle it, to get rid of the elements of fear in connexion with it, to assert liberty, and throw down the restraints by which moral

conduct has hitherto been guarded. This tendency finds plenty of soil to work on in the secularism, and moral and religious indifferentism of the time, as well as in the natural desire of the sinful mind for unrestricted freedom in choosing its own paths. But alongside of this, in singular contrast with it, is to be traced, often in the most unlooked-for quarters, the other tendency—a *deepened sense* of sin, a feeling, even if it be in the temper of rebellion, of sin's awfulness, of its tragedy, of its irresistible seductiveness, its deceitfulness, its certain disillusionments ("apples of Sodom"), of the relentless Nemesis which dogs it, the hell of remorse it brings to its victims—the bitter desire and craving, too, for *atonement* which awakens, often, when it is too late.

Which of these two tendencies is the stronger, or which is more likely for the time to prevail, it is difficult, in the existing readiness to break down existing sanctions, to predict; but, despite superficial appearances to the contrary, one would like to believe it is the latter. There can be no question, at any rate, as to which is the *deeper*, and which it is one's duty to ally oneself with

to the utmost. The novel, the drama, poetry, as well as more serious literature, may be appealed to in proof that the tendency is there, and powerfully operative,¹ and there are many indications of a more general kind. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that, with all its weaknesses and follies, there never has been an age with conscience more sensitive to social wrongs—more sympathetic with the downtrodden, the helpless, the oppressed, more indignant at wanton cruelty, more bent on redress of injustice, more insistent in its demand for equity—than our own. If this spirit is sometimes found divorced from avowed religion, it may fairly be claimed that it is not to be divorced from Christianity. It is not simply that Christianity is in affinity with it, but, traced to its deepest springs, it may be discovered that Christianity—the teaching and ideals of Jesus—are the source of it. Unconscious evidence is constantly afforded that Christ's spirit has passed into the age, and is operative, frequently, where Christianity would not be acknowledged. When Mr. Blatchford, for instance, in his book,

¹ Illustrations will come later.

God and My Neighbour, assails Christianity, what is the ground on which he proceeds? Chiefly, strange as it may seem, the ground that Christian society fails to realise the ideals of its Master. "This is a Christian country. What would Christ think of Park Lane, and the slums, and the hooligans? What would He think of the Stock Exchange, and the Music Hall, and the race-course? What would He think of our national ideals? . . . Pausing again over Exeter Hall, I mentally apostrophise the Christian British people. 'Ladies and gentlemen,' I say, 'you are Christian in name, but I discern little of Christ in your ideals, your institutions, or your daily lives' . . . If to praise Christ in words, and deny Him in deeds, be Christianity, then London is a Christian city, and England is a Christian nation. For it is very evident that our common English ideals are anti-Christian," etc.¹

¹ From Preface. The book is full of such passages. E.g., "Is Christianity the rule of life in America and Europe? Are the masses of people who accept it, peaceful, virtuous, chaste, spiritually-minded, prosperous, happy? Are their national laws based upon its ethics? Are their international politics guided by the Sermon on the Mount?" etc. (p. 166, Pop. Edit.). This is a strange basis for the conclusion: "This is not a humane

What does all this mean, one asks, if not that it is the sin of Christendom that it is *not* obeying the precepts of Christ its Master who is still held up as the Ideal to be obeyed? A stranger indictment against a religion surely never was penned!

All this being allowed for, the fact is still to be recognised that a very considerable part of the thought of the age, in its estimate of sin, as in other respects, has moved away from Christianity—not simply from Christianity as we have been accustomed to conceive of it, but from Christianity in its most essential ideas and declarations, as these are historically preserved to us. Men may, of course, if they will, extract from the teaching of Jesus, or the Creeds of the Church, some residuum which they are pleased to baptize with the name “Christianity.” But this is not the Christianity of the Gospels and Epistles; not Christianity as the world has ever known it. It is a residuum which tends constantly to become less—smaller in amount and vaguer in form.¹ But even and civilised nation, and never will be while it accepts Christianity as its religion” (p. 197).

¹ As one example from a reverent thinker, E. Boutroux, in his interesting work, *Science and Religion in*

the residuum, in many circles, is being parted with, and the confession of Strauss in his *Old and New Faith*, as far back as 1872, is freely endorsed: We are no longer Christians. Sin, as Christianity has understood it, the wrath of God against sin, are bugbears of which the world is to be happily rid.

III

The separate *causes* which have led to this altered trend of thought in the age are too numerous and complex to be here more than briefly alluded to. Some go far back, and are related to causes still more remote. The whole must await more special investigation.

One general cause may be said to lie in the spirit of *emancipation* from all external authority which Hume spoke of in his day, and which now is widely prevalent. Some boast of this as the legitimate outcome of the Protestant principle of the right of private judgment. Genuine Protestantism, however, in substituting for the authority of man in the priesthood the authority of God speak-

Contemporary Philosophy, finds the essence of religion, as of Christianity, in the two truths—the existence of a living, perfect, almighty God, and the living communion of God with man (E.T., pp. 391-4).

ing in His word of truth and salvation, did not construe its principle as the renunciation of *all* authority; and earnest minds, whether the seat of authority be placed without or within, will never assent to mere subjectivity in opinion, but will apply themselves to the search for objective standards of judgment. The sense of emancipation, none the less, is sweet to many, and they revel in knocking about established beliefs and institutions, simply to prove their superiority to their neighbours.¹ One thinks of the Sophists of ancient Greece whom Socrates had to deal with, and of the so-called "Illumination" (*Aufklärung*) of the eighteenth century, whose superficialities of thought and complacent optimism it fell to Kant and his successors to put an end to. The diffusion and popularisation of knowledge, leading to the spreading of the mind over a great variety of objects—hence to diffusion rather than to concentration—foster the development of a new *Aufklärung*.

The deeper and real causes of the change,

¹ The thoughtful section on "The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Humanity—Redemption and Emancipation," in Martensen's *Christian Ethics* (pp. 191 ff.), is full of suggestion for our age.

however, are to be traced to *more important* influences. Among these are specially to be reckoned the bold and independent course taken by philosophic thought during the last century—its roots go back as far as thought itself—the profoundly changed conception of the universe, and of man's place in it, as the result of the advances of the physical sciences, specially of the entrance of the idea of evolution, the enlarged knowledge of other (including ancient) peoples and their faiths, and the comparative study of religions, the development and application of the methods of a rigorous historical criticism. One can hardly wonder if the effect of the co-working of these, and numerous related factors—especially at a time when material ideals tend to eclipse spiritual—has been, on the one hand, to undermine, or profoundly modify, older beliefs in God, man, the world, sin, human progress and destiny; and, on the other, to create an attitude of mind unfavourable to the reception of any system of beliefs which involves supernatural elements, as the Christian system, fairly interpreted, unquestionably does.

That this, in any case, has been the *result* of the new influences few will be disposed to dispute. And at no point is the change more apparent than in the treatment of the idea of sin. On the theological side, the immanence of God is being pushed to an extreme (where God is not resolved into the monistic Unknowable Power) which merges God's life in the life of the developing universe, and of necessity takes up sin as a strain into that life. On the scientific side, evolution is applied to show man's rise by slow gradation from the animal, to disprove the idea of a "fall," and to establish an "ascent," through perhaps half a million of years, from semi-brutishness, savagery, and prolonged barbarism, to his present happier intellectual and moral condition.¹ Sin becomes, during by far the larger portion of his history, a negligible quantity. Philosophy sees in sin a necessity of man's development—of his coming to the true knowledge of himself—and speaks freely of it as good in the making.² Science, philosophy, and ethics alike

¹ Cf. chs. v., vi.

² For a valuable criticism, see Galloway's *Principles of Religious Development*, pp. 324 ff.

are often found arguing for a "Determinism" which strikes at the basis of moral responsibility. Still bolder tendencies are in operation, which, regarding existing moral ideas as the fruit of obsolete beliefs and outworn conventions, would sweep them away, with revolutionary results in the relation of the sexes, in family life, and in society. As a culminating phase in the revolt, Nietzscheism would invert the moral standards of Christianity altogether.

These are only indications, for which proof must subsequently be given, but they leave no doubt as to the extent and complexity of the problems opened up to the Christian inquirer by the modern treatment of sin.

IV

It is hardly necessary to point out how fundamentally the *whole system of ideas* in Christianity is affected by the changed attitude to the doctrine of sin now described. Professor Henry Jones has a remark in his Essay in the volume, *Jesus or Christ*, which tells in more directions than that in which he applies it. He observes: "Such is the unity of spiritual experience, even when it is

not reflective, that no particular opinion can be adopted, rejected, or changed, except by modifying the whole of that experience.”¹ It cannot be impressed too strongly that Christian doctrines are not a collocation of isolated conceptions, any one of which may be altered or abandoned without effect upon the rest, but have an internal unity and coherence, binding them together as a whole, so that one cannot be tampered with without injury to every part. Peculiarly is this the case with the doctrine of sin. It is in its doctrine of sin, apprehended in its own way, that Christianity bases its teaching on the indispensableness for man of redemption and spiritual renewal, and of the provision of God, in His abounding love, for the accomplishment of these ends. If, accordingly, from any cause, the facts about sin are misconceived, or are inadequately conceived, it is useless, as already hinted, to attempt to come to any understanding with these higher doctrines. It is not different with the Christian conceptions of duty and of the spiritual life.

One point at the very centre of Christianity

¹ P. 23.

may be referred to as vitally affected by the modern discussions about sin. It is no other than the question of the possibility of a *Sinless One*. Till a comparatively recent time there was a shrinking, even in advanced circles, from seeming to breathe a doubt of the moral perfection of Jesus. That can no longer be said. It is, no doubt, only logically consistent that, if humanitarianism is to rule, the claim to be without sin should be denied to Jesus. How should One arise without sin in a humanity to which sin belongs by essential constitution? In a world without miracle a sinless Being is excluded by the laws of human existence. It is entirely characteristic, therefore, that more and more the sinlessness of Jesus is coming to be challenged or surrendered by writers of the modern school. The highest grade of moral purity is conceded to Jesus, but not *perfect* holiness. His own words, "Why callest thou me good?"¹ are quoted against Him. Oscar Holtzmann, Wernle, Schmiedel, Bousset, G. B. Foster, now R. J. Campbell, a host more, will be found uniting here.² The question, with

¹ Mark x. 18.

² The opinions of Schmiedel, Foster, and others are sufficiently well known. It may serve to refer to the

its implications, will occupy us later. It is glanced at here only to show to what results, in judging of Christianity, the newer speculations conduct.

These are the issues. What attitude, it is to be asked finally, in the midst of this whirl of conflicting opinions—of doubts, denials, speculations—is open to one who retains the Christian position, and believes it to be true and vital? How is he to deal with the fact and doctrine of sin? Very plainly a *theological* treatment of the doctrine—such a treatment as might be fitting in the circle of those accepting the fundamental Christian conceptions—is totally useless here. The mind of the age is proclaimed to be one that sits loose to all doctrinal formulations—that regards them as in the air, unscientific, antiquated, logical cobweb-spinning, untrue to

first and last of the names quoted. O. Holtzmann, in his *Leben Jesu* (p. 36), expresses the view that the idea of the sinlessness of Jesus originated with Paul, and thinks that Jesus Himself is shown by Mark x. 18, xiv. 36 to have held a different opinion. Mr. Campbell, in his recent essay on *Jesus or Christ*, goes so far as to say: "To speak of Him as morally perfect is absurd; to call Him sinless is worse, for it introduces an entirely false emphasis into the relations of God and Man" (p. 191).

fact and experience. As little will it avail to build on Biblical data (though these cannot wholly be neglected); for the authority of the Bible, in the old sense, is rejected; texts can be explained away; in any case are not held to bind *us*. This applies not only to the Old Testament—to the Fall-story in Genesis, for example—it applies equally to the New, where Paul is of no authority, and even the word of Jesus is not final. With every single postulate of the Biblical doctrine challenged, how is discussion to proceed?

One thing the believer in the Christian doctrine can do. He can take his own place in this restless whirl of the thought of to-day; can try to understand it, and to interpret it to himself and to *itself*; can seek, as we have already been attempting to do, to trace it to its causes, and to exhibit it in its workings. He can set over against it what seems to him to be the truth of fact and experience, and the Christian interpretation of the facts, and can try to show that it is in the latter that the true key for the understanding of the facts is to be found. The Christian believer, in a word, can look this thought of the day in the face. If Christianity is worth anything, it

does not need to shirk looking facts in the face. It will not profess to furnish a perfect solution of the problem of sin. Only Omniscience can do that. It is but parts of God's ways we can trace. Our seeing is through a glass darkly.¹ But the subject may be set in a light which brings it more into consistency with itself, with faith in God, with human experience, and with the other truths of the Christian revelation. This of itself will be a step to a Theodicy.

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

CHAPTER II

SIN AS MORAL TRANSGRESSION—THE PRIMARY CERTAINTIES

A FIRST aspect in which sin appears to the natural conscience, likewise in Scripture, is as *transgression of moral law*. "Every one that doeth sin," says St. John, "doeth also lawlessness (*ἀνομία*), and sin is lawlessness." ¹ "Sin," says St. Paul, "is not imputed where there is no law." ² Hence the common description of sin as "transgression" (*παράβασις*)—"Where there is no law, neither is there transgression" ³—"trespass" (*παράπτωμα*), ⁴ "stumbling," ⁵ "going astray." ⁶ The generic name for sin, *ἁμαρτία*, a missing of the mark, points in the same direction, with special glance at the moral end (cf. Rom. iii. 23). ⁷

It was observed in the previous chapter that

¹ 1 John iii. 4.

² Rom. v. 13.

³ Rom. iv. 15; cf. Jas. ii. 9, 11.

⁴ Rom. v. 15, 17, etc. ⁵ Jas. ii. 10; iii. 2.

⁶ Isa. liii. 6; Jer. l. 6; 2 Pet. ii. 15, etc.

⁷ The chief Old Testament terms corresponding to the above are well represented in Ps. xxxii. 1, 2, 5 (cf.

“law,” in the Christian sense, cannot be divorced from the idea of God, as, in Lotze’s phrase, the “Highest Good Personal.” But man, as made in the rational and moral image of God, recognises law in his own conscience : even the heathen, as St. Paul says, “not having the law, are the law unto themselves, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them.”¹

On this subject certain preliminary remarks fall to be made. The question will then have to be faced—Is not modern thought in open conflict with the Christian conceptions of moral law, and of man’s obligations under it? It may sound strangely to some that such a question should need to be raised, but no one familiar with the literature of the day will doubt that the need is not only there, but is urgent.

I

On the positive or Christian side, the following positions will probably command general assent :—

Exod. xxxiv. 7)—עֲשָׂה, transgression ; אֵינְךָ, coming short of the mark ; יָעַ, a perversion, a misdeed, iniquity.

¹ Rom. ii. 14 15.

1. Morallaw implies, as its necessary correlate, the *moral being*. From its nature, the conception of the "ought"—in which morality may be said to centre—can only arise in a rational agent, capable of setting before himself ends, and of contemplating alternatives, distinguished in moral quality, either of which, in the exercise of choice, he can adopt. As elements in the constitution of the moral agent may therefore be recognised—(1) Capability of moral *knowledge*—perception of moral distinctions, of right and wrong, good and evil, with recognition of the *obligation* which the perception of the right imposes on the will; (2) Capacity of moral *affections* and *emotions* (approval and disapproval, etc.); (3) Possession of a measure of *self-determining freedom*. It is not, however, simply in the sphere of conduct (action) that obligation is realised. Even more fundamentally, certain qualities of character are recognised as good or evil—as having moral value.¹ Moral law pre-

¹ Hence the distinction that may be noted in ethical schools—some preferring to speak of moral *law* (e.g., Kant), others of moral *values* (Lotze, Ritschl); some dwelling on the rectitude (conformity to rule) of *actions*, others on the beauty or amiability of virtuous *character*

scribes to the agent at once what he ought to *be*, and what he ought to *do*; and sin arises from shortcoming or disobedience in either respect.

2. A second consideration is that, as respects content, moral law has the implication of *absolute moral values*. While law has relation to God as its Source and Upholder, this in no wise means that it does not embody the idea of an essential right and wrong. God does not create moral values. He Himself is the absolutely Perfect One,¹ in whom the Good has its eternal ground. What God wills is not, as Occam thought, good because He wills it, but He wills it because it is good. This idea of a right and wrong which neither God nor man can make or unmake—which the enlightened conscience is capable of discerning when presented to it—lies at the foundation of a true Christian ethics, and of every Christian view of sin. It is an idea not disproved by

—the “jural” and “aesthetic” standpoints respectively, as they may be called. The moral “ought” includes both the ought to *be* as well as the ought to *do*. Cf. p. 258.

¹ Matt. v. 48; Mark x. 18: “None is good save One, even God.”

anything that can be urged on the gradual growth of moral conceptions, or the aberrations of undisciplined or low-grade minds—a subject to be dealt with afterwards.¹ It is the higher here that must judge the lower, not the lower the higher. The ordinary conscience will confirm the assertion that good and evil are not terms that can be changed at will: that even God could not, e.g., set up falsehood, and treachery, and cruelty, on the throne of the universe, and say, These are the virtues to be extolled and worshipped; or cast down love, and purity, and justice, and say, These are vices to be abhorred and spurned.² There is, as Carlyle would say, an everlasting “Yea” which affirms itself in goodness: it is Mephistopheles who boasts: “I am the spirit that evermore denies.”³

¹ See the valuable remarks in Dr. Rashdall's *Philosophy and Religion*, pp. 63 ff.

² David Hume's singular contention: “If nature had so pleased, love might have had the same effect as hatred, and hatred as love. I see no contradiction in supposing a desire of producing misery annexed to love, and of happiness to hatred” (*Dissertation of Passions*, Works, II. p. 112), is fitly paralleled by the suggestion approved by Mr. J. S. Mill of a conceivable world in which two and two make five! (*Exam. of Hamilton*, p. 69).

³ “Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint” (Goethe, *Faust*),

Good and evil are thus, in their essential nature, opposites. This does not imply that, in the moral relations in which human beings stand to one another and to God, there may not be *positive* commands as well—injunctions, “statutes,” which it is wrong, in relation to God, sin, to disobey. Such, in certain of their aspects, are civil and political laws. Such are the commands which a parent may and must impose upon his children for the direction of their conduct, in their studies, and in other ways. In the economies of religion there is a stage when the “children,” as minors, are under “rudiments.”¹ Still such commands are presumed to be not arbitrary, but to rest upon a moral basis, and to subserve a moral end.² If they contravene the higher—written or “unwritten”³—law of true morality, they

¹ Gal. iv. 3.

² It is a singular merit of Calvin that he perceived so clearly the relatively subordinate position of the ceremonial and political laws of the Jews to the Ten Commandments, in which lay the real bond of their covenant with God. (See his Preface to *Com. on the Last Four Books of Moses.*)

³ “The unwritten, yet unchangeable laws of the gods.” (ἄγραπτα καθολῆ θεῶν νόμινα, Sophocles, *Antigone*, 454-7).

do not bind the conscience. "We must obey God rather than man."¹

3. It is still further to be remarked that, when moral law is spoken of in this connexion with sin, the word "law" is to be taken with all the *spirituality* and *depth* of meaning which Christ's revelation imparts to it. Only thus is it the *Christian* conception. The law in the natural conscience is much; as developed and illumined by centuries of Christian training, is more. The law in the Old Testament is a great advance. With all its Jewish limitations, how high does it rise, in its insistence on righteousness, above the standard of ordinary Christian aspiration and attainment even at the present hour! How changed a spectacle, e.g., would society present, if only the Jewish Ten Commandments were honestly and universally obeyed among men! "Thy commandment is exceedingly broad," said the Psalmist.² St. Paul, speaking from experience, declared: "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and righteous, and good."³ It is customary to speak slightingly of the Decalogue

¹ Acts iv. 29; cf. iv. 19.

² Ps. cxix. 96.

³ Rom. vii. 12.

—the “Ten Words.” “Ten Words” truly ! But look at these “Words” as they are set in the revelation of God’s character and grace in the history ; regard them no longer as isolated precepts, but trace them back, as they are traced in the law,¹ and by Christ,² to their central principle in love to God and to one’s neighbour ; view them as they dilate and expand, and flash in ever-changing lights, in the practical expositions and applications made of them ; learn, as St. Paul did, that the law they embody is not a thing of the letter, but of the spirit, touching every thought in the mind, every word spoken, every action performed—penetrating into motive and regulating affection³—and the estimate we form of their breadth and depth may become very different. It is in Christ, however, the Perfect Revealer of the spirituality of the law, and at the same time the Personal Embodiment of its holiness, that we come supremely to comprehend how vast and wide, how profound, how searching, the commandment of God is. “I am not

¹ Deut. vi. 5 ; Lev. xix. 18.

² Matt. xxii. 37-40 ; Mark xii. 29-31.

³ Rom. vii. 7-13.

come," said Jesus, "to destroy, but to fulfil."¹ The commandment is "old," but it is also "new," for it has become "true" (realised) in Him and in His people.²

II

These are the positions on the Christian side. What now is to be said of the conflict of modern thought with these Christian ideas? For conflict, strong and uncompromising, there unquestionably is.

We come back here to the crucial issue—Is this whole conception of a moral law, resting on absolute moral values, on which so much is made to depend, a *valid* one? Is it not a conception disproved, left behind, rendered even ludicrously obsolete, by a sounder—a more truly scientific and philosophical—investigation of the nature and genesis of moral ideas, their connexion with the past in organic and social evolution, their relations and changing character in different races, ages, and environments? Suppose, e.g., the theistic basis of the moral law to be subverted, and the ethical character of the Power manifested in the universe

¹ Matt. v. 17.

² 1 John ii. 7, 8.

to be denied. Suppose, next, the doctrine of "relativity" to be introduced into moral conceptions, and the absoluteness of moral distinctions to be negated. Suppose, again, that human morality is conceived of as a slow development from non-moral } animal instincts and impulses, or is explained as a phase of social convention, changeable in the future, as it has often been changed in the past—if, indeed, it is not the express vocation of the true reformer radically to change it (Nietzsche). Suppose the idea of obligation traced to the action of natural causes (e.g., fear of punishment) which weaken or destroy its binding hold on conscience; while conscience itself is analysed, as it is by Schopenhauer—an extreme case, but hardly too extreme for our age—into such elements as "one-fifth fear of man, one-fifth superstition, one-fifth prejudice, one-fifth vanity, one-fifth custom."¹ Suppose, yet again, with so many moderns, that free-will is eliminated as an illusion, and a rigorous determinism reigns in its stead. What, in such a situation, becomes of our moral law,

¹ *Die beiden Grundprobleme der Ethik* (1st Edit.), p. 196 (quoted by Calderwood).

with its supposed sacredness, and unconditional demands? It has vanished, and with it, in current discussions, moral conceptions and traditions are thrown into the melting-pot, there to undergo transformation into one does not well know what.

Is this description exaggerated? We should not like it to appear so. It truly, as will be shown, represents a deliberate and important trend in the responsible thinking of our age; and though nobler philosophies, and able defences from many sides, are in the field, these are often themselves weakened by a defective theistic basis, or by an element of compromise with naturalistic theories, which largely neutralise their value for an effective vindication of the Christian doctrine of sin.

Let a few of the chief points be regarded more closely.

1. The question of *Theism*, and of the divine *Holiness*, in relation to the fact of sin, is reserved for special consideration. It cannot, however, but impress a thoughtful mind how entirely the postulate of a living, holy God has disappeared from current ethical discussions, and how inadequate, where not

positively subversive of a sound morality, are the conceptions substituted for it in the name of science and philosophy. One has not in view here a crude Monism—indistinguishable from a materialistic Pantheism—like that of the Jena *savant*, Haeckel, though a very perceptible current from this is found in the popular thinking and writing of the time. Mr. Spencer's agnostic Absolutism, also, based on an untenable doctrine of the "unconditioned," borrowed from Hamilton and Mansel, has well-nigh passed its day of influence, or has become merged in the yet more radical absolutism of Mr. Bradley.¹ The elevated Idealism of the Oxford Hegelians has, through stress of an inner logic, moved largely in the same direction.² The result has been that the idea of the personal God—even of Mr. Green's "Eternal Self-Consciousness"³—is largely surrendered, and, instead, we have an Absolute—the Ground or Reality of the

¹ Dr. Rashdall (*Phil. and Religion*, p. 52) reproduces Mr. Bradley's epigram that Mr. Herbert Spencer has told us more about the Unknowable than the rashest of theologians has ever ventured to tell us about God.

² Cf., e.g., the criticisms in Prof. A. E. Taylor's *Problem of Conduct*, chap. ii.; A. J. Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*, pt. ii. chap. ii.

universe—for which good and evil, in the ordinary sense of the terms, no longer exist.

Only one or two examples need be taken. Dr. Ellis McTaggart's recent works are a carefully-reasoned argument against the admissibility of the idea of a God in any form. "I have endeavoured to show that all finite selves are eternal, and that the Absolute is not a self."¹ "If the results which I have reached . . . are valid, it would seem that we have no reason to believe in the existence of a god."² It is argued that the conception is not needed either for the explanation of the world, or for human happiness.³ Mr. Bradley goes deeper. For him moral distinctions disappear altogether in the abyss of the Absolute. There is but one Reality, and its being consists in experience.⁴ Morality and religion both fall within the sphere of "appearance," and have no absolute truth. To the Absolute there is nothing either good or bad.⁵ "Ugliness, error, and evil are all owned by, and all contribute to, the wealth of the

¹ *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 3.

² *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 261.

³ *Ibid.*, chaps. vii., viii.

⁴ *Appearance and Reality*, p. 454. ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Absolute.”¹ “ ‘ Heaven’s design,’ if we may speak so, can realise itself as effectively in ‘ Cataline or Borgia ’ as in the scrupulous or innocent.”² Religion, which rests on a relation of man to a God conceived of as personal, is also a self-contradictory idea.³ “ But if so, what, I may be asked, is the result in practice ? That, I reply at once, is not my business.”⁴ Similar to this is the position in Prof. J. E. Taylor’s work, *The Problem of Conduct*, which combines with Mr. Bradley’s teaching elements from Nietzsche’s doctrine of the “ Superman.”⁵ The closing chapter of the book, imitating Nietzsche, is entitled, “ Beyond Good and Bad,”⁶ in what sense will immediately be seen. As another example of this phase of the *Zeit-Geist*, it will be enough to allude to Mr. Karl Pearson’s *Ethic*

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 489.

² *Ibid.*, p. 202.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 446-8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

⁵ “ This was the great and imperishable service of Nietzsche to ethical philosophy. However far we may be from recognising in Nietzsche’s rather unamiable heroes our own ideal human being, we may at least say that ethics seems to have said the last word in the command to live for the ‘ Overman ’ ” (*Prob. of Conduct*, p. 410).

⁶ Prof. Taylor would seem since to have somewhat modified his position. To compare the above really “ antinomian ” view (cf. p. 480) with St. Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith (pp. 432-6, 479), is absurd.

of *Free Thought*. "Religion" to this writer, "is law."¹ "Hence the indifference of the true free-thinker to the question of the existence or non-existence of a personal god To repeat Buddha's words, 'Trouble yourselves not about the gods.' If, like the frogs or the Jews, who would have a king, we insist on having a god, then let us call the universe, with its great system of unchangeable law, god—even as Spinoza."²

It should be noted that, in the view of all these writers, as of a crowd of others, no ground is left for belief in immortality³—of which more anon.

2. The one effective answer to these subversions of the ethical character of the Supreme is in the certainty of the *Moral Ideal*, which, with its unchanging values, points, as already said, to a Source beyond the finite consciousness. It has rightly been esteemed Kant's outstanding merit to have emphasised

¹ *Ethic of Freethought*, p. 27. ² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³ Dr. McTaggart, while rejecting all ordinary arguments for immortality, holds, as above quoted, that "all finite selves are eternal." This, however, has nothing to do with personal immortality in the usual sense. It is rather endless re-incarnation without memory of former existence (cf. *Heg. Cosmol.*, pp. 52-4; *Dogmas of Religion*, p. 128).

the unconditional character of the moral "imperative"—the "Thou shalt" of duty; as it was Butler's to have exalted the distinctive "authority" of conscience. But the moral ideal also, no less than the God who is its eternal Ground, is, with the accompanying conceptions of obligation, authority, good and evil desert, brought into question by the all-challenging spirit of the time.

It can, indeed, be argued, as it is by Dr. McTaggart, that a high moral ideal may exist without belief in God to sustain it,¹ just as a high standard of personal conduct may be maintained in association with naturalistic or other theories which logically would destroy their foundations.² Sooner or later, however, theories of this kind may be relied on to work

¹ *Dogmas of Religion*, pp. 280-4. Cf. the remarks of Martensen, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 15-17 (E.T.).

² Mr. A. J. Balfour justly says: "I am not contending that sentiments of the kind referred to may not be, and are not frequently, entertained by persons of all shades of philosophical or theological opinion. My point is, that in the case of those holding the naturalistic creed the sentiments and the creed are antagonistic; and that the more clearly the creed is grasped, the more thoroughly the intellect is saturated with its essential teaching, the more certain are the sentiments thus violently and unnaturally associated with it to languish or to die" (*Found. of Belief*, 8th Edit., p. 18). Cf. Sorley's *Ethics of Naturalism*.

out their natural consequences, and history shows that it is the most perilous of experiments to tamper with moral sanctities, and expect no evil fruits to result. Hence the earnestness with which religion has generally contended against associational, utilitarian, hedonistic, and evolutionary theories of morals, in which no *a priori* (rational, intuitive) principles of judgment are recognised, and has insisted on the universal and unchanging authority of moral law. After all, one is warranted in contending, the right is not simply the expedient; the good is not simply the pleasurable; conduct which springs from the compulsion of fear is distinguishable from conduct voluntarily done from the obligation of duty. Where there is not the recognition of primary and naturally-binding obligations such as are found in all codes, many of them the oldest, worthy of the name—one may refer to the Egyptian Precepts of Ptahhotep (5th Dynasty), the Negative Confession in the Book of the Dead, the Code of Hammurabi, Confucian and Buddhist ethics—morality properly cannot be said to exist. The savage, and not he alone, may seem to be indifferent to lying and theft—to have no

sense of wrong in connexion with them—but let his neighbour try to deceive or defraud *him*, or behave to him with selfish ingratitude, how speedily does moral condemnation flash out! ¹ The untutored mind may not be able to comprehend abstract canons like Kant's or Hegel's, "Respect humanity in your own person," "Be a person, and respect others as persons,"—canons self-evident to those who understand them,—but the reason which expresses itself in such formulas is already working in the obligation the individual spontaneously feels [to be self-respecting, controlled, veracious, honourable to comrades, faithful to promises and trusts. Doubtless he may know, and not obey, with the result of darkening of mind and weakening of will ²; his judgments also may often be mistaken and perverted, partly from moral causes, partly from undeveloped intelligence,

¹ Cf. Rom. ii. 1: "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things." Savage tribes have, as Mr. A. Lang shows in his *Making of Religion* and *Magic and Religion*, often much higher moral notions than sociologists are wont to ascribe to them. Above all, they have the moral *capacity*.

² Cf. Rom. i. 21 ff.

partly from ignorance and error in regard to himself, his world, and his relationships; but as he gains the right standpoint, grows in knowledge of his environment, and acquires the will to obey, conscience likewise grows in clearness, in vigour, in power of discrimination.

It is precisely these exceptions, entering, we must hold, into the essence of morality, from which much in our modern thought *removes the ground*. It will be generally granted that this was the effect of many of the older selfish and sensational theories of morals—even of a utilitarian hedonism, unmodified, as J. S. Mill sought to modify it, by the introduction of the idea of “quality” in pleasures.¹ To declare, e.g., with Hobbes, that man is a naturally selfish being, and that rights spring from the sovereign power in the State, defining the limits within which selfishness shall be allowed to operate, is, apart from untruth to the facts, an *immoral* exaltation of absolutism, and ignoring of the demand that even public rights shall rest on a basis

¹ A criticism of these theories is given by the present writer in his *David Hume: His Influence on Philosophy and Theology*, chap. ix. (“The World’s Epoch-Makers”).

of inherent justice. To say, again, with Bentham, that morality is a simple calculation of pleasures and pains (the moralist is an "arithmetician" ¹), and that the word "ought" is one which should be banished from human speech, ² is to abandon the possibility of a science of duties, ³ while professing to construct one.

Modern thinkers, however, because they dig deeper, remove the foundations only the more effectually. Dr. McTaggart strikes a high note in finding the goal of existence in "love"; but how shall he justify the demand for a "passionate, all-absorbing, all-consuming love," ⁴ in a universe the Principle of which neither loves nor can be loved, ⁵ in which determinism rules, ⁶ and in which there

¹ *Deontology*, ii., Introd., p. 19.

² "If the use of the word be admissible at all, it 'ought' to be banished from the vocabulary of morals" (*Ibid.*, i. p. 32). Yet Bentham himself frequently uses it.

³ "It is, in fact, very idle to talk about duties; the word itself has in it something disagreeable and repulsive" (*Ibid.*, p. 10). ⁴ *Heg. Cosmol.*, p. 261.

⁵ The Gospel command is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," etc. (Mark xii. 29). But on this theory love to God is excluded. "That, of course, must go, if it is believed that the person that was loved never existed" (*Dogmas of Religion*, p. 290; cf. *Heg. Cosmol.*, pp. 288-90). ⁶ See below, pp. 52 ff.

is no personal (conscious) immortality? When, besides, love is described as knowing that another "conforms to my highest standards," and feeling that "through him the end of my own life is realised,"¹ is not this a recognition of values and ends of which, again, no good account is given? The ethical outcome of Mr. Bradley's theory of the absolute has already been indicated; and Professor Taylor, in his Nietzschean vein, is, if possible, even more sweeping in his conclusions. One passage from the chapter, "Beyond Good and Bad," may indicate the standpoint. "As we advanced toward the final culmination of morality in practical religion we saw the notions of 'guilt,' 'desert,' 'obligation,' and 'free-will,' which ordinary ethics assumes as fundamental, lose both scientific meaning and practical validity. And even the life of practical religion, we have learned, though it dispenses with so many of the uncritical assumptions of mere morality, needs as its

¹ *Heg. Cosmol.*, p. 261. There are hints, however, that even this is not the ultimate. The conception of virtue, we are told, "reveals its own imperfection [as implying the possibility of sin, of action, of time], and must be transcended and absorbed before we can reach either the absolutely real or the absolutely good" (p. 128; cf. *Dogmas of Religion*, p. 138).

basis the assumption for practical purposes of a standpoint which metaphysical criticism must finally reject as self-contradictory and unintelligible.”¹

3. The ethical conceptions, however, are still there, and demand *explanation*; and such explanation, as already hinted, neither naturalism, nor the metaphysical idealism we have been considering, is able to give. “Self-realisation” is ethical only if the self that is realised has the ethical ideal already implicit in it: “self-satisfaction” is but a subtler form of hedonism; “the advantage of society” yields no help, unless society reckons among its highest advantages the possession of excellencies of character, which is to move in a circle. Professor Taylor is in the peculiar position here of starting with an empirical psychology, and ending with a metaphysical absolutism akin to Mr. Bradley’s. Unlike Dr. McTaggart, however, who lays all the stress on eternal personal “selves,” Professor Taylor will not allow to the “self” any proper existence at all; it is a “secondary product” of “the ordinary psychological laws of recognition, assimilation and

¹ *Prob. of Conduct*, pp. 493.

association" ¹ (all of which, in truth, already imply the "self"). It is a natural corollary that there are "no unconditional obligations," ² and that the ordinary ethical concepts—obligation, duty, responsibility, free personality—are derivatives from non-ethical roots.³ The crucial test of such a theory is the account it has to give of such concepts as "obligation," "responsibility," "accountability," ⁴ and one has only to watch carefully to perceive that the "genesis" of such ideas on empirical lines can only be effected by surreptitiously introducing into the process, as the argument proceeds, the very ideas it is intended to explain. That others expect or require something from me, and can enforce their demand by punishment, does not suffice to create the feeling of obligation; ⁵ in order to this the demand must be felt to be a *right* one—to have reason and justice in it.⁶ In any

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 78-9. A yet more thorough-going denial of a permanent self may be seen in the newly-published work on *Consciousness*, by Dr. H. R. Marshall. The conclusion logically drawn is that "the notion of erring and sinning is an illusion" (p. 657).

² *Ibid.*, p. 57. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 119 ff.

⁴ The most searching analysis of this group of notions is perhaps that in Mr. Bradley's earlier work, *Ethical Studies*, Essay I. ⁵ *Prob. of Conduct*, p. 140.

⁶ Cf. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, p. 3. Man must feel

case, Professor Taylor is precluded from furnishing a satisfactory explanation of the notion by his denial (1) of a real personal identity, and (2) of freedom—both essential conditions of a consciousness of accountability.¹

III

It is striking that it is precisely the three ideas which Kant held to be essential to morality—God, Freedom, Immortality—which our modern theorists seem most bent on overthrowing. It might seem clear that there can be no moral conduct in the proper sense—that is, conduct for which the agent can justly be held responsible—unless such agent possesses at least a measure of self-determining *Freedom*; and that a thoroughgoing determinism of the kind advocated in most recent scientific and philosophical works would (if mankind could be got to believe in it, and to act on it, which they never do) be destructive of the very idea of responsibility. To affirm this is not to be blind to the very genuine speculative difficulties involved in

that, "it is *right* that he should be subject to the moral tribunal; or the moral tribunal has a *right* over him, to call him before it, with reference to all or any of his deeds."

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 7.

the idea of freedom or to the fallacies in many popular discussions of it. Freedom is not absolute, but is hedged round with many conditions; it is not lawless, but has laws congruous with its own nature. The so-called "liberty of indifference" is an irrationality as incompatible with true freedom as determinism itself.¹ For every choice a man makes there is at the moment a "why" or "reason," which leads him to choose as he does rather than otherwise. But that a man guides himself by rational and moral considerations, or *ought* to guide himself by these (for he may yield to influences which override his freedom, and rob him of it),² does not alter the fact that his action in the truest sense proceeds from *himself*—is due to his own self-determination. It is not enough even to say that his *character* decides him.

¹ Cf. Bradley, as above, pp. 8 ff. Erdmann is quoted as saying: "The doctrine of Determinism is a will which *wills* nothing—which lacks the form of will; the doctrine of Indeterminism a will which wills *nothing*, a will with no content" (p. 11). On the rival conceptions of necessity and freedom see Emerson's Essays on "Fate" and "Power" in his *Conduct of Life*.

² From the Christian standpoint, man's will is in a *spiritual* bondage, through sin, from which only God's grace can deliver it (cf. Rom. vii.).

Character is itself largely the product of antecedent acts of freedom, so that the question is only shifted back. After the most searching analysis there will probably always be felt to be a residuary unanalysable element in freedom.¹ But nothing will eradicate the plain man's conviction that his responsibility is bound up with a power of determining himself in a way which makes his acts truly his own.

To the metaphysical, as to the scientific mind, however, there is a fascination in the idea of universal causation—of unbroken law—which almost resistlessly compels it to the rejection of free-will, and the adoption of a *Determinism* as rigorous as that of physical nature. It is not only "miracle" that the modern philosopher rejects, but that *simulacrum* of the miraculous in man—free-agency. Professor W. James is an exception,² but he allows that the other view is the prevailing one. Materialistic and Pantheistic systems

¹ Cf. Galloway, *Principles of Religious Development*, pp. 327 ff.

² See his Essay on "The Dilemma of Determinism" in his *Will to Believe* (pp. 145 ff.). The so-called "Pragmatist" school inclines in this direction (cf. Schiller on "Freedom" in *Studies in Humanism*).

(Spinoza, Haeckel) are of necessity deterministic.¹ H. Spencer was determinist. So are most recent philosophical writers.² Karl Pearson, e.g., for whom the universe is a logical thought-process, advocates "Free-thought" by preaching absolute necessity. "Every finite thing in [the universe] is what it is, because *that* is the only possible way in which it could be."³ Mr. Bradley does not directly discuss the question in his later work, but the implications of his system—the non-reality of self and change, the illusoriness of time, Reality, eternal and unchanging, only in the Absolute⁴—destroy freedom in its very idea. Dr. McTaggart argues elaborately for "complete" determinism, and seeks to show its compatibility with responsibility and vir-

¹ Mr. Blatchford's opinions are of no account philosophically, but it may be noted that he is a determinist of the extremist type, and denies responsibility. "I do seriously mean that no man is under any circumstances to be blamed for anything he may say or do" (*God and My Neighbour*, p. 10; cf. his chapter on "Determinism").

² One wonders more at finding it in a theologian like A. Sabatier. See the Preface to his *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*. "There has never been met with in history a being who was not anteriorly determined" (p. x.).

³ *Ethic of Free Thought*, p. 29.

⁴ See specially chaps. ix., x., xviii. in *Appearance*

tue.¹ This is done on the external ground that "rewards and punishments may encourage right volitions and discourage wrong volitions"²—surely a poor conception of responsibility. Another line adopted by psychologists is to eliminate the idea of volition (conation) as an independent factor in consciousness altogether. It is resolved into feeling—"kinæsthetic sensations,"—more fully into "sensation, idea, and emotion," as by Professor Taylor,³ to whom the "self" is a "secondary product"; or into "attention," as by Professor G. F. Stout, who challenges the identification with "feeling."⁴ The re-

and Reality. "We shall find that the self has no power to defend its own reality from moral objections" (p. 103). Volition, as cause, is "illusory" (p. 115). "If time is not unreal, I admit that the Absolute is an illusion" (p. 206).

¹ *Dogmas of Religion*, chap. v. ² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

³ *Prob. of Conduct*, pp. 170, 172-3. The reader can judge how far the following throws light on the fact of "resolve"—"The state of mind commonly expressed by such phrases as 'I'll do it,' seems to be no more than the change of emotional direction and intensity and the corresponding change in organic sensation, effected by the transition from a state of mental conflict to one of such steady and continuous diminution of emotional tension as we have described in our analysis of the simple forms of impulsive action" (p. 174).

⁴ *Analytic Psychology*, i. pp. 118, 130; see the whole chapter, "Feeling and Conation." "Wherein does

sult reached by the different roads is the same—that “Free-will,” in any sense that gives it meaning in a moral system, is got rid of.¹ Therewith, as we have sought to show, modern thought comes into conflict with irrefragable data of consciousness, and does violence to the august authority of moral law.

IV

To sum up on this conflict of modern thought with Christian conceptions, it has been seen that this type of thought removes the theistic basis from moral law; denies the ethical character of the Power at work in the universe; denies absolute moral values; negates free-will, and substitutes for it a rigorous determinism; in this way assails the foundations of moral obligation. Were these denials

this determination itself consist? Is it also a mode of being attentive? We answer this question in the affirmative” (p. 130).

¹ “This doctrine [of Free-will] may in philosophy be considered obsolete, though it will continue to flourish in popular ethics” (*Appearance and Reality*, p. 393). One might think here of certain indefensible theories, but Mr. Bradley’s philosophy compels the extension to *all* theories. “The questions commonly raised about the ‘freedom’ and the ‘autonomy’ of ‘will,’ have, from our point of view, no psychological significance” (Taylor, *Prob. of Conduct*, p. 177).

merely theoretic—had they only an academic character—the situation would be serious enough. But this cannot be affirmed regarding them. The change in theory, it is becoming apparent, involves a radical *change in ethical standards*—this of a kind which cannot be viewed with complacency by any Christian mind. Older writers, whatever their intellectual basis, generally kept tolerably close to the Christian virtues.¹ A bolder, more revolutionary spirit now prevails. Why should conventions be respected, when the supernatural sanctions which supported them have been completely swept away, and thinkers are hard at work breaking down the natural sanctions? It is difficult to read without grave concern the chapters in advocacy of far-reaching changes in the ideas of sex-relations in such a book as Karl Pearson's

¹ Dr. McTaggart notes that "Hegel's judgments as to what conduct was virtuous, and what conduct was vicious, would on the whole agree with the judgments that would be made under the influence of Christianity" (*Heg. Cosmol.*, p. 239). Mr. Spencer writes with some disappointment (Pref. to Parts v. and vi. of his *Ethics*): "The doctrine of evolution has not furnished guidance to the extent I had hoped. Most of the conclusions, drawn empirically, are such as right feelings, enlightened by cultivated intelligences, have already sufficed to establish."

Ethic of Freethought,¹ or even the more cautious, but highly casuistical treatment of the same subject, with leaning to liberty, in Professor Taylor's *Problem of Conduct*.²

The outstanding representative of this spirit of revolt in recent times is F. Nietzsche. It is not suggested that the opinions of this writer, taken in their entirety, are anything but a mad extreme. But one observes traces of a Nietzsche cult which is of no good omen, and certainly many of his ideas are "in the air." Nietzsche's ethics—if one may dignify them with this name—are avowedly anti-christian. The last work completed by himself, which bears the name, *The Antichrist*, breathes a passionate hate of Christianity and all its works. With this rôle of Antichrist, as Riehl says,³ Nietzsche, without doubt, identified himself. A sentence or two from admiring expounders will illustrate his positions. "In morality," we are told, "Nietzsche starts out by adopting the position of the relativist. He says, there are no absolute values 'good' or 'evil': these are mere

¹ Specially Essays xiii. and xv. ² Pp. 206-18.

³ *F. Nietzsche, der Künstler und der Denker* (3rd Edit.) p. 155.

names adopted by all in order to acquire power to maintain their place in the world, or to become supreme. . . . Concepts of good and evil are, therefore, in their origin, merely a means to an end, they are expedients for acquiring power.”¹ His “transvaluation of all values” means the inversion of every Christian standard. “Voluptuousness, thirst of power, and selfishness—the three forces in humanity which Christianity has done most to garble and besmirch—Nietzsche endeavours to reinstate in their former places of honour.”² “Life is something essentially immoral,” Nietzsche tells us. . . . “Life is *essentially* appropriation, injury, conquest of the strong and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of its own forms, incorporation and at least, putting it mildest, exploitation.”³ “Instead of advocating ‘equal and inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,’” Nietzsche advocates “unequal rights, and inequality in advantages generally, approximately proportionate to deserts: consequently, therefore, a genuinely superior

¹ A. M. Ludovici, in Appendix to *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (E.T.), pp. 408-9.

² *Ibid.*, p. 430.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 434.

ruling class at one end of the social scale, and an actually inferior ruled class, with slavery at its basis, at the opposite social extreme.”¹

The picture may be left to speak for itself. One use at least Nietzsche serves—that of showing what morality without God, in a man of real genius, may come to.

¹ T. Common (translator), *Introd. to Beyond Good and Evil*, p. x.

CHAPTER III

SIN AND THE DIVINE HOLINESS—THE MORAL END

HOLINESS, as Christianity understands it, is a name for the undimmed lustre of God's ethical Perfection. God is "the Holy One"—the alone "Good" in the absolute sense,¹—and it is only when sin is lifted up into the light of this moral glory of God's character that its full enormity and hatefulness are disclosed. The divine holiness is a postulate of the Christian doctrine of sin.

I

1. It is not necessary to spend time on philological discussions as to the *primitive meaning* of the word "holy,"² or as to the

¹ Mark x. 18.

² In Old Testament, קָדוֹשׁ, holiness; קְדוּשָׁה, holy. In New Testament, ἅγιος. The root-meaning of the Old Testament word is obscure. Some (Gesenius, Dillmann, etc.), find the root-idea in "pure," "clear," "bright," or similar notion; others (Baudissin, etc.) find the idea in "separation." The latter is the view at present more

stages of the growth of the idea in the Old and New Testaments. It is more important to deal with the essential elements in the idea, as these come out in the result. On the former point—the origin and growth of the idea—many questionable things are often said. “To us,” Dr. W. R. Smith observes truly, “holiness is an ethical idea. God, the perfect being, is the type of holiness; men are holy in proportion as their lives and character are Godlike; places and things can be called holy only by a figure, on account of their association with spiritual things.” “This conception of holiness,” he adds, “goes back to the Hebrew prophets, especially to Isaiah; but it is not the ordinary conception of antique religion, nor does it correspond to the original sense of the Semitic words that we translate by ‘holy.’”¹ The assertion, accordingly, is common that ethical quality did not enter into the original conception of

generally favoured. Dr. Robertson Smith apparently begins with holy places and things (*Rel. of Semites*, Lects. iii.-iv.), but in Israel, at least, it was not so. “The probability is,” as Dr. A. B. Davidson says, “that the application of the term ‘holy’ to *things* is secondary” (*Theol. of Old Testament*), p. 152; cf. p. 145).

¹ *Rel. of Semites*, p. 132.

Jehovah as holy.¹ We hold, on the contrary, with Dillmann,² that the ethical is an element entering into the idea of God's holiness in the Biblical revelation from the beginning. The word "holy" is not, indeed, found in Genesis—as, however, we should expect it to be, if it was, as some think, a simple synonym for deity; but in Genesis the *thing* denoted by the word is present. God is the Judge of all the earth.³ He requires men to walk before Him, and be perfect.⁴ He accepts and saves the righteous.⁵ He overwhelms a sinful world,⁶ and sinful cities,⁷ with His judgments. Joseph must not do wickedness, and sin before God.⁸ Even were it granted, as Dr. David-

¹ Thus e.g., Budde, Stade (*Bib. Theol. des A.T.*, pp. 87-8). Cf. Ritschl on "Holiness" in his *Recht. und Ver.* ii. pp. 89 ff., 154.

² Dillmann finds the "principle," "the fundamental thought," "the characteristic mark," of the Old Testament religion not simply in its Monotheism, or (with Hegel) in its "sublimity" (*Erhabenheit*, exaltation of God above the creature), but in the idea of God as "holy," with inclusion of the ethical element,—"the turning away from all evil and sinfulness, goodness and ethical perfection." He rejects the view that the demands for ethical holiness are "first late (prophetic or even post-prophetic) demands" (*Alttest. Theol.*, pp. 25 ff.; 252 ff.).

³ Gen. xviii. 25. ⁴ Gen. xvii. 1; xviii. 19.

⁵ Abel, Enoch, Noah, etc. ⁶ The Deluge.

⁷ Sodom and Gomorrah. ⁸ Gen. xxxix. 9.

son holds, that "holy," as applied to Jehovah, was "a general term expressing Godhead,"¹ the case is not essentially altered. For it is allowed that "Godhead was never a mere abstract conception," and that "holiness" had its meaning filled out from the attributes ascribed to God.² But among these attributes were the ethical.³

2. As essential elements entering into the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 145.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 145-6.

³ We take it, therefore, to rest on erroneous theory when it is affirmed: "In early [Biblical ?] times, at least, the holiness of the gods had no definite meaning apart from the holiness of their physical surroundings" (Hastings' *D. B.*, ii. p. 397; cf. Smith, *Rel. of Semites*, p. 141). It seems equally unwarranted to declare that in Ezekiel "the divine holiness appears to denote no other attribute than that of majesty, exhibited in the exercise of irresistible power (*Ibid.*; cf. Davidson, *Introd. to Com. on Ezekiel*). This would, indeed, be an extraordinary descent from earlier prophetic teaching; but facts do not bear it out. Ezekiel had the intensest convictions of the divine righteousness (e.g., chap. xviii.; cf. Davidson, *in loc.*); this must have been included in his conception of holiness. He was, besides, a man whose mind was saturated with the ideas of the ritual law ["It appears to me that the Book of Ezekiel shows that before his day the ritual was almost the same as it became after the Restoration," Davidson, *Theol. of Old Testament*, p. 19], especially with the ideas and language of the so-called "Law of Holiness," in which, unquestionably, the word "holy" has a strong ethical, as well as ceremonial, connotation (Lev. xix. 2 ff., xx. 7, 8, etc.). It was by their *sins* the people had profaned the holy name of Jehovah (Ezek. xxxvi. 21-27).

idea of the divine holiness in Scripture, we seem justified, with Dillmann, Martensen, and others,¹ in distinguishing these two. The term "holy" denotes God (1) in *His distinction from, and infinite exaltation above, everything that is creaturely and finite*; and (2) in *His separation from all moral impurity, or positively, in the splendour of His moral perfection*. In the first aspect, which brings into view the awfulness, unapproachableness, majesty of God, "holiness" does little more than express, as the writers above referred to contend, the idea of "Godhead"—hence even the heathen can speak of "the holy gods."² In the second aspect, "holiness" is something peculiar to the God of Israel. Even on the side on which it expresses the exaltedness and majesty of God, however, it is important to notice that "holiness" is not a mere natural attribute, but involves an ethical element. God is not "holy" simply through the fact of His majesty; the word expresses rather a determination of His will,

¹ Dillmann, as above; Martensen, *Dogmatics*, pp. 99-100 (E.T.). Oehler, *Theol. of Old Testament*, i. pp. 154 ff.

² Daniel iv. 8, 19, etc.; the inscription of Eshmunazar (Phœnician).

through which He maintains Himself in His distinction from the creature, and cannot permit any derogation from His honour.¹ Just as, on the other side, the moral character of God is raised by its connexion with His absoluteness to a height of sanctity which inspires the profoundest awe, dread, and reverence in the worshipper.² It is this awful moral purity of God,—this light of holiness in presence of which evil cannot stand,—which, in the Old Testament, is God's chief glory; in the New Testament its sublimity, while as fully recognised,³ is softened by the gentler radiance of love. Only as holiness is morally conceived, has the command, "Be ye holy, for I am holy,"⁴ any meaning. In Isaiah's

¹ Cf. Martensen, *op. cit.*, p. 99. Oehler says: "It follows that the divine holiness, even if, as absolute perfection of life, it involves the negation of all bounds of creature finitude, is nevertheless mainly seclusion from the impurity and sinfulness of the creature, or, expressed positively, the clearness and purity of the divine nature, which excludes all communion with what is wicked" (*op. cit.*, i. p. 160).

² Isa. vi. 1-5; cf. 1 Peter i. 16, 17, iii. 15. The connexion between the holy majesty and ethical character of Jehovah is seen in such passages as 1 Sam. ii. 2, 3; Hab. i. 12, 13.

³ John xvii. 11; cf. xii. 41; Heb. x. 31, xii. 18-29; Rev. xv. 4, etc.

⁴ Lev. xi. 44, xix. 2; 1 Peter, i. 16, 17.

vision, only the ethical could call forth the prophet's confession of uncleanness.¹ In the New Testament it is the ethical aspect of holiness which is the prominent one in both God and man.

3. The two aspects of holiness here signalled are one in the nature of God, but become known to man through the fact of God's *self-revelation*. It is not as man grows in moral conceptions that he gradually creates for himself the image of a God of stainless perfection; it is, conversely, in the light of the revelation of God's holiness that man comes to know himself as sinful, and has set before him an ideal of holiness to which he aspires. Philosophy pleads for autonomy in ethics.² But there is one word to which philosophical ethics cannot give its proper meaning—this word "holiness." Religion gives the word its significance by interpreting it to mean ethical purity like to God's. It is much of itself to have the obligations to which conscience naturally testifies united with the idea

¹ Isa. vi. 5.

² "While religion without morality cannot, in our day, count on many advocates, morality without religion finds no lack of such" (Martensen, *op. cit.*, p. 15).

of a divine Being, whose will they represent, and with whose character they correspond. As thus lifted up, obligation is magnified and strengthened. It acquires an awfulness and solemnity it could not otherwise possess. A sense of responsibility of peculiar sacredness is developed. The very elevation to which duty is now raised—the consciousness of new duties to God, the call to love, trust, and worship—exalt the moral ideal, while they deepen the sense of personal unworthiness. Vastly greater are the effects produced, when to the quickening of natural conscience is added the disclosure of God's own character as holy and gracious in the words and deeds of his special revelation: when, as in Israel, holiness is seen manifesting itself in works of power and mercy, in judging and punishing transgression, in fidelity to promise and covenant, in righteous laws, in demands for faith and obedience, in the uniting of blessing with ethical conditions.¹ The supreme revelation of God's holiness, however, as of everything else in

¹ Ceremonial ordinances take a lower, if still necessary, place in this process of education. In the Bible they are truly part of a divine economy—"shadows of the good things to come," as the Epistle to the Hebrews represents them (chaps. ix., x.).

God, is again that given in Christ—the holy and incarnate Son. Be the process of development what one will, the result is indubitable : God is conceived of in Christianity as the absolutely ethically perfect Being—the Holy God, if also the God of Fatherly Love,¹ to whom moral impurity in every form and degree is abhorrent.²

4. For the rest, it may be sufficient to say that, if “holiness” be the most comprehensive name for the divine moral perfection, the lustre of this perfection, in the separation of its rays, yields what we designate as the *special moral attributes*. These are grouped, perhaps, most conveniently under “righteousness” (truth, faithfulness, justice, zeal, etc.), and “love” (goodness, pity, mercy, longsuffering, etc.), though in reality all are

¹ 1 Peter i. 16, 17.

² B. Stade, whose views on the development are radical enough, says that the view of God in the revelation of Jesus is not related to that of the Old Testament as its opposite, but as its completion and perfecting. It includes the following “weighty and characteristic” features, received from Judaism : “that God is supra-mundane Spirit, World-Creator and World-Preserver, therefore eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, and ethically holy, i.e., acting according to the most perfect standards, and that His creation and preservation of the world stand in the service of a plan of salvation for mankind and have for their end a Kingdom into which all men are called” (*Bib. Theol. des A.T.*, p. 79).

but expressions of the one undivided life. It is plain, further, that, if holiness has been rightly described, it cannot be regarded as simply a *passive* perfection of the divine Being—a “glory” or “beauty” of character—but must be thought of as an intensely active principle, a living energy, asserting itself in the upholding of the good, and the condemnation and judgment of the bad. Against sin, from eternity to eternity, the holy God cannot but declare Himself. “Wrath” is not extraneous to His nature, but is a vital element in His perfection. “Our God is a consuming fire.”¹ But judgment is no delight to Him, and the ultimate end which holiness strives after is, not the destruction of the sinner, but the restoration of the divine image, and the union of all beings in love.²

It must now be apparent how deeply the idea of the divine holiness enters into the Christian conception of sin. Where this idea is absent, or where “holy” is only an un-ethical predicate of the gods viewed as removed from men, there may still, from the

¹ Heb. xii. 29.

² Ezek. xviii. 32, xxxiii. 11; Eph. iv. 13-17; Col. iii. 10).

promptings of the natural conscience, be a sense of sin and guilt, moving to penitential utterances, and to acts for the removal of that guilt. There can never, however, be the same sense of sin's awful evil, and of its hatefulness in the sight of God, as where, in the light of revelation, God is truly known, and the impression of His holiness is deeply felt. It is, indeed, singular how sensitive the natural conscience sometimes is, even in heathenism, to wrongdoing as sin, and how unerringly, often, it pierces the grossest veils of polytheism in its conviction of a Power that judges righteously, and punishes the evil-doer.¹ Tertullian makes effective use of this spontaneous testimony of the soul to the true God²—the “soul naturally Christian,” as

¹ Mr. A. Lang does service in collecting the evidence, much of it recent, to the higher religious conceptions and the connexion of religion and morality among low savages, where the existence of such ideas had been denied. (See his *Making of Religion*, chaps. ix., xiii.) Livingstone testified of the Bakwains: “Nothing we indicate as sin ever appeared to them as otherwise”—polygamy excepted (*Miss. Travels*, pp. 158: in Lang).

² *De Test. Animi*, c. 2. “Thou affirmest Him to be God alone to whom thou givest no other name than God. . . . Nor is the nature of the God we declare unknown to thee: ‘God is good,’ ‘God does good,’ thou art wont to say. . . . So thou art always ready, O soul, from thine own knowledge, nobody casting scorn

he calls it in his *Apology*;¹ and heathen literature of all ages abounds in illustrations of the same thing. In the Egyptian Precepts of Ptahhotep,² e.g., and in the Babylonian Code of Hammurabi,³ God is appealed to as directly and simply as in the Book of Genesis. But the darkening polytheism and immoral mythology are *there* in these religions, and even the noblest of Babylonian or Vedic penitential hymns fall immeasurably short of the ethical intensity of the Hebrew Psalms,

upon thee, and no one preventing, to exclaim, 'God sees all,' and 'I commend thee to God,' and 'May God repay,' and 'God shall judge between us.' How happens this, since thou art not Christian?"

¹ "*Anima naturaliter Christiana*," *Apol.* c. 17.

² Cf. Renouf, *Hibb. Lects. on The Rel. of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 99-103; and B. G. Gunn's translation of the book. There are several similar collections and fragments (Renouf, pp. 75-6; 101-2; Gunn). Mr. Gunn translates "the God," where Renouf renders "God"; "a Power without a name or any mythological characteristic, constantly referred to in the singular number" (p. 100). But Mr. Gunn also says: "There is nothing said as to duties to the Gods . . . So simply and purely does Ptah-hotep speak of the God that the modern reader can, without the least degradation of his ideals, consider the author as referring to the Deity of Monotheism" (pp. 33, 36). The qualities attributed to God are ethical. He rewards diligence and punishes sin, is the giver of good things, observes men's actions, loves His creation, etc.

³ C. H. W. Johns, *Oldest Code of Laws*, pp. 18, 19, 24, 25, 50, etc.

just because the idea of a perfect holiness in God is wanting. The Babylonian penitent reiterates: "O my God, seven times seven are my transgressions; forgive my sins! O my goddess, seven times seven are my transgressions; forgive my sins! O God, whom I know and whom I know not, seven times seven are my transgressions; forgive my sins!"¹ But the sins confessed are chiefly ritual offences ("The cursed thing that I ate I knew not. The cursed thing that I trampled on I knew not"). In the Rig-Veda Varuna is piteously appealed to for mercy; but sin is conceived of as infatuation. "It was not our own doing, O Varuna, it was necessity, an intoxicating draught, passion, dice, thoughtlessness."² How profound, in comparison, the language of the Psalmist: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight. . . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me!"³

Thus then the case stands as regards revelation. In Habakkuk's words, speaking of

¹ Sayce, *Hibb. Lects., Rel. of Ancient Babylonians*, pp. 350-1.

² *Rig-Veda*, vii. 86, 89 (Müller's *Anc. Sanskrit Lit.*).

³ Ps. li. 4, 10.

Jehovah, his "Holy One": "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on perverseness."¹ Reverting now to the question which mainly occupies us, we have to ask how the *thought and speculation* of the day stand related to this *postulate of a Divine Holiness*, in the light of which, in Christianity, sin appears so infinitely hateful and condemnable.

II

If what has been said is correct, it follows that any teaching which negates God's existence, or denies or weakens the truth of the holiness of God, must, in the degree in which it does so, weaken or subvert the Christian conception of sin. In last chapter, however, it was seen that, both as a general question of Theism, and as a special question of ethical character in God, it is precisely this Christian postulate of a holy God which, at the present hour, is being, from many sides, vehemently assailed. The bearings of these assaults must now be looked at more narrowly. The point to be regarded is—their effect on the idea of sin.

¹ Heb. i. 13.

Atheistic and materialistic views of the world, such as have sometimes prevailed, may be set aside at once as incompatible with any serious view of sin. Here the negation of God is absolute: of necessity, also, the negation of the spiritual nature of man, and of inherent moral distinctions. "Man is what he eats" (Feuerbach) affords no basis for ethics. By the last century materialists, Feuerbach, Büchner, Vogt, Moleschott, the consequences were remorselessly drawn out.¹ There is no sin, free-will, accountability. "Ethics," in words of Luthardt, "are transformed into a bill of fare."² Such crass doctrine, though popular for the time—Büchner's *Kraft und*

¹ Cf. the writer's *Christian View of God* (11th Edit., pp. 402-3).

² *Fundamental Truths of Christianity*, p. 131 (E.T.). Abundant quotations are given by Luthardt and others. E.g., "Sin is that which is unnatural, and not the choosing to do evil" (Moleschott). "In fact, there is no such thing as sin, and therefore no justice in punishment." [So to-day, Mr. Blatchford.] Vogt says: "There is no such thing as free-will, and, consequently, such things as the responsibility and accountability which ethics and penal law, and God knows what else, would still impose upon us." The outcome is as in I Cor. xv. 32. Luthardt quotes from one of many epitaphs on ancient monuments: "Friends, I advise you, mix a goblet of wine and drink it, with your heads crowned with flowers; earth destroys what is left after death" (p. 381)

Stoff ("Force and Matter") went in twenty years through fourteen editions, and was translated into almost every language in Europe—could not survive. There came a reaction on the part of leading thinkers.¹ The monistic, agnostic, and materialistic-idealistic² theories (Haeckel, Spencer, Huxley, etc.) which took its place can hardly be described as an improvement, since, even where distinction is made between mental and physical facts, it is held that science can deal with the former only when interpreted in terms of matter.³ Freedom is denied. Man becomes an automaton.⁴ Material law rules the whole domain of human life.⁵ What place is left for sin?

¹ Haeckel, in his *Riddle of the Universe*, bemoans that most of the leading thinkers, as Virchow, Du Bois-Reymond, Wundt, who had at first adopted a materialistic standpoint, later abandoned it, and came over to a spiritualistic view.

² "It follows that what I term legitimate Materialism . . . is neither more nor less than a shorthand Idealism" (Huxley, "On Descartes," *Lay Sermons*, pp. 157, 374).

³ "With a view to the progress of science, the materialistic terminology is in every way to be preferred" ("On Physical Basis of Life," *Lay Sermons*, p. 160). "Thought is as much a function of matter as motion is" ("On Descartes," *Ibid.*, p. 370; cf. on "Science and Morals" in *Collected Essays*, ix. p. 135).

⁴ Thus Huxley, Shadworth Hodgson.

⁵ "As surely as every future grows out of past and

Dillmann justly says that "holiness" contains the notion "of a living, intelligent, free *Personality*, for only of an I, of a free Personality, can holiness in the full sense be predicated."¹ It results that all *Pantheistic* systems, with *theories of Idealism* which exclude, or inadequately affirm, the divine Personality, are hostile to Christian views of sin. History, again, shows this to be everywhere the case. Spinoza, whose system had such a fascination for later minds, declared repentance to be a weakness.² God is the sole cause. Sin has no reality.³ Schleiermacher, owing

present, so will the physiology of the future extend the realm of matter and law, till it is co-extensive with knowledge, with feeling, and with action" ("On Physical Basis," *Ibid.*, p. 156).

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 28. If we are to keep the name of God at all, or any equivalent term, says Prof. Pringle-Pattison, "an existence of God for Himself, analogous to our own personal existence, though doubtless transcending it infinitely in innumerable ways, is an essential element in the conception" (*Hegelianism and Personality*, p. 222). Dr. McTaggart says: "It is better not to call an impersonal Absolute by the name of God" (*Heg. Cosmol.*, pp. xi. 93).

² "Repentance is not a virtue, or does not arise from reason; but he who repents of an action is doubly wretched and infirm" (*Ethics*, pt. iv., prop. 54).

³ "Good and evil, or sin, are only modes of thought, and by no means things, or anything that has reality" (cf. his "Short Treatise," Wolf's *Spinoza*, pp. 51, 60, etc.).

to the Pantheistic basis of his thinking, seriously weakened the idea of sin. God's is the one causality in the universe. Sin is the form of growth ordained for us by God with a view to the redemption in Christ. The guilt-consciousness (a subjective experience) is a spur to lead us to seek that redemption.¹ Absolutist systems generally reject "Personality" in its application to God as an anthropomorphic and inadmissible conception. It is a moot question whether Hegel, who claimed to change Spinoza's "Substance" into "Subject" (Spirit, Reason, Idea), in any sense attributed Personality to God. The whole genius of his system seems to forbid it,² and expositors and critics like Professor Pringle-Pattison³ and Dr. Ellis McTaggart⁴ are certain he did not. The effects on his views of sin are thus summed up by Dr. McTaggart: "Defects, error, sin, are for Hegel only imperfectly real. . . . All sin is for Hegel relatively good . . . Christianity habitually attaches enormous importance to the idea of

¹ *Der christ. Glaube*, Sects. 51. 1; 80, 81.

² A defence can only be made by regarding time-development as illusory (see below on Green); even then the idea of Personality is not that of Christianity.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 222. ⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp. 59, 93, 205 ff.

sin. . . . This idea is entirely alien to Hegel. I do not wish to insist so much on his belief that all sin, like all other evil, is, from the deepest point of view, unreal, and that *sub specie æternitatis* all reality is perfect. . . . The real difficulty lies in Hegel's treatment of sin as something relatively good. . . . There is no trace in Hegel of any feeling of absolute humility and contrition of man before God. . . . Sin is a mere appearance. Like all appearance, it is based on reality. But the reality it is based on is not sin. Like all reality, it is perfectly good. The sinfulness is part of the appearance." ¹ Is it not a similar effect that is seen to-day in the belittling of sin in "The New Theology" ?

III

The outlook may seem more promising when we come to the distinguished thinkers of the Oxford *Neo-Hegelian* school, headed so ably by the late Mr. T. H. Green. Here, at least, we have the recognition of, in Mr. Green's phrase, an "Eternal Self-Consciousness" at the basis of the universe ; therefore, it may be thought, of something like Personality. Mr.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 218, 239, 243. See the whole discussion.

Green's own profound religious feeling, as well as his ideological views of Christianity, are well brought out in Mr. Nettleship's "Memoir," and in his various writings on religion. God, to him, was a conscious Being who is in eternal perfection all that man has it in him to come to be—"a Being of perfect understanding and perfect love"—an infinite Spirit, towards whom "the attitude of man at his highest and completest could still only be that which we have described as self-abasement before an ideal of holiness."¹ So Dr. Edward Caird speaks of "the divine principle of all things" as "a living God, the inspiring source and eternal realisation of the moral ideal of man"²—"an intelligent or self-conscious being."³ Both Mr. Green and Dr. Caird, however, would shrink from applying the term "personal" to God—Dr. Caird argues against it⁴—and with too good reason in the metaphysical implications of their system. For what, after all, is this "Eternal Self-Consciousness" of Mr. Green's *Prolegomena*? In strictness, only the ideal unity of the system

¹ "Memoir," in Green's *Works*, iii. pp. 92, 142.

² *Evolution of Religion*, ii. p. 67.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 82. Cf. Mr. Bradley, *Ethical Studies*, pp. 290, 304-5,

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

of thought-relations we call the universe—its central point or focus—the still pool, if we may call it so, in which the system of relations eternally reflects itself. Time falls away from this Consciousness, and from the relations it sustains, for it is “a consciousness for which the relations of fact that form the object of our gradually-acquired knowledge already and eternally exist.”¹ Freedom does not belong to it, for the relations are what they are by eternal logical necessity. The Consciousness has no contents but these relations which constitute the world—no being in and for itself. It is Kant’s “Synthetic Unity of Apperception” deified. God and the universe are, in short, on this view, but two sides—the inner and outer—of one and the same fact: individual selves are but “the Eternal Consciousness itself, making the animal organism its vehicle, and subject to certain limitations in so doing.”²

Despite language, therefore, about a “realised moral ideal,” it is very obvious that we have not here a view of God fitted to sustain a

¹ *Prolegomena to Ethics*, p. 75. Time-development is here in principle denied. Process in nature is not a matter simply of “gradually-acquired knowledge,” but a reality of the objective system. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.

Christian doctrine of sin. God's life being merged in that of the universe, sin, so far as it is real, is taken up into God's own life. But sin, in truth, is not real. Sin belongs, as in Hegel, to the realm of appearance, and for God, the unity of the whole, simply does not exist. As Mr. Nettleship interprets: "The imperfection which in man is never wholly overcome, but remains a positive and final fact separating him from God, exists in God, not as sin, but as an element in the divine perfection, in which its finality, and therefore its sinfulness, is done away."¹ So to Dr. E. Caird sin is a necessary step in the dialectic movement of spirit which conducts to goodness. "The turbidity of the waters only proves that the angel has come down to trouble them, and the important thing is that, when so disturbed, they have a healing virtue."² It begins to be apparent that the "realised perfection" of this theory is something very different from the divine holiness of the Chris-

¹ "Memoir," p. 94.

² *Op. cit.*, i. p. 231. St. Paul is criticised for not adequately seeing the unity of the negative and positive sides of this process (ii. pp. 207, 211-13). It is instructive to notice that the words "Sin" and "Evil" do not occur in Dr. Caird's Index.

tian gospel. It is only what might be looked for, therefore, to find the type of thought the theory represents, so replete with contradictions, developing, in the hands of Mr. Bradley, who emphasises these, into the doctrine of an Absolute for whom good and evil wholly disappear, and, under Dr. McTaggart's unsparing logic, into a doing away with the "Eternal Self-Consciousness" altogether.

Enough was perhaps said in last chapter in illustration of Mr. Bradley's general standpoint in his work, *Appearance and Reality*. The consciousness in which Mr. Green sought the key to the meaning of the universe Mr. Bradley finds to be involved in insoluble contradictions, which show that it works in a region of "appearance"—one may say, illusion. The appearances are held to imply an absolute Reality of which we can assert little more than that it is the sum of them, but is, in some unknown way, self-consistent and harmonious.¹ [How this last proposition is established is not clear.] Neither thought, nor will, nor Personality, nor morality, can be affirmed of the Absolute. To it there is nothing good or bad.² It may only be noticed

¹ *Appear. and Reality*, pp. 242, 457. ² *Ibid.*, p. 411.

now how this final product of the hyper-acute dialectic of the Neo-Hegelian school lands us in a species of semi-pessimistic Spinozism, very different from the buoyant confidence with which the school set out. "Is there," asks Mr. Bradley towards the close, "in the end, and on the whole, any progress in the universe? Is the Absolute either better or worse at one time than another? It is, clear that we must answer in the negative, since progress and decay are alike incompatible with perfection. There is, of course, progress in the world, and there is also retrogression, but we cannot think that the whole either moves on or backwards."¹ The Christian ideal of a Kingdom of God finds little support here. It need not be said that the hope of immortality is rejected.²

If Dr. McTaggart, in his *Some Dogmas of Religion*, is as hyper-subtle as Mr. Bradley, he attacks the problems in his own way, and

¹ We do not seem to get much beyond the doctrine of Celsus, whom Origen combated. "There neither has been, in former times, nor is there now, nor ever shall be, an increase or diminution of evil. The nature of the universe is ever identical, and the production of evil is not a variable quantity" (*Contra Celsum*, bk. iii. 62). ² *Op. cit.*, pp. 501-10.

arrives at different, if equally negative, conclusions. His polemic is directed against the ordinary doctrines of God, Freedom and Immortality, all of which, he is satisfied, must go, when brought to the bar of reason. By God is meant "a Being who is personal, supreme, and good."¹ The usual arguments to prove the existence of such a Being are weighed and found wanting. A chief reason for challenging the omnipotence and goodness of God is the existence of evil in the world.² A non-omnipotent God is declared to be no solution of the difficulty; besides, there is no evidence for His existence either. The case for Theism thus falls. Obviously it is needless to talk of a divine holiness, and of a doctrine of sin built on it, when the very existence of a personal and supreme Deity is negated. It may safely be replied, however, that in his ingenious reasonings on these subjects, Dr. McTaggart overreaches himself by his cleverness. The problem of evil in its relation to Theodicy belongs to a different part of the argument, but a few words may be said on the general issue. The question of

¹ *Some Dogmas of Religion*, p. 186.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 208 ff., 224.

Theism, on its intellectual side, resolves itself, in a sentence, very much into this, Is there a rationally-constituted universe? On its moral side, into this, Is there an essential distinction between right and wrong? For if the universe is rationally constituted—and who will say it is not?—it seems but the other side of the same proposition to affirm that there must be Reason behind it—that it has a rational mind for its Cause. Hypotheses which postulate Thought without a Thinker may be left, for the majority of human beings, to look after themselves. Some of the objections offered by Dr. McTaggart on the theoretic side are extraordinary. E.g., How can God be omnipotent, if He is bound by the laws of Identity, Contradiction, and Excluded Middle?¹ If He cannot, at will, make $A = \text{not-}A$! or, say, make 2 and $2 = 5$! Again, in his argument—here following Hume—that, given sufficient time, “chance,” in its innumerable combinations, is capable of producing all the appearances of design in the universe.² Not

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 203-6, 230, etc.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 243-5, 259. Cf. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Nat. Rel.*, pt. viii.: “It must happen, in an eternal duration, that every possible order or position must be tried an infinite number of times.” It is over-

by such reasonings will the pillars of a rational belief in God be shaken.

It is on the ethical side, however, that the weight of the objection presses, and here the question of the divine holiness is most nearly touched. On this the reply may be made that, however, in theory, the validity of moral distinctions may be challenged, there is hardly a writer who does not, in practice, admit that it is impossible to believe in a God who is *less* than the *realised ideal of moral perfection*. Either *such* a God, even the Agnostic will say, or no God. Mr. Bradley would be the first to scout the possibility of believing in a God who was capricious, cruel, or vindictive, in His dealings with His creatures. This much, at least, Christianity has done for serious thinking. An illustration is afforded in Mr. J. S. Mill's famous outburst, endorsed by Dr. McTaggart,¹ in denunciation of what he took to be the kind of Deity depicted by Mr. Mansel. "If, instead of the glad tidings that there exists a Being in whom all the excellencies which the highest mind can con-

looked that there are some combinations that *never* would arise under fortuity, even in an eternity—those, viz., due to an ordering intelligence (a "Hamlet," for instance). ¹ *Ibid.*, p. 214.

ceive exist in a degree inconceivable to us, I am informed that the world is ruled by a being whose attributes are infinite, but what they are we cannot learn, nor what are the principles of his government, except that 'the highest human morality which we are capable of conceiving' does not sanction them; convince me of it, and I will bear my fate as I may. . . . Whatever power such a being may have over me, there is one thing which he shall not do; he shall not compel me to worship him. I will call no being good, who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures" [the closing part of the passage we may omit].¹ Here is assertion enough of absolute moral values. On whatever grounds we believe in a supreme, ruling

¹ *Exam. of Hamilton*, p. 103. Mr. Mansel's reply may be seen in his *Philosophy of the Conditioned*, pp. 168 ff. The words quoted do honour to Mr. Mill's heart: whether he was justified in using them by his philosophy is another matter. It is to be granted that, while endorsing Mill's words, Dr. McTaggart in other places seems to take a different view. "It is not impossible that the director of the universe should be worse than the worst man. . . . I cannot see, therefore, that any reason has been given for supposing a director of the universe to be good rather than bad" (*op. cit.*, pp. 255-6). But, paradoxes apart, Dr. McTaggart would object to worship such a being. He would judge him by the moral ideal, and condemn him.

Power in the universe, even the perplexity of evil in the world cannot shake our faith that this Power must be ethically good.¹

IV

It is possible, however, to go a step further. Allusion has been made to the tempting plea of philosophical writers—of Dr. McTaggart among the rest—for an autonomous morality, a morality which shall be independent of religion. In the interest of both morality and religion—indirectly, of a doctrine of sin—it may be claimed that, with the recognition of absolute moral standards, this plea cannot be sustained. It is not merely, as formerly urged, that morality needs imperatively to be vitalised from a higher source, and only when taken up into a higher relation, that of religion, obtains the power needed to sustain it, to give it the breadth adequate to man's need, and to make it a living reality in men's hearts. The deeper truth is that the ethical ideal, with its unconditional claim on man's obedience, has for its necessary implication *an*

¹ Matthew Arnold's "Power not ourselves that makes for righteousness" is a testimony in the same direction, but fails in not explicitly recognising that such a Power must be personal.

Ethical Power at the basis of the universe. The ideal in conscience is not its own explanation. It drives us back on the Power on which our whole being depends, and is itself one of the surest grounds of our faith that this Power is personal, and ethically perfect. It discovers to us that man, as a moral being, is not a self-sufficing unit, capable of living for himself and to himself, but is intended to live his life in dependence on God, drawing daily his supplies of grace and strength from Him.¹ His sin is, fundamentally, that he does not so live, but seeks to realise a false independence.

The idea of the Divine Holiness, in union with Personality and Freedom — God's "Thou" answering to the "I" in man—is thus one profoundly in accordance with reason and the highest dictates of morality. Yet it is to be repeated that the full meaning of holiness, final certainty in regard to it, and the irresistible impression of its power, are only to be obtained through God's historical self-revelations, and above all through His personal revelation in Jesus Christ. "The only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared [ἐξηγήσατο, interpreted,

¹ Thus Augustine rightly conceived of man.

given the 'exegesis' of] Him." ¹ In Christ we have, as Herrmann would say, the overpowering impression (*Eindruck*) of the grace and truth, but not less of the holy purity, of the Power, "greater than all things" that rules the world.² The Gospel parallel to Isaiah's confession, "Woe is me! because I am a man of unclean lips," ³ is St. Peter's cry in the boat, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." ⁴ In his recognition of "the inviolable justice of God's moral order," ⁵ which Jesus reveals, and at the same time vindicates, Herrmann goes beyond Ritschl, who, in exalting love to the exclusion of everything judicial and punitive in God's character, weakens the ideas of both sin and guilt, resolving the former largely into "ignorance," and the latter into an alienation and distrust which better knowledge of God removes.⁶ It is, in truth, the revelation of God's holiness in the gospel which gives grace all its value. Resentment against sin, as Professor Seeley in *Ecce Homo* teaches, is the

¹ John i. 18.

² *Communion with God*, pp. 78 ff., 107-10 (E.T.).

³ Is. vi. 5. ⁴ Luke v. 8.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁶ *Justif. and Recon.*, pp. 376-84 (E.T.). Cf. below.

background of mercy.¹ In Christ the flame of anger at wilful transgression is ever accompanied by pity for the weak and erring.

God, then, is holy. One corollary from this truth, of no small importance for the doctrine of sin, is the right determination of *the moral end*. Moral life, in the true idea of it, as philosophy has recognised from the time of Socrates, is life directed to an end. What is that end? Religion alone, in its doctrine of the holy God, holds the answer to that question. If God be holy, embracing in His divine perfection righteousness and love, it follows without further argument that His final end in the universe must be a moral and personal one. Kant, Lotze, Ritschl, most theologians of rank, agree here. From it they deduce, in harmony with Christianity, that God's final end in His universe must be a "Kingdom of God," or "Kingdom of the Good."² Dorner in his *Ethics* has a fruitful discussion of the question, What is the relation of the ethical nature of God to the other determinations we ascribe to Him? And he

¹ *Ecce Homo*, chap. xxi.

² Cf. Kant, *Religion within the Limits of True Reason*, bk. iii.; Lotze, *Phil. of Rel.*, p. 137 (E.T.); Ritschl, *Justif. and Recon.*, pp. 279-80 (E.T.).

reaches the conclusion that "the non-ethical distinctions in the nature of God [the natural attributes] are related to the ethical as means to an end; but the absolute end can only lie in morality, for it alone is of absolute worth."¹

This conception of the end of God yields the true standard for the *end of man*. The older theology, mounting to the highest point, defined the last end for both God and man as "the glory of God." And truly all things are created and exist ultimately for the glory of God.² Man's sin is that he comes short of that glory.³ But the question needs nearer determination; for obviously each created being glorifies God only as it fulfils the end for which it was itself created. What then is the end of man's creation? Kant, again, is right in saying that it can only be the moral; that the end is wrongly conceived if sought in anything outside morality—in pleasure, happiness, self-satisfaction, in anything to which morality is related merely as a means. It is not relation to the end that creates morality, but morality that imposes the necessity that

¹ *Christian Ethics*, p. 65 (E.T.).

² Pss. xix. 1, cxlv. 10-12; Rev. iv. 11, etc.

³ Rom. i. 21, iii. 21.

the end must be a moral one. The end may include both virtue and blessedness ; but the virtue must determine the blessedness, not *vice versa*.

But this is not the whole. From the *religious* standpoint, which is the ultimate one, man does not exist for himself. His end, therefore, cannot lie within himself, but must lie in his making *God's* end his own. The powers derived from God are to be used for God's ends, not for his own ; are to be used, as was said, for God's glory.¹ That is, in the view taken of God's end, they are to be used for the ends of His Kingdom. Here, in the Christian conception, is man's chief end—his chief duty and chief good—to live for God's Kingdom ; to seek first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.² That Kingdom, begun on earth, perfected in eternity—established through Christ in redemption from sin—is to be the goal of all endeavour, the object of all hope.

How entirely every such conception of the end, whether of man or of the universe, is swept away by the theories above com-

¹ 1 Cor. x. 31 ; 1 Pet. iv. 11. Cf. Rom. vi. 13, 22.

² Matt. vi. 33.

mented upon, will be obvious to every one who reflects on their denials of God, of Freedom, and of Immortality, and on the views which are substituted of the grounds of moral conduct, and the aims of human existence. Illustrations will appear in later parts of the discussion.

CHAPTER IV

SIN IN ITS PRINCIPLE AND DEVELOPMENT

Sin is now to be more exactly considered in its own nature—not simply in its formal character as transgression of moral law, nor in its enormity as contradiction of the divine holiness,—not even in its obliquity as departure or turning aside from the true moral end,—but in its own inmost *principle* and *genesis*, in that deepest spring within the soul from which all its baleful manifestations proceed. Is there such a “principle” of sin? If there is, it must be of the utmost importance for the right estimate of sin to be able to lay the finger upon it.

It has been seen that there are theories which, from their nature, exclude the existence of any such all-comprehending principle,—theories to which sin is something relative only to the finite human judgment, which belongs to the parts, not to the whole.

which, from the point of view of the Absolute, simply does not exist,—theories which deny to man free volition, therefore rob him of his power of acting as a voluntary cause,—theories which enchain man in a destiny not of his own making through heredity or the inheritance of brute-instinct. What room, e.g., is left for moral action, entailing responsibility, on such a theory as Herbert Spencer's, who declares that our faith in the reality of freedom is "an inveterate illusion," that man is no more free than a leaf in a tornado, or a feather in Niagara;¹ or as Maudsley's, who affirms: "There is a destiny made for man by his ancestors, and no one can elude, were he able to attempt it, the tyranny of his organisation."²

High metaphysical theories, like Hegel's, which make sin a necessary "moment" in the process of the evolution of the absolute "Idea"—a moment of "negation" to be afterwards sublated in a higher unity: in the case of man, a necessary stage in the transition from animal to human conscious-

¹ Cf. his *Psychology*, i. pp. 500 ff.

² Quoted by Dr. Amory Bradford, in his book on *Heredity*, pp. 81 ff.

ness,¹ equally preclude the search for a "principle" of sin, originating in a culpable misuse of human freedom. So with theories, weaker echoes of the above, which trace sin to a necessary play of opposites in the universe—to a law of "polarity" which prescribes that a thing can exist and be known only through its contrary:² light through darkness, sweet through bitter, pleasure through pain, good through evil—or which treat it, aesthetically, as the discord necessary for the production of the perfect harmony.

Even here, however, one fact is to be noticed. In all such theories it has still to

¹ Cf. Dr. McTaggart's exposition in his *Heg. Cosmol.*, ch. vi. and pp. 230 ff. This is not to deny that there are instructive points in Hegel's teaching on sin, as in everything he wrote. Some of these are noted below.

² Thus Mr. Fiske, in his *Through Nature to God*, deduces the necessity of sin from what he calls "the element of antagonism" in the universe. "If we had never felt physical pain, we could not recognise physical pleasure. . . . In just the same way it follows that, without knowing that which is morally evil, we could not possibly recognise that which is morally good. Of these antagonistic correlatives, the one is unthinkable in absence of the other" (pp. 34-5). Cf. Sir Oliver Lodge, *The Substance of the Faith*, pp. 46-52. In *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1889, Mr. Huxley banters Mr. S. Laing on his use of the word "Polarity" in this connexion.

be recognised that, however it may be in the contemplation of the infinite—of the whole, from the standpoint of the finite—the part, sin, culpability, is a terrible and omnipresent reality. Men do every day things they know they ought not to do, and leave undone things they ought to do. Judged by whatever standard one will, law of conscience, social opinion, public law, offences, iniquities, abound, entailing on the wrong-doer sharp and deserved penalty. It is a proper question to ask—How are such things there? Is there any unity of principle to which they can be referred?

I

A first point in the Christian doctrine of sin is that sin does not arise as part of the necessary order of the universe, but has its origin or spring in *personal will*, revolting against God and goodness. It has not its ground in the nature of God: the suggestion is blasphemy. "God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man."¹ It has not its ground in an eternal, God-

¹ James i. 13.

resisting "matter," as many old thinkers taught, and as even so Christian-minded a man as R. Rothe permitted himself to believe.¹ Matter, in the Biblical view, is not non-divine, but was created "good." How can it be the source of ethical evil? It has not its ground in a "flesh" inherently sinful—a doctrine which some would read into St. Paul,² but with which St. Paul's teaching on the *σάρξ* has nothing to do.³ Apart from special texts, sin is everywhere represented in Scripture as originating in volun-

¹ *Theol. Ethik* (2nd Edit.), i., Sects. 40, 104-30. In his *Still Hours* he says: "Evil, in the course of development, or sin, is not in itself a condition of the development of the good; but it belongs to the idea of creation, as a creation out of nothing, that the created personality cannot detach itself from material nature otherwise than by being clothed upon with matter, and being in this way altered, rendered impure and sinful. . . . The necessity of a transition through sin is not directly an ethical, but rather a physical necessity" (pp. 185-6, E.T.).

² Thus Holsten and many moderns. C. Clemen supports this view in his *Christ. Lehre von der Sünde*, i. pp. 200-1. Baur, Pfeiderer, etc., opposed Holsten.

³ Christ assumed our human nature, yet without sin (Rom. viii. 3; Phil. ii. 7; 2 Cor. v. 21). The bodily members that were servants of sin are to become instruments of righteousness (Rom. vi. 13, 19; Rom. xii. 1). The life which Paul lived, as a renewed man, "in the flesh," he lived by the faith of the Son of God (Gal. ii. 20). It was through "disobedience" that sin and death entered (Rom. v. 12 ff.).

tary disobedience on the part of man,¹ as unfaithfulness to better knowledge,² as wilful choosing of evil rather than of good—all flesh “corrupting” its way upon the earth.³ Only on this ground is sin something that God can judge and punish. This also is the teaching with which the Church, in its creed-formations, has been constantly identified.⁴

All theories of the universe, it is acknowledged, do not minimise the tragic reality of sin. Many even of those which throw back the origin of sin into the original constitution of things—into the nature of God Himself—are, in an indirect way, a testimony to the awfulness of that reality. Sin—evil—is felt to be a fact too real to be explained as mere

¹ Ps. xiv.; Rom. v. 19; Jas. i. 13-15. Cf. the indictment of Israel, Deut. xxxii. 4-18; Isa. i. 2-4.

² Rom. i. 21 ff.

³ Gen. vi. 12.

⁴ This is true of Calvinistic, as of all other important symbols. In the *Westminster Confession*, e.g., the natural liberty of man is affirmed, with his power, in the state of innocence, “to will and to do that which is good and pleasing to God” (ch. ix.), and God’s providence is described as extending to all sins, in permitting and overruling, “yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God; who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the author or approver of sin” (ch. v.).

seeming, too deeply interwoven into the nature of man and the texture of the world to be accounted for by the contingencies of individual volition. A deeper ground, it is thought, must be sought for it. Hence Zoroastrianism, with its hypothesis of eternally antagonistic principles striving for the mastery—one good and one evil. The dualistic solution reappears in Manichæism, and has a strong fascination for many modern minds.¹ It is overlooked that a principle which is *only* evil—which never knew good and rejected it—is not properly an ethical principle at all. It sinks to the level of a nature-force, beneficent or harmful, as the case may be, but in no true sense moral. Hence the inevitable tendency in dualism to confuse natural and moral evil. Gnosticism took the bolder step of carrying up the origin of evil into the region of the divine itself—into the “Pleroma.” *There* the primal fall took place which re-enacts itself in lower spheres.² Modern Pessimistic sys-

¹ J. S. Mill tells us in his *Autobiography* that his father was inclined to favour the Manichæan hypothesis. The God of Christianity he regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of wickedness (p. 40).

² Thus specially the Valentinians. Scripture like-

tems seek to give the theory of the inherent evil of existence an absolute philosophic grounding—one, however, which refutes itself by its own irrationalities and internal contradictions. The original, inexpiable crime is creation. The absolute "Will," by an insensate act, rushes into existence, and binds itself in bonds of the finite, from which, with the misery it entails, its utmost ingenuity afterwards hardly enables it to escape! ¹ It is striking to observe the attraction which this idea of a "Fall" in the sphere of the divine has for the framers of absolute philosophies. The Pessimism of Schopenhauer has its roots in ideas of philosophers who preceded him—of Böhme, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel.² The system has its service in showing how impossible it is to get rid of sin as a tragedy in the universe. As Professor Flint has said, Pessimism, "like Macbeth, has

wise has its doctrine of a superhuman evil, but in the spiritual world also the Fall is voluntary (John, viii. 44; 1 John iii. 8). See below, p. 126.

¹ Cf. Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea*, and Von Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. A criticism is offered in the writer's *Christian View of God*, pp. 53 ff.

² Illustrations are given in *Christian View of God*, p. 54. Schelling, in his *Philosophie und Religion*, describes

murdered sleep.”¹ It has killed for ever the superficial optimism of the older Rousseau school. Its fatal defect is that, seeking a transcendental ground for evil, it relieves man’s will of the responsibility for sin, and shifts the blame back on the Absolute Principle of the universe.² With such a view Christianity can make no terms.

The first really deep note in the reaction from the optimism of the French and German *Aufklärung* was that struck by Kant in his section on “The Radical Evil in Human Nature” in his *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason*. Kant recognises the existence of a propensity to evil in human nature, but is clear that this propensity can only be really (ethically) evil, and imputable to man, if it is not an affair of mere sensibility or inheritance, but has its origin in an act of personal freedom—i.e., springs from the

the Creation as an “Abfall”—the assertion by the ego of its independence. In quite the strain of Schopenhauer, he speaks of this as the original sin or primal fall of the spirit, which we expiate in time. Cf. Prof. Seth (Pringle-Pattison), *From Kant to Hegel*, p. 65. The idea has place in Hegel also (cf. his *Phil. d. Rel.*, ii. p. 251).

¹ *Anti-Theistic Theories*, p. 294.

² Yet v. Hartmann speaks in his *Religionsphilosophie* of the “Holiness” of God!

human *will*. This wrong decision, altering man's whole character, Kant seeks, in accordance with his philosophy, not in the empirical (phenomenal), but in the "intelligible" (transcendent, timeless, noumenal), domain, to which all man's acts of freedom are referred.¹ Few will follow him in this line, but the value of his assertion that moral evil can only have its origin in a misuse of freedom remains unaffected by the peculiarity of his theory of freedom. It is on this account that Ritschl could speak of Kant as laying the foundations of a sound Christian theology.²

¹ Cf. the translation of this part of Kant's work in Abbott's *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 325 ff., or the exposition in Caird's *Kant*, ii. pp. 593 ff. It is not clearly shown by Kant how, on his theory, sin should be universal.

Ordinary pre-existence theories, as those of Origen and Julius Müller, it is not thought necessary to discuss (cf. the criticism in Dorner, *Syst. of Christ. Doct.*, iii. pp. 46-9 (E.T.)).

² Cf. his *Justif. and Recon.*, i. (E.T.) p. 387. Kant's importance, he thinks, lies in his having "established critically—that is, with scientific strictness—those general presuppositions of the idea of reconciliation which lie in the consciousness of moral freedom and moral guilt." He speaks of Kant's "leading thought, viz., the specific distinction of the power of will from all powers of nature" (p. 444). He accepts Kant's distinction of the phenomenal and noumenal in respect of human freedom (pp. 389, 394).

In other directions, as through the rise of the evolutionary philosophy, necessity—what J. Fiske calls “the brute-inheritance”—is brought back to explain the origin of sin in man’s nature. This will require separate consideration.

II

A second point in the Christian doctrine of sin is that, originating in volition as something that *ought not to be*, it can be defined, and judged of, only by *reference to the good*—to that of which it is the *negation*.

This is not the same thing as to say, as some theorists have done,¹ that sin is mere “privation,” absence of a quality of goodness which ought to be present. For sin, while negative in relation to that which ought to be, is, as everyone must see, positive enough as an appallingly active force for corruption and ruin. Scripture, indeed, speaks of sin

¹ Sin is an *ens privativum*, requiring for its explanation, not a *causa efficiens*, but only a *causa deficiens*. Thus Leibnitz in his *Théodicée*, and many others. Augustine, in his recoil from Manichæism, used similar language, but chiefly as meaning that sin is not a substance, but arises from the perversion of what in itself is good. Cf. the writer’s *Progress of Dogma*, p. 147. See also Müller’s *Doct. of Sin* (E.T.), i. pp. 286 ff.

—carnal-mindedness—as a state of “death.”¹ It means, without doubt, the loss of the soul’s true life in God—is in that sense “privative.” But it is not a privation which converts man into a clod (reason, consciousness, desire, all active powers remain), but one which, as the result of the taking into the will of a hostile, God-negating principle, holds within it the germ of a new and perverted development. It has a “law” which runs its own course—a “law of sin and death.”² In the words of J. Müller, “the perverted negative presupposes a perverted affirmative.”³ Sin is a power, a tyranny, which defies all man’s efforts, in his natural strength, to get rid of it.⁴

It is not, again, meant, in what is just said, to reaffirm the doctrines already rejected that good and evil are polar opposites, only to be known or realised the one through the other—the good through the evil, the evil through the good. This notion, the offspring of a false dialectic, is really a reversion to the dualism which takes from both good and

¹ Rom. viii. 6; Eph. ii. 1, etc.

² Rom. vii. 21-25; viii. 2. ³ *Op. cit.*, i. p. 287.

⁴ Rom. vii. 23, 24.

evil their proper character, and has for its logical issue the disappearance of the distinction altogether in the Absolute, who (Schelling's "point of indifference") is necessarily above the contrast. Sinless life, on such an hypothesis—in God, in Christ, in beings higher than man, as angels are presumed to be—becomes an impossible conception. There cannot be an absolute holiness such as the moral ideal requires us to postulate in God, for only through experience of evil could good, even for God, be known. This, indeed, is what the doctrine comes to in systems which merge God's life in that of the universe, and make sin a necessary movement in that life. No such necessity exists. The negative can only subsist through the positive; but the positive subsists in its own right—in and through itself—and is the presupposition of the other. If it is urged that, for finite beings, the good, at least the highest realisation of the good, can only be attained through experience of evil, the Christian, in reply, takes his firm stand on the sinless development of the world's Redeemer. Sin, indeed, Christ knew, but it was the world's sin, not His own.

Temptation He endured, yet without fall. His development was faultlessly pure from cradle to Cross.

To understand sin's principle, therefore, it is necessary, first, to understand the *principle of the good*. This true thought Ritschl carries to an extreme when he affirms that sin, in Christianity, is determined by the idea of the highest moral good—the Kingdom of God.¹ The Kingdom of God is, indeed, the Christian formula at once for the highest good or blessedness, and for the highest moral aim; but the Kingdom itself presupposes a community of moral beings united for the realisation of righteousness, and themselves “good” in virtue of this fundamental determination of their wills. Ritschl's view inverts the true order of ideas. It is certainly not the idea of the Kingdom of God which first makes it a man's duty, “denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,” to live “soberly and righteously and godly in this present world”²—which makes it right, e.g., to be self-respecting, just, kind, truthful, or wrong for one to cherish pride, or

¹ *Justif. and Reconcil.* (E.T.), p. 57: “The religious moral good of the Kingdom of God forms the standard of our conception of sin and guilt.” Cf. pp. 329, 334, 348.

² Titus ii. 12.

envy, or malice, or lewdness in his heart. The wrong of these things lies in themselves; the ideal of the good excludes them, and demands their opposites. The attitude of mind and will which the individual takes up towards the things which are good, and true, and pure—the “principle” by which his will is regulated in regard to them—is what makes the individual good or bad.

Kant has given a classical utterance on the subject of the good in his dictum that nothing can possibly be conceived of which can be called good without qualification except a *Good Will*.¹ The question of the principle of the good thus resolves itself into the question of what constitutes a good will. Kant would find the answer in a will determined by pure reverence for the moral law. This accords with the philosopher's moralism, but it falls short of the demand of religion, and specially fails to satisfy the Christian demand. The good will, in the Christian sense, is a will determined, not by its attitude to an abstract law of reason, but, fundamentally, by its attitude to God. “Which is the great commandment

¹ *Fund. Principles of Met. of Morals*, Sect. i. (Abbott's translation, p. 9).

in the law?" asked the scribe of Jesus. Jesus answered: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment, and a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."¹ This demand for love to God Christ lays down, not as a requirement for a select few, but as a first, permanent, and unalterable demand, springing from the essential relation of the moral being to God; not as something man is to reach as the goal of a long development, but as the only state of goodness, something that ought to be there from the beginning, and in all stages of development. It is a demand, therefore, applicable to all, scribes, Pharisees, publicans, sinners, alike. One is reminded of Anselm's statement of the primary moral obligation, in his *Cur Deus Homo*: "The whole will of a rational creature ought to be subject to the will of God."² Expression may vary. We may speak of the will as determined by "love," or by "fear" of God; as subject to God, surrendered to God, obedient to God; but

¹ Matt. xxii. 36-39; Mark xii. 28-34.

² *Op. cit.* i. 11.

the essence of the matter is always the same—the will is viewed as *God-regarding*, not *self-regarding*, a will yielded up to God in loving, trustful obedience,¹ for God's ends, not one's own. Only thus, as Augustine of old, who here gets to the root of the matter, apprehended, is it a truly *good will*.²

It need hardly be said that a good will, in the sense described, can only exist and develop normally, i.e., in unflinching obedience, in a nature into which sin has not already entered; a nature pure in its springs and impulses, and harmoniously constituted. The good *nature* is the correlative of the good *will*, and the moral demand embraces both. Divine law takes account of disposition, as well as of principle and motive, and requires that the heart be pure, the affections and desires regulated, as befits a state of uprightness. This does not, of course, mean that a nature right

¹ Everywhere in Scripture the test of godliness is obedience. The only disciple Christ recognises is he who does the will of the Father (Matt. vii. 21, etc.). "This is the love of God," says St. John, "that we keep His commandments" (1 John v. 3). Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 19; Gal. v. 6.

² Augustine rejected the Pelagian idea of a will neutral to good and evil. If the will has not the love of God as its principle, it is because it has taken into itself an opposite principle.

in principle is not subject to growth and development. There are *stages* in growth. As in the Kingdom: "first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear."¹ The child thinks as a child, speaks as a child, understands as a child. Jesus, though sinless, advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.² This, however, a growth in goodness, is very different from growth out of evil into good,³ with which it is often confounded. How absolutely contrary such conceptions are to current ideas of man's natural development—the moral ideal slowly evolving through ages of animalism, brutality and savagery, of superstition, vice, and crime, till the existing (still very imperfect) stage of civilisation is reached—the writer is well aware. Only, it is held, morality must change its nature, and Christ's teaching on man's relation to the Heavenly Father, and duty to Him, be shown to be other than it is, before a different conception of what constitutes goodness can establish itself as Christian.

¹ Mark iv. 29.

² Luke ii. 40, 52.

³ Dorner says: "Evil does not consist in man's not yet being initially what he will one day become; for then, evil must be called normal, and can only be

III

If the principle of the good has been correctly apprehended, the way is open for stating what, in the Christian view, is the principle of *badness* or *sin*. To reach this principle one must go deeper than any mere conflict of higher and lower tendencies in man's nature—of sense with reason, of animal appetency with dawning consciousness of duty, of egoism with altruism, and the like. As examples, Schleiermacher finds the explanation of sin in the relative weakness of the God-consciousness as compared with the strength of the sensuous impulses.¹ Ritschl, not dissimilarly, finds it in the fact that man starts off as a natural being, with self-seeking desires, while the will for good is a "growing" quantity² (sin, therefore, is largely "ignorance," and to that extent is non-imputable). Evolution finds it in the presence and sway of

esteemed exceptionable by an error. Evil is something different from mere development. . . . Evil is the discord of man with his idea, as, and so far as, that idea should be realised at the given moment. . . . Sin is not being imperfect at all, but the contravention of what ought to be at a given moment, and of what can lay claim to unconditioned worth." (*System of Doct.* [E.T.], iii. p. 37.

¹ *Der christ. Glaube*, Sects. 66-9. ² *Unterricht*, p. 26.

the "brute-inheritance." A sufficient reason for rejecting these theories, from the point of view already taken, is that they, one and all, make sin a necessary, at least an "unavoidable,"¹ condition of human development, and describe man as from the first a being with unequal conflict established in his nature—a state in contradiction of the moral idea. The theories take up man at a point at which the disorder of sin is already present.

Martensen comes nearer a true explanation when he views man as, in accordance with "his twofold destiny of a life in God and a life in the world," moved fundamentally by two impulses—the one, the impulse towards God; the other, the impulse towards the world, which, as having a relative independence, he may be tempted to make an object on its own account.² Love of the creature, therefore, rather than God, might seem to be the princi-

¹ Ritschl's word (*unvermeidlich*), *Recht und Ver.*, p. 360 (E.T., p. 380, "inevitable"). Evolution theories are considered later.

² "God and the world are the highest universal powers which stir in human nature, and through the corresponding impulses make man their instrument. For although the world is God's world, yet in a modified sense He has permitted it to have life in itself. He has bestowed a relative independence and self-dependence on it as being other than God; and this principle of the world's

ple of sin.¹ It is apparent on reflection, however, as Martensen, too, knows, that behind even this stands the wrong act of the will *choosing* the creature rather than God; so that, in the last analysis, the essence of sin is seen to lie in the resolve of the will to make itself independent of God—to renounce, or set aside, God's authority, and be a law to itself; in other words, in *self-will*, or *egoism*. It is the desire for a false independence of which the story of the Prodigal is the eternal parable; the search for a freedom which really ends in bondage and misery. Augustine calls it "self-love"; it is more truly "selfishness"; the enthroning of self in the core of the being as the last law of existence. It is Christ's word inverted: "Not Thy will, but mine, be done." With this corresponds the uniform representation in Scripture of sin as rebellion, disobedience, apostasy, the turning aside from God to one's own ways; and of repentance as the return to God in faith, love, and new obedience.

That the analysis of sin's principle here independence and the world's autonomy aims at establishing its sovereignty in man and through him by means of these impulses." (*Christian Ethics*, E.T. p. 95.)

¹ Cf. Rom. i. 25; 1 John ii. 15-17.

offered ¹ is the true one will be manifest in the further tracing of the developments of sin : it is pertinent, at present, to observe how essentially it agrees with the analysis which philosophy itself furnishes when seeking to probe this matter of the nature of evil to its bottom. Kant, e.g., is insistent that the last explanation of sin is the determination of the will to be a law to itself. As he puts it : " A man is bad only by this, that he reverses the moral order of the springs in adopting them into his maxims. . . . Perceiving that they [the moral [law and self-love] cannot subsist together on equal terms, but that one must be subordinate to the other, as its supreme condition, he makes the spring of self-love and its inclinations the condition of obedience to the moral law." ² For Hegel also, whatever the defects otherwise of his theory of sin as part of a dialectic process, the essence of sin lies in the assertion of independent being, a Being-for-Self in isolation from the universal.³ Dr. McTaggart may

¹ The subject is discussed in other relations in the writer's works, *The Christian View of God*, pp. 171 ff., and *God's Image in Man*, pp. 212 ff.

² Cf. in Abbott, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

³ *Phil. d. Rel.*, ii. p. 264.

explain: Sin "is thus both positive and negative—positive within a limited sphere, but negative inasmuch as that whole sphere is negative. And this does justice to the double nature of sin. All sin is in one sense positive, for it is an affirmation of the sinner's nature. When I sin I place my own will in a position of supremacy. This shall be so, because I will it to be so, regardless of the right. . . . The position of sin lies in the assertion—or rather in the practical adoption—of the maxim that my motives need no other justification than the fact that they are my motives." ¹ When regard is had to this deepest "maxim" of sin, it is obvious that, in principle, as St. James declares, the law is negated as a whole in every single violation of it.²

IV

Sin, as originating in a law-defying *egoism*, is a principle of *God-negation*.³ It cannot cohere with love to God, trust in Him, or enjoyment in His presence. The possibility

¹ *Heg. Cosmol.*, pp. 150, 158.

² Jas. ii. 10.

³ Hence the prevailing Scriptural representation of sin as *ἀσέβεια*, godlessness.

of a spiritual communion is dissolved. The "love of the world," with its new ruling principles, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the vain-glory of life," excludes the "love of the Father."¹ The fatality with which sin's principle acts in the depravation and ruin of the soul, its frustration of the destiny of man, its unspeakably baleful consequences for the individual and society, must form a subject for investigation by itself. But it will be of use here, in a general view, to test the soundness of the conclusion arrived at by comparing it with the actual forms of sin in the course of its development.

There is no need, in order to support a one-sided case, to indulge in exaggerated diatribes on the existing condition of human nature. Let all the good—the relative good—one undeniably sees in humanity, be ungrudgingly, even gratefully, acknowledged. The evil of the world is too patent a fact to need heightening through the extravagances of a morbid pessimism, or the grovellings in filth of the coarser school of fiction.² Even with

¹ 1 John ii. 15, 16.

² Max Nordau, in his book on *Degeneration*, repudiates the claim of M. Zola, that his series of Rougon-Macquart

ignoring of the Godward side, Kant, in the opening of his work on *Religion*, gives nearly as dark a picture of the wickedness of mankind as St. Paul does in his first chapter to the Romans. It is not pretended by any one, however deeply convinced of the deadliness of sin, that the evil implicit in sin comes to manifestation at once, or in like degree in all, or that sin in its developments is not checked and restrained by a variety of original principles in human nature, and influences in society, acting in an opposite direction. The original constitution of human nature, as Kant also affirmed, is good, and reacts, so far, to hinder sin's full development. Indelible traces of the image of God remain in man. There is a *voûs* which testifies against the law of sin, though often its protests are feeble and ineffectual.¹ The doctrine of human "depravity" has often been misunderstood in this respect—perhaps has laid itself open by

novels represent "a typical average family of the French middle class, and that their history represents the general social life of France in the time of Napoleon III. . . . The family whose history Zola presents to us in twenty mighty volumes is entirely outside normal daily life, and has no necessary connexion whatever with France and the Second Empire" (p. 495).

¹ Rom. vii. 14-25.

some of its expressions to be misunderstood—but even the stoutest upholders of the doctrine—e.g., Calvin—guard themselves against such extremes as are imputed to it. The beauty and goodness of God's natural gifts in man ; man's love of truth, sense of honour, skill in law, other virtues and talents, are freely acknowledged.¹ With all abatements,

¹ A few sentences may be quoted from the *Institutes* of Calvin in illustration. "To charge the intellect with perpetual blindness, so as to leave it no intelligence of any description whatever, is repugnant not only to the word of God, but to common experience. We see that there has been implanted in the human mind a certain desire of investigating truth, to which it never would aspire, unless some relish for truth antecedently existed" (Bk. ii. 2, 12). "Accordingly we see that the minds of all men have impressions of civil order and honesty. Hence it is that every individual understands how human societies must be regulated by laws, and also is able to comprehend the principles of these laws" (Bk. ii. 2, 14). "Therefore, in reading profane authors, the admirable light of truth displayed in them should remind us that the human mind, however much fallen and perverted from its original integrity, is still adorned and invested with admirable gifts from its Creator. If we reflect that the Spirit of God is the only fountain of truth, we will be careful, as we would avoid offering insult to Him, not to reject or contemn truth wherever it appears. . . . Nay, we cannot read the writings of the ancients on these subjects without the highest admiration ; an admiration which their excellence will not allow us to withhold" (Bk. ii. 2, 15). "Nor do I set myself so much in opposition to common sense as to contend that there was no difference between the justice, moderation, and equity of Titus and Trajan,

however, the Apostolic verdict holds good: "The whole world lieth in wickedness."¹ The question asked is: How far the character of this wickedness bears out what has been said of the root-principle of sin?

It has often been observed that the forms of sin connected with the indulgence of *the sensuous nature* have a power of veiling the egoism of the principle in which the sin originates.² The drunkard's revel, the licentious man's pleasures, have an element of sociability—of companionship—attaching to them, which hides the selfishness which is their core. Yet underneath the roystering mirth of the reveller, and the voluptuous softness of the debauchee, it is not difficult to see that in sensual sin it is *self-gratification* which is the last motive of the whole. The drink-appetite will convert a naturally generous man into the most selfish of human beings. Wife, home,

and the rage, intemperance, and cruelty of Caligula, Nero, and Domitian; between the continence of Vespasian and the obscene lusts of Tiberius; and between the observance of law, and justice, and the contempt of them. . . . Hence this distinction between honourable and base actions God has not only engraven on the minds of each, but also often affirms in the administration of His providence" (Bk. iii. 14, 2).

¹ 1 John v. 19 R.V. has "in the evil one."

² Cf. Müller on the *Doctrine of Sin*, i. pp. 159-60.

children count for nothing, that his craving may be satisfied. The heartless selfishness of the dissolute man is proverbial. For the gratification of his lust, honour, truth, friendship, are ruthlessly sacrificed, and when injury beyond repair has been done, the victim of his deceit is callously cast off.¹

It is sins of the flesh which society visits with its most unsparing reprobation. To Jesus, however, who knew, in His tenderness, in how many cases such sins partake more of human infirmity than of deliberate wickedness, they were less heinous than many sins of *the spirit*, in which the egoistic principle of sin is more glaringly apparent. "The publicans and harlots," He told the Pharisees, "go into the kingdom of heaven before you."² He was gentle to the woman who was a sinner, to the woman of Samaria, to the woman taken in her very act of sin,³ but His denunciations of the hypocrisy, ostentation, covetousness,

¹ Literature is full of illustrations. One recalls the desertion scene in Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*, ch. iii., or Tito Melema in *Romola*, or Thomas Hardy's *Tess*.

² Matt. xxi. 31.

³ Luke xi. 37 ff. ; John iv. 7 ff. ; viii. 3 ff. Society excuses the man, and is severe on the woman. It was to the woman Jesus showed most mercy.

arrogance, of the Pharisees were scathing.¹ The reason was that He saw how much more of the essence of sin as a God-denying power there was really in them. What but egoism in its varying forms are pride, envy, covetousness, worldly ambition, love of the praise of men, lust of rule? Pride exalts in selfish isolation, covetousness would grasp all for self, envy grieves at the good of another, vanity craves for adulation of self—so through the whole gamut of this class of sins. Self is manifest in all.

There are, however, forms of evil in which the principle latent in all sin appears in yet more hateful nakedness. This is the stage of *malignancy*, in which evil seems chosen for its own sake. "Evil, be thou my good," says Milton's Satan, and by a general consent this class of sins are spoken of as "devilish." Kant uses this term for them.² Max Nordau devotes a large space in his book on *Degeneration* to what he calls "Satanism."³ Malevolence—evil for evil's sake—is the outstanding mark of it. There is a positive

¹ Cf. Matt. xxiii.

² Cf. Abbott, *loc. cit.* p. 334.

³ See specially his chapter on "Parnassians and Diabolists."

delight in the sight of suffering, in the inflicting of misery, in the temptation and ruin of the innocent. Nordau's lurid pictures, drawn from contemporary literature, of this revolting phase of the *fin de siècle* spirit, reveal almost incredible depths of depravity. "There is no indifference here to virtue or vice ; it is an absolute predilection for the latter, and aversion for the former. Parnassians do not at all hold themselves 'beyond good or evil,' but plunge themselves up to the neck in evil, and as far as possible from good."¹ In all its subjects this form of evil is described as connected with the grossest lasciviousness.²

By Nordau this "diabolist" tendency is treated as a form of the "Ego-Mania," to the elucidation of which in our latter-day civilisation over a couple of hundred pages of his

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

The question of a superhuman evil (see above, p.104), with which the sin of man is implicated in origin and development, is left untouched in these pages, as aside from the main purport of the discussion. The reality of such evil, however, is not doubted (Matt. xii. 25-9 ; John xiv. 30 ; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4 ; Eph. ii. 2 ; vi. 11, 12, etc.), and the facts above stated are germane to it.

² "If Baudelaire prays it is to the devil (*Les Litanies de Satan*). . . . Besides the devil, Baudelaire adores only one other power, viz. : voluptuousness" (*Op. cit.*, p. 293).

volume are given. It is easy to see how wickedness so unrestrained should pass over into rankest *blasphemy*, and this may be regarded as the culminating form of sin. In it sin's inmost essence as "enmity against God" is laid bare. "Ego-Mania," however, is not necessarily connected with the outward foulness of the preceding type, and may take shapes of antichristian blasphemy springing from the sheer self-exaltation that will submit to no law of God or man. Nordau, with some justice, takes F. Nietzsche as the crowning example of this Titanic egoism in our era. But history knows of many periods in which a blatant atheism has vented itself in passionate hatred of God. On this the veil may be allowed to fall.

Without carrying sin to any of these extremes, it is easy to see the stamp of egoism which rests on all life in separation from God. Self-centred enjoyment, self-centred culture, self-centred morality, self-centred science, self-centred religion even (Worship of Humanity)—such are among the world's ideals. John Foster remarks somewhere that men are as afraid to let God touch any of their schemes as they are of the touch of fire. It is the old

Stoic *αὐτάρκεια*, self-sufficiency, not without a certain nobleness where men had nothing else, but sin in its renunciation of dependence on God. Existence on such a basis is doomed to futility.

CHAPTER V

SIN AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY—THE ISSUES

ENOUGH has been said to indicate how seriously the Christian doctrine of sin is imperilled by the forms assumed by modern philosophical speculation. It is now necessary to consider the bearings on this doctrine of the still more formidable influence—more formidable because more widely extended and more penetrative of modern thought—of current theories of organic evolution.

No one who studies the evolutionary theory of man's origin, enormous antiquity, and primitive brutishness can doubt that there is call for such inquiry.¹ The force of the theory goes even deeper than in its effect on the

¹ In a note on "Adam, the Fall, the Origin of Evil," in his *Thoughts on Religion*, G. G. Romanes says: These, "all taken together as Christian dogmas, are undoubtedly hard hit by the scientific proof of evolution . . . and, as constituting the logical basis of the whole plan, they certainly do appear at first sight necessarily to involve in their destruction the entire superstructure."

doctrine of sin. In the forms of it that seem to find most favour with its accredited representatives—e.g., in the volume, *Darwin and Modern Science*, recently issued at Cambridge in connexion with the Darwin commemoration—it profoundly touches Theism itself. There is no need for apology for any Christian thinker, though neither a biologist nor a naturalist, giving earnest attention to this subject. It is not a matter of choice : it is forced upon him by the necessity of the case. The theologian may be to blame when he rashly or dogmatically intrudes into the domain of science ; on the other hand, it is not his place to be silent when the scientist makes bold inroads into *his* domain, and, in the name of science, would sweep away spiritual facts which stand on their own grounds of evidence as securely as any facts of external nature. Truths in nature and truths in the spiritual world, cannot, of course, be in real collision. But this requires to be made clear against unwarrantable assertion on either side.

The present writer has no desire or intention of intruding into the sphere of science proper. He claims no more than the right of every intelligent mind to consider theories

of science as expounded by their best representatives in the light of their own evidence, and to judge of them from the point of view of a sound connexion between premises and conclusions. He has no concern to dispute evolution within the limits in which science has established it, or rendered it probable. He would only plead for its being kept carefully within these limits in its bearings on religion. It will be seen in the sequel how far "evolution," in current use, is from being a term of single or simple meaning; how little it stands for one definite, harmonious view of the origin of organic beings; how many ambiguities, confusions, fallacies, conceal themselves under its high-sounding name. Only admiration, mingled with astonishment, can be felt at the ceaseless patience and marvellous skill with which a host of investigators are engaged in unravelling the intricacies of Nature's mystic web; but it may be claimed that the result is to show how little that is really scientifically proved conflicts with those beliefs on man's nature, origin, and sin, which lie at the roots of our most cherished Christian convictions.

I

Evolution is to be considered in its special bearings on the doctrine of sin; but this involves, to start with, a brief estimate of *the general trend of evolutionary theory* as a phase of the thought of the age.¹ Older controversies may, for the most part, be put aside: as authoritative guides for modern opinions one cannot do better than take the volume already named, *Darwin and Modern Science*, with its twenty-nine essays by writers of distinction, supplemented by the able works on Darwinism and Heredity by Professor J. A. Thomson,² and the acute and valuable book by Rudolf Otto, of Göttingen, translated under the title of *Naturalism and Religion*.³ Darwin's own works, naturally, must always be kept in view, though it will become apparent—Otto specially works out this thesis—how broad a distinction needs to be drawn

¹ A more general review of evolutionary theories may be seen in the writer's *God's Image in Man and its Defacement*, and *Christian View of God and the World*.

² Chiefly his recent (closely related) works, the *Bible of Nature* and *Darwinism and Human Life*.

³ The German title of Otto's book is *Naturalistische und religiöse Weltansicht*. The translation is published in the "Crown Theological Library."

between "Evolution," and "Darwinism" as a special theory of the process.

Evolution, in some form, has *long been in the air*. Hegel was an evolutionist as truly as Darwin, but there is a wide difference between the philosophical and the scientific conceptions. Hegel beheld in the evolutionary process the movement of "idea." Darwin built his theory on observation and interpretation of the facts of nature, eschewing any but natural factors in his explanations. His supreme service was that, in Professor J. A. Thomson's words, he made the thought of evolution "current intellectual coin."¹ He gave it scientific precision and enlarged basis, and connected it with a theory of the "How" in "Natural Selection."² The *fact* of evolution is now generally accepted: the *how*, it will be found, is still much in debate. It is here, in truth, the crux lies. Is "natural selection," or any purely "causal-mechanical"³ theory, an adequate account of evolution?

¹ *Darwinism and Human Life*, pp. 17, 19.

² Darwin laid chief stress in his own claim on the discovery of the "How" (cf. *Origin of Species*, Introduction). Yet it is the "How" which is now a question. See further below, pp. 154 ff.

³ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 242.

A first impression produced by a study of Darwinism, as set forth by its advocates in the Cambridge volume, is its undisguised *naturalism*. Darwin, it is well known, seeks to give an entirely natural account of how species have originated, of how the rise has been effected from lower to higher orders of organic existence, finally, of how man has been developed, in both body and mind, from the animal forms nearest to him. The agency chiefly relied on to produce these changes is "natural selection,"¹ which, acting on unguided variations,² under the conditions of

¹ While not upholding selection as the "exclusive" means of modification, it was that on which, at the beginning, Darwin laid practically all the stress. His book was entitled *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. In the third edition he wrote (p. 208) that if it could be demonstrated that any complex organ could not be formed by this means, his theory "would absolutely break down." This opinion he lived to modify (*Descent of Man*, i. p. 152).

² Variations are not indeed without causes, but are held to be without design (in this sense "fortuitous") : are, as Darwin repeatedly calls them, "chance" variations. In *Life and Letters*, ii. p. 369, he speaks of "the action of selection on mere accidental variability." There is more here than the ignorance of conditions with which Prof. Thomson would ward off the objection of "fortuitousness" (*Bible of Nature*, p. 170). Prof. Ward, in *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, dwells on the difference between "evolution without guidance and evolution with guidance" (i. p. 205).

the struggle for existence, brings about the adaptation hitherto supposed to imply the presence of mind. Theologians, therefore, did not misrepresent Darwin in speaking of his theory as, in its essential character, inimical to Theism. Of course multitudes of evolutionists qualify this naturalism in various directions—therein deserting Darwin. So far, however, as the volume, *Darwin and Modern Science*, is a true index to the prevailing trend of evolutionary thought, it cannot be described as other than unfavourable to a religious interpretation of nature.¹ In the majority of the papers nature is regarded as capable of working out all her results in the order, beauty, harmony, adaptation of the world without the aid of intelligence or purpose.² Teleology—and this not simply the old teleology of Paley, but the immanent teleology which, in all secondary causes, sees

¹ In certain of the essays this is made a boast of. Darwin is praised for his agnosticism and rejection of Christianity (pp. 114–15, 496); Christianity itself is satirized (p. 495).

² Cf. e.g., pp. 61, 99, 100, 139, 141, 225, etc. “Assuming,” says Prof. Bateson, “that the variations are not guided into paths of adaptation—and both to the Darwinian and to the modern school this hypothesis appears to be sound if unproved” (p. 99).

the internal direction of means to ends, and general advance of creation to a predetermined goal—is eliminated. To the consistent Darwinian God becomes, as to Laplace, a superfluous “hypothesis.” It is a barren concession of Huxley and others that there *may* be teleology in the total system, though we cannot possibly prove it. If the universe can be explained without intelligence, why postulate it? The contention of pure Darwinism is that it can be so explained.¹

It is a point of importance that Darwin will allow selection-value only to excessively *small and rare* variations, and that, of consequence, the process of evolution is assumed to be slow and insensible.² It will be seen

¹ Weismann, in his work, *The Evolution Theory*, i. pp. 55–6, remarks: “The philosophical significance of natural selection lies in the fact that it shows us how to explain the origin of useful, well-adapted structures purely by mechanical forces, and without having to fall back on a *directive* force.” R. Otto, in *Naturalism and Religion*, emphasises this as the characteristic mark of Darwinism—the reason for which Darwin is called the Newton of biology—“its radical opposition to teleology” (p. 89, cf. p. 140).

² He gives as an illustration a bird being born with a beak $\frac{1}{100}$ of an inch longer than usual (*Life and Letters*, iii. p. 33). He does not doubt “that during millions of generations individuals of a species will be born with some slight variation profitable to some part of its economy” (*Ibid.*, ii. p. 124).

afterwards that this is a point in which the newer evolution tends to break with Darwin ; but Weismann strenuously supports Darwin in it.¹ In its bearings on man's origin, it leads to the conclusion that man has only very slowly and gradually risen from the ape (or cognate) condition, acquiring his higher powers through favourable variations of mind and body, preserved by natural selection and accumulated during long ages of semi-brutishness and savagery, till by degrees he attains to speech, arts, and civilisation.² 150,000, 300,000 or 500,000 years are not thought too long to allow for this development.³

II

It must be seen, without need of detailed

¹ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, pp. 22-3. Cf. *Evolution Theory*, i. p. 55 : "Natural selection depends essentially on the cumulative augmentation of the most minute useful variations in the direction of their utility."

² The arguments in Darwin's *Descent of Man* are conveniently summarised in several papers in *Dar. and Mod. Science* (specially those of Prof. Schwalbe on "The Descent of Man," and of Haeckel on "Darwin as an Anthropologist"), and in Prof. Thomson's works as cited. Darwin himself has a convenient summary in his closing chapter.

³ Cf. e.g., Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, pp. 191-2 ; A. R. Wallace, *Darwinism*, p. 456 ; *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 130.

argument, that the Darwinian evolutionary theory, thus sketched in very general terms, strikes deeply into the heart of the *Christian doctrine of sin* as that has been commonly understood. It does so both on the theistic and on the anthropological sides; but attention may be confined at present to the side of man. The older conception of an historical "Fall" of man of course goes. Instead of a fallen son, man becomes a rising creature. His origin is pushed back so far, his primitive condition is pictured as so brutish, such countless generations of animalism and savagery intervene before he gets his foot on even the lowest round of the ladder of civilisation, that the idea of a "Fall" from an original state of integrity (*status integritatis*) is out of the question. The doctrine of a "Fall," therefore, as taught in Genesis and by the Apostle Paul,¹ is ruled out by evolutionary science and by the New Theology²—as by the older philosophy—as inherently absurd.

¹ Gen. iii.; Rom. v. 12 ff.; 1 Cor. xv. 21; 1 Tim. ii. 13, 14; cf. John viii. 44; 1 John iii. 8; Rev. xii. 9.

² Mr. R. J. Campbell thinks the doctrine of the Fall is largely responsible for "the theological muddle." "This doctrine has played a mischievous part in Christian thought, more especially, perhaps, since the Reformation."

It is not only, however, a particular theory of the origin of sin that is put in question by the evolutionary conception: *the very idea of sin*, in the Christian sense, is essentially altered. Sin is no longer the voluntary defection of a creature who had the power to remain sinless. The very possibility of sinless development is excluded. Sin becomes a natural necessity of man's ascent: a something unavoidable in his history. It is, therefore, at least in its earlier manifestations, a thing exceedingly venial—hardly, indeed, imputable at all. The idea of a "guilt" in sin is weakened till it almost vanishes. With this must naturally be given up the idea of a world lost and perishing through sin, under condemnation, needing redemption and renewal. What has been called hereditary sin becomes the yet uneliminated brute inheritance.¹ The basis of the Christian Gospel seems removed.

In support of the contention that *the Fall* mation. . . . What I now wish to insist upon is that it is absolutely impossible for any intelligent man to continue to believe in the Fall as it is literally understood and taught" (*New Theology*, pp. 53, 55). He does not seem to believe in it in any sense.

¹ Cf. *Christian View of God*, pp. 117 ff.; *God's Image in Man*, pp. 201 ff. See below, pp. 218, 229 ff.

is no proper part of Christian doctrine, it is frequently urged that, after the "mythical" account of Genesis iii. (if even there¹) no further trace of the doctrine is found in the Old Testament. The prophets knew nothing of it. This statement, however, goes much too far,² and hardly looks below the surface. It would be truer to say that the fact of the Fall is presupposed in the whole picture which the Bible—Old and New Testament alike—gives of the world as turned aside from God, and in rebellion against Him.³ Put

¹ Mr. Tennant, in his book *The Fall and Original Sin*, will hardly allow that the doctrine of a moral Fall is taught even in Genesis; cf. Campbell, *Op. cit.*, pp. 55, 56.

² The J narrative, which records the Fall, is older than written prophecy. Wellhausen, in his *History of Israel*, assumes that the P writer was acquainted with JE on this subject (p. 310). On the historical kernel in Genesis iii., cf. Westphal, *Law and Prophets* (E.T. of his *Jéhovah*), pp. 33 ff.

³ Cf. Gen. vi. 5-12; viii. 21; Ps. xiv.; Rom. i. 18 ff.; iii. 9 ff., etc. Dillmann, in his *Alttest. Theol.*, holds that the Old Testament everywhere presupposes the rule of sin and death in contradiction to its original destiny, and the presence of an inborn evil tendency (pp. 369, 376 ff.). "So," he writes, "we are brought back to the doctrine of the prophetic narrator, of an original state and fall of the first man, who, from an uncorrupted nature, giving entrance to sin, did that which had fatal consequences for the whole race" (p. 380).

the third chapter of Genesis out of view, the facts of the sin and disorder of the world have to be dealt with, and accounted for all the same. The question is—Can they be accounted for, in harmony with a true idea of sin, on the ground of such a picture of man's origin as Darwinian evolution offers ?

Many Christian theologians, whose views are entitled to the highest respect, even if one feels it impossible to agree with them, think *an affirmative answer* can be given to this question.¹ These thinkers are impressed with the facts of evolution, with the consensus of opinion for the animal origin, slow development, and immense antiquity of man and do their best to show that the Christian doctrines of man's moral nature and sinful condition are not affected by them. The argument may be set aside that man's nature being what it is, sin also being a fact of universal experience, it matters little what theory is held as to how they came to be. Beginnings and ends, causes and effects, must

¹ Among others may be mentioned Dr. Gore, Bishop of Worcester (*Expos. Times*, April, 1897), Dr. Driver (*Genesis*, pp. 56-7), Dr. J. R. Illingworth (*Bampton Lects.*, pp. 143 ff., 154 ff.), Principal Griffith-Jones (*Ascent through Christ*, pp. 138 ff.)

law, it has been seen, demands not only right action, but a right state of the *soul*—a subordination of passion to reason, control of lower impulses, purity of motive and disposition, a right direction of the will towards God. Of this the state described is the diametric opposite. It is not simply that this right state is an *ideal* to which the developing being should aspire: it is a state in which he should be *now*, and always, according to the stage of his growth. Christ's "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," etc.,¹ binds man absolutely. He admits of no exceptions. To bear the image of God, as He conceives of it, is not merely to possess in the nature the elements of that image—rationality, freedom, moral knowledge—it is to be a state positively conformable to that image. Sin, it was seen, is more than mere moral fault. It is, fundamentally, transgression of *God's* law, the breach of man's relation to *God*, contrariety in heart and conduct to the *divine Holiness*. How, then, shall we judge of the being whose nature is in violent turbulence, whose life is brutish, who has not even the glimmer of a right knowledge of God? What

¹ Mark xii. 30.

meaning can be attached to "sin" in the case of such a being? Man is in a wrong state to start with. Where is the leverage in nature that will ever lift him out of it? "Evolution"—"Natural Selection"—stand here powerless.

The reply given is—Yes, but man has *free-will*. He is not a creature of necessity, of environment, of circumstances. He has it in his power, as moral consciousness awakens, to choose the good and refuse the evil. Hence responsibility, and the possibility of sin. It is again pertinent to ask—How much "free-will" does naturalism leave to man? And, if naturalism be broken with, Darwinism may be given up at once. But, viewing the matter more nearly, one must be careful here not to impose upon himself or others with words. Man has, indeed, the endowment of freedom; without that, moral life would be impossible. But it has already been seen that, in order to the exercise of freedom, there is needed a balance and harmony of nature: a state of soul which gives freedom opportunity to act. Freedom is not omnipotence. It is not power to act under any and every condition. There is a free, but there is also a fettered

will. It is so even in Christian experience. St. Paul's searching analysis in Romans vii. is the experience of everyone here. "I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members."¹ From this bondage only grace can deliver. How much greater the mockery of speaking of "freedom" in the case of a being emerging from the state of animalism, ignorant of God and goodness, the subject of powerful and ungoverned impulses—a freedom enabling him to check and conquer the lower tendencies in his nature, and live uniformly in accordance with the higher! The task set before such a being is an impossible one. The only consistent position here is frankly to declare, as is done by the bulk of evolutionists, that sin in the developing being is inevitable, but is *venial*, something to which no serious "guilt" can be attached.

The issue which arises here is very clear,

¹ Rom. vii. 21, 22.

and of supreme importance. Assuming that *the Biblical conception* has been correctly described as having for its presuppositions God's changeless holiness in His relations with man, moral law apprehended with sufficient clearness to show man his duty, the possibility of obedience, and sin as voluntary departure from rectitude, it can hardly be denied that evolutionary theory, as ordinarily presented, traverses that conception in every particular. It denies to man, as already shown, the possibility of sinless obedience, it leaves the greater part of what is considered as wrongdoing—lust, cruelty, bloodshed, etc.—outside the category of sin on the ground that the conscience of primitive man was not yet sufficiently developed to regard these things as wrong, it treats such transgression as man was capable of as venial, it deprives the acts of the character of *sin* through the absence of serious moral views of God.¹ It is futile to suppose that positions so incompatible can be combined into a unity of view entitled to call itself Christian.

¹ Cf. *God's Image in Man*, pp. 208-9.

IV

We seem thus to be brought to an *impasse*, from which no outlet is evident, save, on the one hand, in the *surrender of the Christian conception of sin*, confirmed as that is by ages of deepest religious experience, or, on the other, in the *rejection of the doctrine of evolution*, which science well nigh universally accepts as the truth. Neither alternative can be entertained. Sin is far too real a fact, is bound up too surely with the experience of redemption in Christianity, to be thus summarily got rid of. If one took certain scientific writers strictly at their word, one would have to admit that, up to the present, evolution had not been proved at all.¹ But

¹ Prof. Thomson says : "There is no logical proof of the doctrine of descent" (*Dar. and Human Life*, p. 22, cf. pp. 26, 189. Cf. the admissions of Weismann below). It is striking to find both Mr. Darwin and his son and biographer in *Life and Letters*, iii. p. 25, announcing : "We cannot prove that a single species has changed." Mr. Thomson, comparing evolution and gravitation, says (p. 26) : "We are aware of no facts contradictory of either." Not contradictory, perhaps, of evolution in the general sense, but, as his own pages show, abundantly contradictory of the specific Darwinian theory of evolution. (See below.) Of plants, Prof. D. H. Scott observes that, "as regards direct evidence for the derivation of one species from another, there has probably been little advance since Darwin wrote" (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 200).

this is over modest. The proof for some form of organic evolution, within limits, is peculiarly cogent. The problem, therefore, assumes a new shape. Granted that evolution is real, does Darwinism truly describe its process, and, if not, do the same difficulties arise on the newer, or modified conception of evolution which takes the place of the older? It is here, not in mediating attempts which surrender the essence of the Christian position, that a solution of the seeming antinomy must be sought.

One has only to study the newer phases of evolutionary opinion, as reflected in the works already mentioned, and in other recent literature, to become aware of the *remarkable, sometimes revolutionary, changes* which have taken place on this subject since Darwin first promulgated his theory of natural selection. The changes have been greater than most, even well-informed, people realise.¹ They

¹ Otto's book, *Naturalism and Religion*, is of special value as showing the extraordinary variety of developments of opinion on the evolutionary theory in scientific circles, especially on the Continent. "The differentiation and elaboration of Darwin's theories," he says, "has gone ever farther and farther; the grades and shades of doctrine held by his disciples are now almost beyond reckoning" (p. 94).

leave no part of the theory untouched—variability, struggle for existence, natural selection, slow gradations, heredity, purposefulness—and transform it from within in such a way as largely to alter the perspective created by it. The crucial point of all—as stated at the outset—is the sufficiency of “natural selection,” or of any “causal-mechanical” view, to account for organic life, growth, structure, adaptation, the ascending order and correlation of nature’s kingdoms, the crowning appearance of man. It is precisely here that the changes of opinion are most instructive.

Reference was earlier made to the prevailing “naturalism” of the volume in commemoration of Darwin (*Darwin and Modern Science*); a scarcely less characteristic feature is its pervading *assumptiveness*. The sufficiency of “natural selection” to account for the phenomena of organisms (with much else, as the origin of life from the non-living¹), is

¹ Weismann, like Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Haeckel, and others, while admitting the impossibility of proof, “holds fast” to belief in an original “spontaneous generation” (*Evol. Theory*, i. p. 370; cf. Huxley, *Critiques and Addresses*, p. 239). Prof. Thomson says: “Though many thoughtful biologists, such as Huxley and Spencer, Nägeli and Haeckel, have accepted the

assumed, not proved; this on the avowed ground that only natural causation can be admitted. An example or two may be taken from Weismann. We cannot bring forward formal proofs in detail, he says, "yet we must assume selection, because it is the only possible explanation applicable to whole classes of phenomena. . . . 'We must accept it because the phenomena of evolution and adaptation must have a natural basis, and because it is the only possible explanation of them.'"¹ This is precisely the point—Does it explain them? On the well-known difficulty of small initial variations, he remarks—"To use a phrase of Romanes, can they have *selection-value*? . . . To this question even one who, like myself, has been for many years a convinced adherent of the theory of selection, can only reply: *We must assume so, but we cannot prove it in any case.*"² On sexual selection: "An actual proof of the theory of sexual selection

hypothesis that living organisms of a very simple sort were originally evolved from not-living material, they have done so rather in their faith in a continuous natural evolution, than from any apprehension of the possible sequences which might lead up to so remarkable a result" (*Bible of Nature*, p. 116). Cf. his quotation from Bunge (p. 99). See below, p. 168.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 6. Italics are his. ² P. 26.

is out of the question, if only because we cannot tell when a variation attains to selection-value. . . . We *must* assume this [advantageousness] *since otherwise secondary characters remain inexplicable*. The same thing is true in regard to natural selection. It is not possible to bring forward any actual proof of the selection-value of the initial stages, and the stages in the increase of variations, as has been already shown.”¹ Religion, plainly, is not the only thing which makes a demand on faith.

Darwinism is essentially a theory of natural selection acting on accidental variability.² It is not disputed that variability, struggle for existence, natural selection, and heredity, have much to do with the process of evolution; Darwin's greatness lies in having

¹ Pp. 49-50. Similarly in mental evolution, Dr. C. Lloyd Morgan writes that “presumably the majority of those who approach the subjects discussed in the third, fourth and fifth chapters of *The Descent of Man*, do so “in the full conviction that mental phenomena, not less than organic phenomena, have a natural genesis” (*Op. cit.*, p. 444).

² Cf. Darwin, already quoted, *Life and Letters*, ii. p. 369. Weismann says: “Nature preserves in the struggle for existence all the variations of a species at the same time, and in a purely mechanical way, if they possess selective value” (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 32).

made this clear. What *is* questioned is, the *sufficiency* of these causes, and the *adequacy* of the Darwinian interpretation of their operation. The chief significance of the change in recent times would seem to be that, whereas in Darwinism, the stress was laid mainly on *external* causes—nature, as it were, through selection, under the keen competition for existence, carving the organism into shape out of “the raw material” (Professor Thomson’s phrase) furnished to it by variation, the tendency in newer thought is to transfer the secret of evolution more and more to causes *within* the organism, and to regard the external causes as subsidiary—stimulative, discriminative, eliminative—not primary or originative. With this goes, naturally, a larger recognition of definiteness, direction, and correlation in variation, and surrender of the idea that evolution must necessarily proceed by extremely slow and insensible degrees. The bearing of such change of standpoint on our immediate subject will, by and by, be apparent. Meanwhile, a few illustrations may be offered of the extent of the change.

V

Darwin believed that, while much had been adduced by others to render probable the *fact* of evolution, it was reserved for himself to put the theory on a secure basis by showing the *how* of the process in natural selection.¹ Now, on all sides, the admission is made that, while the *fact* is certain, the *how* is yet to seek. "The fact of evolution," says Professor Thomson, "forces itself upon us: the factors elude us. There can be no dogmatism."²

The difficulty begins with *variation*. "*The kernel of the riddle,*" Weismann says truly, "*lies in the varying.*"³ It is easy to speak

¹ *Origin of Species*, Introd.

² *Bible of Nature*, p. 153. Weismann says: "The *How?* of evolution is still doubtful, but not the *fact*, and this is the secure foundation on which we stand to-day" (*Evolut. Theory*, i. p. 3). Huxley repeatedly made the same admission (cf. art. "Evolution" in *Ency. Brit.*, viii. p. 751). In an address at Buffalo (Aug. 25, 1876) he said: "We *know* that it [evolution] has happened, and what remains is the subordinate question of how it happened."

³ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 27. Prof. Bateson, a high authority, quotes from Samuel Butler (*Life and Habit*, p. 263): "To me it seems that the 'Origin of Variation,' whatever it is, is the only true 'Origin of Species,'" adding: "And of that Origin not one of us knows anything" (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 99).

of "useful variations," but how do the variations come to be there, to arise just when wanted, to persist in a definite direction—say the formation of an eye or an ear, or of the electric organ of certain fishes? Is this explicable without direction—without reference to an inner teleology? Weismann himself asks: "How does it happen *that the necessary beginnings of a useful variation are always present?* . . . Natural selection cannot solve this contradiction: it does not call forth the useful variation, but simply works upon it."¹ "Correlation" also has to be taken into account, with the new problems connected with heredity. These will come up after.

The difficulty thus arising for natural selection is increased when it is discovered, as seems granted by most writers in the Cam-

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 27. Weismann speaks of the argument as "reasoning in a circle, not giving 'proofs.'" Prof. Thomson quotes Bateson: "We are continually stopped by such phrases as, 'If such and such a variation took place and was favourable,' or, we may easily suppose circumstances in which such and such a variation, if it occurred, might be beneficial, and the like. The whole argument is based on such assumptions as these—assumptions which, were they found in the arguments of Paley or of Butler, we could not too scornfully ridicule" (*Dar. and Human Life*, p. 100).

bridge volume,¹ that the variations which have selection-value, are not always, as Darwin and Weismann assume, exceedingly slight and rare ("imperceptible," "minute," "insensible," "infinitesimal,"²) but are sometimes *abrupt, discontinuous, considerable* ("mutations" of specific types)—that, in short, evolution proceeds by "leaps" as well as by slow processes. These "lifts" in nature, as Professor Thomson calls them,³ will be found, if conceded, to change the entire problem of origins. For here the causes lie obviously within, and are not tied to long periods of time. A further weighty fact, pointing in the same direction—one which Darwin was led finally to admit—is the existence of many structures which bear no relation to utility—which cannot therefore, as Darwin grants, "be accounted for by any form of selection, or by the inherited effects of the use and disuse of parts."⁴

¹ Cf. the essay of De Vries, and *passim*, pp. 179–81, 200, 225, 242, etc. See especially on the views of Grand'Eury and Zeiller, pp. 221–2.

² Cf. Weismann (*Op. cit.*, p. 23; Bateson, who dissents, p. 99).

³ Cf. his *Darwinism and Human Life*, pp. 104 ff.; *Bible of Nature*, pp. 155–8.

⁴ *Descent of Man*, ii. p. 387; i. p. 152; *Life and*

Darwin's theory was originally suggested by the reading of Malthus, and one of its chief pillars has always been held to be the doctrine of *the struggle for existence*. It is an extraordinary change to find it questioned by Korschinsky and his "moderns" whether this "struggle" exists in anything like the degree supposed,¹ or has the relation to evolution that the Darwinian theory imagines. Korschinsky's conclusion is that, where struggle occurs, "it prevents the establishment of new variations, and in

Letters, iii. p. 159. Nägeli is quoted as saying: "I do not know among plants a morphological modification which can be explained on utilitarian principles" (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 218).

¹ In reading the descriptions of the prodigious fecundity, of the lower organisms, one is reminded of Sir Arch. Alison's statement, *à propos* of the British Sinking Fund (quoted by Walker, the American economist) that "a penny laid out at compound interest at the birth of our Saviour would in the year 1775 have amounted to a solid mass of gold 1,800 times the whole weight of the globe." The penny was not laid out in the way imagined. So the enormous increase in animal life in geometrical ratio is not realised: but the elimination is not, for the most part, through internecine struggle—indeed takes place before the stage of struggle is reached—and survival or fatality has little to do with the infinitesimal advantages of individuals. From another side a softening of the picture is introduced by the introduction of the element of altruism. Nature is not wholly selfish (cf. Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, pp. 174 ff.).

reality stands in the way of new developments. It is rather an unfavourable than an advantageous factor.”¹

Lastly, criticism is directed on the prime agency of the theory, *natural selection* itself, with the view to demonstrate its insufficiency for the enormous tasks assigned to it. Natural selection, it is pointed out, is not a creative but an eliminative agency. It prunes the tree of life, but itself produces nothing.² The power ascribed to it of infallibly picking out infinitesimal favourable variations and preserving them for many (perhaps millions of³) generations till new favourable variations are added, is held to lie beyond human credence. A point is made of the palpably inutile character of

¹ Cf. Korschinsky's whole statement for himself and the newer school in Otto, *Op. cit.*, pp. 182-4.

² Weismann treats this common objection as “senseless” (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 61), but it is not obvious how he weakens its force. De Vries says truly: “Natural selection acts as a sieve; it does not single out the best variations, but it simply destroys those which are, from some cause or another, unfit for their present environment” (*Ibid.*, p. 70). Prof. Thomson says: “Natural selection explains the survival of the fittest, but not the arrival of the fittest” (*Bible of Nature*, p. 162). “Natural selection prunes a growing and changeful tree. Natural selection is a directive [?], not an originative, factor” (*Dar. and Human Life*, p. 193).

³ Thus Darwin. See above.

most incipient variations in the evolution of organs ultimately useful.¹ Stress is laid by Spencer on the complexity and balance of variations ; ² by others on the narrow limits of variation, and relative fixity of types ; by others on the indiscriminateness of nature's methods of destruction (" what advantage," it has been asked, " could it afford to an insect that was about to be swallowed by a bird, that it possessed a thousandth fragment of some property not possessed by its fellows ?"); by others on the effects of pairing, on hybridity, etc. Answers more or less plausible may be given to some of these objections, but their cumulative effect is very great. Evolutionist writers claim large rights of scepticism for themselves. They must permit some right of scepticism to others when asking them to believe that a blind force of the kind supposed is really the main explanation of the beauty and adaptation with which the world is filled.³

¹ It is not a sufficient reply to say that " we cannot tell " whether the smallest variation, in such a case, may not have a selective value. *Prima facie* it has not, and our ignorance cannot warrant us, in the interest of a theory, in assuming that it has.

² Cf. *Principles of Biology*, Sect. 166.

³ The extent to which natural selection, as main

The tendency in these changes, as already said, is to transfer the primary causes of evolution from without to within the organism, and to recognise a definite direction in the working of evolutionary forces. This again leads back to the *teleology* which Darwinism had rejected. Here, fundamentally, is the objection which must always be taken to Darwin's, as to every mechanical, theory of nature, that it asks from unintelligent, unguided, forces work that can only be accomplished by mind. "Wherever we tap organic nature," Professor Thomson is fond of quoting from Romanes, "it seems to flow with purpose."¹ Does it only *seem*? This is a position in which thinking minds can never rest. The attempt to make it appear otherwise, it has just been found, breaks down on trial. "If there is Logos at the end" of the process [in man's reason], says Professor Thomson truly, "we may be sure that it was also at the beginning."²

cause, is given up by newer evolutionists may be seen in Otto's work above cited, pp. 154, 158, 184, etc. A trenchant popular criticism in a recent book, *Science, Matter and Immortality*, by R. C. Macfie, chap. xix., may be referred to.

¹ *Bible of Nature*, p. 25; *Dar. and Human Life*, p. 196. ² *Bible of Nature*, p. 86; cf. pp. 26, 242.

Not, however, at the beginning only, but as a present, directive principle all through. If so, a "causal-mechanical" view cannot be accepted as even an adequate "modal" interpretation of organic nature. Science is under no call to accept it as such, for it does not truly explain the facts. What would be the "modal interpretation" of the writing of a book, or the making of a machine, which did not recognise the presence of the constructive, guiding mind? ¹ This also, if in terms it sometimes seems denied, is in reality accepted by the writer just quoted.² Mechanical categories alone do not satisfy. Science "gives an account of the tactics of

¹ It is surely an unwarrantable narrowing down of the idea of science to say that it can take no account of teleology. Paley's watch may be out of date as an analogy to nature's processes, but could a "scientific" explanation be given of a watch which took no account of the part mind played in its construction? If teleology is a fact, why is it unscientific to recognise its presence in nature, even while seeking for secondary causes?

² Cf. the fine pages in the close of *The Bible of Nature*, pp. 238 ff. One passage may be quoted. "May it not be that mind lies in the egg—not inactive like a sleeping bird—but doing for the egg what the mind does for the body, unifying, regulating, in a sense directing it, not insinuating itself into the sequences of metabolism, but, so to speak, informing them and expressing itself through them? We mean that the regulative prin-

nature, but never explains its strategy.”¹ It is necessary to interpret nature through purpose. God is “the real agent in nature, and in all natural evolution.”

The bearings of these altered views on the nature of man and the fact of sin have still to be considered.

principle, the entelechy, which many embryologists find it necessary to postulate, in giving a more than chronological account of an individual development, is that resident quality of a living organism which in its full expression we call mind (p. 245).

¹ P. 239.

CHAPTER VI

SIN AND EVOLUTIONARY THEORY—THE ORIGINS

THE contention of the preceding pages has been that sin, as Scripture and experience represent it, is irreconcilable, not indeed with evolutionary theory within the limits in which science can justly claim to have established it, but with an evolutionary theory which, like Darwin's, pictures man as having arisen, bodily and mentally, by slow gradations from the animal, and as subsisting through uncounted millenniums in a state of semi-brutishness and savagery. Sin implies relation to God, but here there is no knowledge of God, or possibility of right relation to Him. Sin implies the possibility of sinless development; here such possibility is precluded. Sin implies voluntary departure from rectitude; here it is made a necessity. Sin implies possession of enough knowledge of moral law to enable the moral being to act rightly. Here the

glimmer of light in reason and conscience, if present at all, is of the faintest. Sin postulates freedom ; here man is a slave to animal impulse and passion from the first.

Assume, however, what Darwinism will not grant, that evolution is not from without, but is from within ; that it is purposeful, or directed to ends, not blind ; that it is not necessarily slow, but often sudden—advancing by “ mutations,” and exhibiting “ lifts,” which imply the entrance of new factors—and the problem is essentially changed. Even in this form of evolution it may not be possible to prove that man was pure in origin, but there is now room for such an origin, if the law of moral and religious life can be shown to demand it. It may not prove that man is comparatively recent, but it removes the chief ground for the assumption that he *cannot* be, but must be traced back to an immense antiquity. The question becomes one, not of theory, but of evidence.

The general attitude taken to the *Genesis* narrative of man's creation, temptation, and fall, has already been indicated. While, as was stated, it is not on the basis of this

narrative solely, but rather on the whole Scriptural doctrine of sin, regarded as apostasy from God, and transgression of His law, that the present argument proceeds, the importance of the deep truths involved in the Genesis narrative cannot easily be overestimated. Without this narrative the entire Biblical representation would be truncated—would lack its appropriate beginning. This is quite compatible with a free recognition of the allegorical or figurative dress in which the narrative may be clothed. There are, in truth, and always will be, two ways in which these ancient narratives may be approached. Approach them in one way, and they are readily made out to be a bundle of fables, legends, myths, without historical basis of any kind. Approach them in another, and they are the oldest and most precious traditions of our race, worthy in their intrinsic merit of standing where they do at the commencement of the Word of God, and capable of vindicating their right to be there: not merely, as most would allow, vehicles of great ideas, but presenting in their own archaic way the memory of great historic truths. The story of the Fall,

thus regarded, is not a myth, but enshrines the shuddering memory of an actual moral catastrophe in the beginning of the race, which brought death into the world and all our woe.

Modern thought, however, especially as represented by the evolutionary theory, definitely contradicts, it is affirmed, the truths embodied in this old-world chronicle of man's origin, nature, and defection from his allegiance to his Creator.¹ This affirmation, in the light of what has already been advanced, may now be brought to the test. Such questions arise as the following. Is man, in his physical genesis, a slow development from the animal, or is he, in a true sense, a higher creation? Is man, in his mental and spiritual nature, simply an evolution from lower psychical forms, or is he, in a sense true of no other, a spiritual personality—a rational and moral Self? Is man, as existing, an advance on an original brutishness or savagery, and does his past extend through, perhaps, hundreds of millen-

¹ The difficulties and objections are very fully summarised by Dr. Driver in his *Genesis*, Introduction and Notes on early chapters.

niums of pre-civilised existence? Or is his origin more recent, and did he stand from the first in conscious moral relations with his Creator? Was man in his origin subject to mortality, or is death an abnormal fact in his history? It will be felt that the answers to these questions cut deeply into the form to be assumed by a doctrine of sin.

I

As helping to place the subject in its true light, a few words may be said, first, on the antithesis so constantly urged between *creation* and *evolution*.¹ Such antithesis is plainly only valid, if by creation is meant a *de novo* act of the Creator in the production of each separate form. Creative activity, on this view, is excluded as much by generation as

¹ Thus we read in the art. "Evolution" in *Encycl. Brit.*, viii. p. 752: "It is clear that the doctrine of evolution is directly antagonistic to that of creation. . . . The theory of evolution, by assuming one intelligible and adequate principle of change, simply eliminates the notion of creation from those regions of existence to which it is applied." The Duke of Argyll states the matter more truly in his *Unity of Nature*, p. 272: "Creation and evolution, therefore, when these terms have been cleared from intellectual confusion, are not antagonistic conceptions mutually exclusive. They are harmonious and complementary."

by evolution. But no one supposes that man is less a creature of God because he owes his existence, mediately, to a long line of ancestors. Creation, however, in the more special sense, denotes not simply the reproduction of existing forms, but the origination of something new, for the production of which powers or factors are required of a higher order than those previously operating. A familiar instance is the first appearance of life, which certainly cannot be explained as the effect of merely physical and chemical forces.¹ It matters little, from the standpoint of Theism, whether the powers in question are viewed as latent in Nature from the beginning, only waiting the proper time and conditions for their manifestation, or are regarded as fresh drafts on the creative energy implicit in the whole process. The essential point is that they are *new* powers, higher in kind, and representing intrinsically a rise on the previously existing order. Such advances or "upliftings" are essential if

¹ For careful statements of the precise condition of the evidence on this question, see Prof. J. A. Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, Lect. iii., "Organisms and their Origin," and R. Otto, *Naturalism and Religion*, chap. viii., "The Mechanical Theory of Life."

there is to be "ascent" in nature, and they form no antithesis to evolution but are included in the very idea of that process, as science reveals it.

How closely allied the ideas of creation and evolution are at this point may be shown by two brief quotations. One is from A. Sabatier, whose mind latterly was dominated by the conception of evolution. "At each step," he says, "nature surpasses itself by a mysterious creation that resembles a true miracle in relation to an inferior stage. What, then, shall we conclude from these observations, except that in nature there is a hidden force, an immeasurable 'potential energy,' an ever-open, never-exhausted fount of apparitions, at once magnificent and unexpected?"¹ On this view, it is plain, the antithesis between "evolution" and "special creation" tends to disappear except in name; what are virtually special creations—new apparitions—are taken up into evolution as phases of it. The second quotation is from Darwin himself, and is adduced by Professor D. H. Scott in the Cambridge volume on Darwin to show that if Zeiller's opinion on the sudden appear-

¹ *Outlines of a Philosophy of Religion* (E.T.), p. 84.

ance of new forms should be confirmed, "it would no doubt be a serious blow to the Darwinian theory." Darwin wrote: "Under a scientific point of view, and as leading to further investigation, but little advantage is gained by believing that new forms are suddenly developed in an inexplicable manner from old and widely different forms, over the old belief in the creation of species from the dust of the earth."¹ Yet the trend of modern evolution is unquestionably to admit that new forms *do* suddenly appear, and *have* appeared on a much grander scale in the past. This leads directly to the questions above proposed.

II

A primary question is, Is man, in body and mind, a *slow development* from the animal, or is he not, in the sense just described, a true *creation*? The relation to preceding forms, on which evolution justly insists, is not denied, but is this the whole? Is there not, also, to be recognised in man a *rise* upon the

¹ *Origin of Species*, p. 424; quoted in *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 221. Cf. J. A. Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, p. 163.

preceding animal world, which involves the entrance, at least the action, of new powers, operating in a manner more or less sudden, and founding, as happened in the change from the inorganic to the organic, a new order or kingdom in the world? Consider first the *physical* aspect.

Darwin, it has been seen, was wedded to the idea of infinitesimal gradations in the production of species: Weismann contends, against Bateson and others, for the same view.¹ It will, however, be admitted that there is a very considerable consensus of recent evolutionary opinion in favour of the opposite contention. This was one of the points on which Professor Huxley was always disposed to disagree with Darwin. "We have always thought," he said, "that Mr. Darwin has unnecessarily hampered himself by adhering so strictly to his favourite *natura non facit saltum*. We greatly suspect that she does make considerable jumps in way of variation now and then, and that these saltations give rise to some of the gaps which appear to exist in the series of new forms."² Obviously,

¹ Cf. *Darwin and Mod. Science*, pp. 22 ff.

² *Lay Sermons*, p. 342. Cf. p. 326: "We believe,

with the admission of "jumps," "saltations," "leaps" in nature, the whole problem of man's origin assumes a new character. Now, the facts of evolution itself seem fast compelling scientific writers to adopt just some such view.¹ Professor J. A. Thomson, e.g., finds "increasing warrant for postulating the occurrence of mutations of considerable magnitude," and holds that "it is very difficult to give a concrete selectionist interpretation of what may be called the 'big lifts' in evolution."² He thinks that "man probably arose by a *mutation*, that is, by a discontinu-

as we have said above, that nature does make jumps now and then, and a recognition of the fact is of no small importance in disposing of many minor objections to the doctrine of transformation." Lyell, similarly, was disposed to postulate "occasional strides" in evolution, "constituting breaks in an otherwise continuous series of psychical changes," and thinks that "such leaps may have successively introduced not only higher and higher forms and grades of intellect, but at a much remoter period may have cleared at one bound the space which separated the highest stage of the unprogressive intelligence of the inferior animals from the first and lowest form [why only this ?] of improvable reason in man" (*Antiquity of Man*, p. 504).

¹ See references in last chapter.

² *Darwinism and Human Life*, p. 203. "It is likely," he says, "that man had his starting-point as a prepotent anthropoid genius." If, however, there is "genius," one seems to have got beyond the "anthropoid" altogether.

ous variation of considerable magnitude.”¹ R. Otto likewise favours the idea of the origin of man by “*sprungweise*” development, and remarks: “There is nothing against the assumption, and there is much to be said in its favour, that the last step [*Sprung*, leap] was such an immense one that it brought with it a freedom and richness of psychical life incomparable with anything that had gone before.”² Certainly, if such a “big lift” took place in the origin of man, it is not on the physical side only it is to be looked for; the psychical must be included. Since, indeed, it is the psychical which determines the characters of the organism, rather than *vice versa*, it may be held that it is primarily with a rise on the psychical side that the bodily rise must be connected.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

² *Naturalism and Religion*, p. 133 (E.T.). It is interesting to observe that Darwin was himself induced to travel a good way on this road. “An unexplained residuum of change, perhaps a large one,” he says, “must be left to the assumed action of those unknown agencies which occasionally induce marked and abrupt deviations of structure in our domestic productions” (*Descent of Man*, i. p. 154). Darwin to the end, however, looked with disfavour on abrupt variations as entering to any appreciable extent into the origin of species. Cf. *Origin of Species*, 6th Edit., chaps. vi. and viii.; *Plants and Animals under Domestication*, ii. pp. 414,

In favour of such an origin for man may be urged, in addition to the difficulties already adverted to attending the idea of development by infinitesimal gradations on the principle of natural selection, the standing difficulty of establishing *actual links* of connexion between man and anthropoid ancestors, or even in constructing a plausible "phylogeny" for man of any kind. Plenty of dogmatism on this subject, indeed, is often to be met with. But the more cautious writers treat the phylogenies with scant respect."¹ With Schwalbe and Haeckel the ape-ancestry of man is an article of faith: they will hear of no other hypothesis.² But Haeckel himself quotes the dictum of Virchow that science cannot teach that man is descended from the ape³; and Schwalbe bears witness that an influential group of anthropologists reject this line of descent, and seek for the roots of the human

¹ Cf. Bateson, *Dar. and Mod. Science*, pp. 188-9. Otto quotes Du Bois-Reymond as declaring "that if he must read romances, he would prefer to read them in some other form than that of genealogical trees" (*Nat. and Rel.*, p. 102).

² *Dar. and Mod. Science*, pp. 135 ff.; 146 ff. Darwin is uncompromisingly claimed for the view that "man was descended from the ape" (pp. 135, 147).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 146.

race in other directions,¹ very much further back. Even the famous Javan *Pithecanthropus erectus*, if we go by the judgment of experts, is far from establishing the connexion of ape with man.² The great gulf between man and lower forms stands still unbridged. There may well, indeed, have existed ape-forms much nearer man than any existing species, but even the Javan specimen stands far beneath the most degraded human skulls.³

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 132-4. Schwalbe instances Cope, Adloff, Klaatsch, etc. Cope derives from the Lemurs. The Dutch zoologist Hubrecht rejects the Lemurs, and argues for derivation from a Tarsiad form (*Descent of the Primates*, pp. 39, 40). Thus, as Schwalbe truly says, "the line of descent disappears in the darkness of the ancestry of the mammals." He thinks we might as well admit at once that "man has arisen independently"! (*Ut supra*, p. 134).

² Cf. Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 110. At the Anthropological Congress at Lindau, Sept. 1899, Dr. Bumiller read a paper in which he contended that the supposed *pithecanthropus erectus* was "nothing but a gibbon, as Virchow surmised from the first." There is, however, little unanimity.

³ Huxley doubted whether the human adult brain ever weighed less than 31 or 32 ounces (*Man's Place in Nature*, p. 102). The average human brain is 48 or 49 ounces. The brain of the *pithecanthropus* may have been 26 ounces. The heaviest gorilla brain is 18 or 20 ounces. Prof. Huxley, in *Nineteenth Century*, xxviii. pp. 750 ff., endorsed the words of M. Fraipont: "Between the man of Spy [one of the poorest skulls] and an existing anthropoid ape there lies an abyss."

III

The physical development of man cannot, as has been hinted, be dissociated from the consideration of his *mental* and *spiritual* equipment, and here the next question of interest arises—Are man's mental and moral powers simply a development from the mind of the animal, or do they likewise represent a *rise*—in this case, not in *degree* only, but in *kind*—upon the forms of intelligence below him? Evolutionary theory is wont to answer this question, as the preceding discussion would lead us to expect, by assuming that the same causes which are held adequate to explain the bodily development suffice also to explain the higher mental powers which the developed being (*homo sapiens*) manifests. Mind and body, it is granted, go together, not in the sense that mind is an entity distinct from the body—this it would be thought highly “unscientific” to admit¹—but as implying that

¹ Haeckel writes: “In strict contradiction to this mystical dualism, which is generally connected with teleology and vitalism, Darwin always maintained the complete unity of human nature, and showed convincingly that the psychological side of man was developed, in the same way as the body, from the less advanced soul of the anthropoid ape, and, at a still more remote

any rise on one side must necessarily be accompanied by a rise on the other. Mind cannot develop in advance of body. A human mind could not be put into a Simian brain, any more than body can develop high brain capacity without mental activity to utilise it. The question is: Is the ordinary evolutionary theory an adequate account of the mental endowment which we know man to possess in distinction from the animals?

Naturally, if there is reason to doubt whether man, *physically*, is a product of slow continuous development, this doubt must attach far more strongly to his mental development, in which the contrast to the merely animal stage is so much greater. It was the distinctiveness of man's mental powers, above all, which suggested to Lyell the idea of a "leap" which "may have cleared at one bound"¹ the space between animal and man; which forced on A. R. Wallace, with others, the conviction of a "break" at this point, implying the interposition of a creative Cause.² The

period from the cerebral functions of the older vertebrates" (*Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 150). Cf. Schwalbe, *Ibid.*, p. 116.

¹ *Antiq. of Man*, p. 504.

² Wallace, *Darwinism*, pp. 474-5. So Mivart, the Duke of Argyll, Calderwood, J. Young, etc., with some

conclusion is more directly reached by concentrating attention on the fact itself that in man mental and spiritual powers are revealed which place him in a different category from the mere animal—which cannot, therefore, by any process of slow accumulation of variations be developed from animal intelligence, but speak to the introduction of something original and higher in *kind*.

That there *is* a distinction between animal and human intelligence amounting to a distinction *in principle* is, in fact, conceded by most writers, though, in theory, efforts may be made to effect a passage from one to the other. Round man, as self-conscious, spiritual personality, capable of rising to universal ideas, of conceptions of law and order, of rational speech, of self-directed moral life, of education, progress and religion, a circle is drawn, investing his life with a sacredness which belongs to that of no mere animal. Law, practice, and common speech, equally with the language of science, recognise the

American and Continental evolutionists. "Break," possibly, is an unfortunate word in this connexion, for the rise may be, as above argued, from within, yet may none the less imply the entrance, or manifestation, of new powers.

distinction. Lyell justly contrasts the "unprogressive" intelligence of the inferior animals with the "improvable" reason of man¹; even Haeckel distinguishes "the power of conceptual thought and abstraction" in man from "the non-conceptual stages of thought and ideation in the nearest related animals."² Darwin, Haeckel, and others endeavour to bridge over the immensity of the distinction,³ and it is urged that the difference between animal and human intelligence is not greater than that between the baby and the full-grown man, between the savage and the philosopher.⁴ The argument is palpably fallacious, for in the baby and the savage there resides the *capacity* for development, which is wholly absent in the animal.

¹ *Antiq. of Man*, p. 504.

² *Riddle of Universe* (Pop. Edit.), pp. 38, 45.

³ Cf. Schwalbe, *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 120.

⁴ This Haeckel, *Riddle*, p. 65, etc. Mr. Mallock plays with the same argument (*Rel. as a Credible Doctrine*, pp. 52, 54). Otto justly remarks: "I can *train* a young ape or elephant, can teach it to open wine-bottles and perform tricks. But I can *educate* the child of the savage, can develop in him a mental life equal in fineness, depth, and energy, frequently, more than equal, to that of the average European, as the mission to the Eskimos and the Fuegians proves, and as Darwin frankly admitted" (*Op. cit.*, p. 333). Cf. the writer's *God's Image in Man*, pp. 162 ff.

The essence of the distinction seems to lie in the fact that in man there is the faculty of apprehending the *universal*—of grasping *principles* and *general ideas*—and of giving expression to these in *speech*. Man has “Logos”—reason—and the difference which this constitutes between him and his animal predecessors is practically infinite.¹

In this same principle of self-conscious rationality the ground is to be sought of man’s *ethical* distinction from the animals. As conscious of moral law, as capable of setting before himself moral ends, as recognising moral obligations, as exercising freedom in the choice between moral alternatives, man

¹ This, too, is generally admitted, however to be accounted for. Haeckel says: “Reason is man’s highest gift, the only prerogative that essentially distinguishes him from the lower animals” (*Riddle*, p. 6). Mr. J. Fiske describes the gulf between the human and animal mind as “immeasurable,” and says that “for psychological man you must erect a distinct kingdom; nay, you must even dichotomise the universe, putting man on one side, and all things else on the other” (*Through Nature to God*, p. 82). Huxley recognises “an immeasurable and practically infinite divergence of the human from the Simian stirps.” (*Man’s Place in Nature*, p. 103.) The image of God, Dr. Driver says, “can be nothing but the gift of *self-conscious reason* which is possessed by man but by no other animal” (*Genesis*, p. 15).

holds a unique position as, not simply a child of nature, but (in Kant's phrase) a member of a "realm of ends"—citizen of a Kingdom of God.¹ The inability of naturalism to explain these ethical conceptions peculiar to man was before commented on. Evolution may show how a basis was prepared for moral life in the social and parental instincts of the lower creation; but moral life itself is something different and higher, and evolutionary theory reaches it only by surreptitiously importing the ethical notions as its exposition advances.² On this point Höffding remarks in the Darwin volume: "To every consequent ethical consciousness there is a standard of nature, a primordial value which determines the single ethical judgments as their last presupposition, and the 'rightness' of this basis, the 'value' of this value can as little be discussed as the 'rationality' of our logical principles."³ It is here the doctrine of sin is effectively touched, for on every pure evolutionary theory there is a flattening down and changing of

¹ Cf. J. A. Thomson, *Bible of Nature*, p. 206, "The Man arose, an organism at length rational; to him all things became new—he spoke, and he was moral."

² Cf. *God's Image in Man*, pp. 141 ff.

³ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 460.

moral conception in a naturalistic or utilitarian interest. Freedom, as a rule, goes by the board.¹ Where, on the other hand, these distinctive attributes of man are firmly upheld, the need of a higher explanation becomes manifest. Selfhood, personality, moral freedom, the supreme value of moral ends, require a spiritual basis, and mean, not simply development, but the setting up of a new order or kingdom of being in the universe.

Even the ethical life, however, with its implication of social life, is not the highest thing in man. It is in *religion*, specially in the Christian religion, that the spiritual ground of man's being becomes most clearly manifest.² Here evolution altogether fails in furnishing an organ for such conceptions as infinity, eternity, spirituality, applied to the highest object of worship—God. Man is made to know, serve, and have fellowship, in the freedom of sonship, with his Creator; and this is possible only through the possession of a kinship with God, and of those attributes of

¹ Cf. Haeckel's attack on freedom, *Riddle*, p. 47, etc.

² "Man," says Max Müller, "alone employs language, he alone comprehends himself, alone has the power of general ideas—he alone believes in God" (*Chips from a German Workshop*, iv. p. 458).

rationality and freedom which stamp him as bearing the *image* of God. This again is essential as a presupposition for the right conception of sin. The conclusion is that, with every wish to give evolution its fullest rights, it cannot be pronounced adequate to explain the moral and spiritual dignity of man.

IV

The question next arising—a hardly less vital one for our doctrine—relates to the *manner* in which man began his career as a moral being—whether, uncoun-
ted millions ago, far down the scale in *brutishness* and *savagery*, or, more recently, in a condition *conformable to his mental nature and destination*, and holding in it the possibility of *sinless development*. On this subject, in inversion of the opinion held in Christendom till almost the present day, evolutionary theory speaks with no bated breath. The positions are coming to be regarded as well-nigh axiomatic: (1) that man is of enormously remote antiquity; and (2) that, as befits his animal ancestry, he is to be thought of as only slowly emerging from the brute condition, and as existing for untold periods—probably hun-

dreds of thousands of years—in the state commonly known as savagery. There has been no fall of man, but a wonderful *ascent*. As Professor Thomson puts it: “We are no longer as those who look back to a paradise in which man fell; we are rather as those ‘who rowing hard against the stream, see distant gates of Eden gleam, and do not dream it is a dream.’”¹ The objection felt to this view is sometimes described as simple prejudice, arising from repugnance to the idea of an ape-ancestry. It goes, however, much deeper. What really staggers one is not a genetic relation to lower forms, but the brute *state* which this is supposed to imply as the starting-point of human development, and the long, revolting history that follows before man attains even the rudiments of moral and civilised existence. The collision here is unmistakable, not simply with Church “dogmas,” but, as already seen, with the truest, purest, ideas we are enabled to form of God, man, sin, and of the normal relations of man to God.

Is this collision inevitable? In itself it can hardly be declared to be so, if the theory of man’s origin by insensibly slow gradations

¹ *Bible of Nature*, p. 226.

(however man arose, it may be very confidently affirmed it was not *thus*) is abandoned, and a different mode of origin—call it by “mutation,” “leap,” “break,” or what one will—is substituted for it. No necessity exists, on this hypothesis, for picturing man, on his first appearance, as a semi-animal, the subject of brute passions and unregulated impulses. His nature, as became a moral being, may have been internally harmonious, with possibilities of pure development, which only his own free act annulled. It is not, therefore, in the nature of evolution, but in the mass of evidence which, it is believed, has been accumulated for man’s long antiquity and primitive low and rude condition (palaeolithic and neolithic man),¹ that the negation of this higher view of man’s origin must be sought. Great caution of assertion, however, is needed even here, and it may be doubted how far the fixed assumption of slow develop-

¹ Prof. Thomson says: “From the situations in which palaeolithic implements are found, it is inferred that these must have dropped from their makers’ hands at least 150,000 years ago. . . . But ever so much older than those palaeoliths are the eoliths. They probably take us back to 300,000 years ago” (*Bible of Nature*, p. 191). He would go back to Miocene times (p. 192). We take leave to be sceptical.

ment borrowed from *évolution* is not itself a leading factor in the reasonings about age.

It would be out of place to attempt to discuss at length a subject on most points regarding which scientific experts are themselves widely at variance. But one or two general remarks may be made. It is granted by nearly every one that the old Ussherian chronology, supposed to be based on the Bible, needs extension by many millenniums. On the other hand, the tendency has been greatly to retrench the exaggerated computations of the older geologists, resting on the rate of deposits, human remains, flints, other evidences of man's handywork. As early as 1888, Professor Boyd Dawkins entered a caveat against such computations, and declared that all, as it seemed to him, had ended in failure.¹ A well-known case was the deposit of stalagmite in Kent's Cavern. Mr. Pengelly had allowed for this 5,000 years for one inch, or 300,000 years for 5 feet. Professor Dawkins declared that it might have been formed at the rate of a quarter of an inch per annum, "at which rate 20 feet of stalagmite might be formed in 1,000 years."²

¹ Address to Brit. Association, Sept., 1888.

² *Cave Hunting*, pp. 39-41.

The reasonings of this same high authority against the presence of man in Tertiary times seem conclusive.¹ A fragment of bone, believed to be human, which Professor Dawkins had at first accepted as evidence of pre-glacial man, he afterwards declared to be not human, but ursine, and doubted whether the clay in which it was found was glacial.² American geology has tended to bring down the close of the Glacial Age, when undeniably man appears, to a much later date than was earlier supposed,³ while the relation of man to "interglacial" periods is still involved in much obscurity.⁴

¹ *Early Man in Britain*, pp. 36, 67-9, 93, etc. Apart from supposed ape-like ancestors, the evidence for Tertiary Man, as at Castenedolo, in Italy, or Calaveras, in California, seems now to be pretty generally discredited (cf. Engerrand, *Six Leçons de Préhistoire*, 1905, pp. 41-2). On the Miocene *Dryopithecus*, which Gaudry thought might be a flint-chipping ape in the line of man's ancestry, Engerrand writes: "Gaudry at first considered *Dryopithecus* as approaching man, but now he places it among the inferior anthropoids."

² *Nature*, June 7, 1877, pp. 97-8.

³ Leading American geologists date the close of the Glacial Age on that continent from 7,000 to 10,000 years ago. Cf. *God's Image in Man*, pp. 173 ff., 305-6.

⁴ In his work, *North America* (1904), I. C. Russell, prof. of Geology in the University of Michigan, states: "We find no authentic or well-attested evidence of the presence of man in America either in or during the Glacial period" (p. 362). Certain "finds" at Trenton, N.J., on which some stress was laid, have been very

The oldest skulls, too, do not support the theory of the slow ascent of man from the ape.¹ There is, one is entitled to say, as little room for dogmatism in this region on the side of science as there is on the side of the theologian. "Primitive Man" is still an enigma.

It must, indeed, to any one who reflects calmly on the matter, appear extraordinary that man should have existed on the earth in a practically unprogressive state for 200,000 or 300,000 years,² then suddenly have blossomed out a few thousand years ago into the mighty civilisations excavation has been bringing to light, with hardly any trace of barbarism behind! These civilisations, as

effectively challenged by Mr. W. H. Holmes, of the American Geological Survey (*Science*, Nov. 1892, etc.).

¹ Prof. Thomson says: "Man's enormous brain, which does not seem to have increased greatly in bulk since Palaeolithic times, marked a new departure" (*Bible of Nature*, p. 194). It is interesting to read that the palaeontologist Zittel "excludes from serious consideration the fossil skeleton of the Neanderthal [one of the more degraded skulls] on the ground that it is of comparatively recent date" (Duckworth, *Morphol. and Anthropol.*, p. 523). Cf. Huxley's verdict, *Man's Place in Nature*, p. 157.

² Prof. G. Henslow speaks of man as "on a uniformly low level of barbarism for an incalculable length of time" (*Liberal Churchman*, June, 1905, pp. 222-3).

surely, sprang from brains capable of better things than chipping rude flints, and making trifling ornaments, though it is to be owned that some of the palaeolithic men had powerful brains also.¹ The Duke of Argyll properly drew attention to the fact that the rude and degraded races are not found, as a rule, in the original centres of the distribution of mankind, but in outlying parts.²

V

There remains, in connexion with man's origin, the solemn question of *immortality*—of man's relation to *death*. Is man, in his spiritual being, capable of withstanding the shock of death? Would he, had sin not entered, have died—as we understand death—at all? The questions are not the same, but it is important to observe that the difficulty which arises here for evolutionary theory is hardly greater on the supposition that the *soul* survives death, than on the view that bodily death is not normal for man. Few will doubt that the animal is mortal. It is constituted for earth. Nothing in its

¹ Cf. on this point the remarks of Dr. Oswald Dykes in his *Divine Worker in Creation and Providence*, pp. 141 ff.

² *Unity of Nature*, p. 426.

aptitudes or desires points to anything beyond. Assume it to be different with man, as manifestly it is different, and how difficult is the problem that arises! Grant that in man we have a being constituted for immortality, capable of surviving death, we are beyond the question of degrees. A being is mortal or immortal; an infinity divides the two conditions. It is with immortality as with sonship to God, insensible gradations afford no clue to the magnitude of the change. It is the *kind* of being that is different. The logic of evolutionary theory, therefore, frequently asserts itself in the denial of a separate spiritual nature in man to which immortality can attach.¹ The question is one which presses hard on those who wish to rescue man from the grasp of naturalism, and secure for him the possession of the Christian hope.

It is a mistake, however, to suppose that immortality, in the Scriptural or Christian sense, is to be identified simply with the survival of the *spiritual* part of man, or an immortality of the *soul*. As truly as in

¹ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, pp. 116, 150. Cf. Haeckel, *Riddle*, p. 87. On immortality, see below, pp. 306 ff.

science, man is regarded in Scripture as a *unity*. Body as well as soul is essential to his complete personality.¹ Existence in separation from the body is never regarded as true or perfect existence (Sheol, Hades). Redemption, on the other hand, is never conceived of as redemption of the soul only, but as redemption of the whole personality—body and soul together.² “Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.”³ Accordingly, in the fundamental Biblical view, death, or separation of soul from body in physical dissolution, is not the natural or normal fate of man; the instinct of mankind, indeed, in its be-

¹ Cf. more fully the writer's *Christian View of God*, pp. 136 ff., 150 ff., 196 ff.; *God's Image in Man*, pp. 46 ff., 249 ff. See also Salmond's Cunningham Lectures on *Immortality*, and Laidlaw's *Bible Doct. of Man*.

² See *Christian View*, etc., as above.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 20, 21; cf. Rom. viii. 23. So far as the hope of immortality is found in the O.T., it takes the form of translation (Enoch, Elijah), deliverance from Sheol, resurrection. In this, in the view of the present writer, is probably to be found the key to such passages in Job, the Psalms and the prophets, as Job xiv. 13-15; xix. 25-27; Pss. xvi. 8-11; xvii. 15; xlix. 14, 15; lxxiii. 24; Hos. vi. 2; xiii. 14; Isa. xxv. 6, 8; xxvi. 19; Dan. xii. 2 (cf. Cheyne, *Origin of Psalter*).

wailing of the dead, has ever protested against its being regarded as such. With this cohere the testimonies already cited to the connexion of death with human sin.¹

Against such teaching evolutionary theory, and not it only, raises a violent protest. Death, it is categorically laid down, is a natural law to which all organisms are subject. Man, therefore, must share the fate of other living beings: must grow, decay, die. The opposite view is absurd. But this again raises the question—What is Man? Is he a mere animal among others? Concede to man a rational and ethical nature constituting him a free, spiritual personality; a religious nature, uniting him in kinship to God; an *immortal* nature, with capacities destined to unfold themselves through eternal ages; is it so manifest that what applies to mere animal existence applies to him also? Does not man found rather a new kingdom and order of existence to which a new law must apply? Death is not the same thing to him as to the animal. To the animal death is the natural termination of its time-limited existence; to man, if the spirit survives, it

¹ Gen. ii. 17; iii. 19; Rom. v. 12, etc.

is a rupture, a mutilation, a separation of parts of himself which were never designed to go asunder.¹ Suppose, moreover, that man began, *not*, as evolution assumes, at the low brute stage, but with capacities of moral obedience, and relations to his Maker suitable to these, is not the subject lifted out of the region in which physiology and the other natural sciences have any longer a voice ?

There is yet another question, however, which recent scientific utterances force on the attention—*Is* death a universal and necessary law of living organisms ? It is customary to assume that it is, but the question assumes a new aspect when a biologist of the rank of Weismann is found challenging it, and declaring that “the origin of death” is “one of the most difficult problems in the whole range of physiology”;² that there is no ascertainable reason, apart from what he considers the “utility” of it, why organisms should ever die.³ In point of fact, he thinks, “an immense number of the lower organisms” do not die.⁴ He has coined the phrase,

¹ See as above, *Christian View*, etc.

² *Essays upon Heredity*, i. p. 20.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 23, etc. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

“the immortality of the Protozoa.” Even as regards the higher organisms, in which the conditions of longevity so surprisingly vary,¹ he considers “that death is not a primary necessity, but that it has been secondarily acquired as an adaptation.”² It is not necessary to enter into the discussion here: meanwhile it is plain that, if Weismann’s reasonings stand unrefuted, death is *not* an inherent law of organisms, but may well depend on conditions which would not have affected sinless man.

In fine, it is not to be denied that evolutionary theory, great as may be its services, leaves us with the main problems as regards origins as yet unsolved. It is so with regard to man’s own origin. It might be shown that it is so with regard to the origin of sex, the origin of language³—if Weismann is right, also with the origin of death. The time has clearly not yet come for dogmatically ruling out the Christian presuppositions of a doctrine of sin.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 6 ff., 36 ff. ² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

³ Cf. *Dar. and Mod. Science*, p. 518.

CHAPTER VII

SIN AND HEREDITY—THE RACIAL ASPECT

HEREDITY is one of the most interesting, as it is one of the most recondite and baffling subjects in modern biological science. Heredity, indeed, is not a new discovery, any more than sin is a new fact. Everywhere in nature kind is seen producing its kind with undeviating regularity. Ancestral traits, good and bad, reappear in offspring. But recent science has given heredity a new grounding in the study of the laws of organism, has tracked its operations with a precision formerly unthought of, has built up complicated theories regarding it, and drawn conclusions from it of the most far-reaching character. It is an inseparable part of evolutionary theory in all its forms. In itself, however, apart from this relation, no one acquainted with recent discussions will question that the bearings of heredity on the doctrine of sin are both deep and vital.

Doubtless it lies beyond the province of biological science to tell us anything properly of the nature of *sin*. Categories of nature do not explain moral and spiritual facts. When discourse turns on laws of freedom, moral responsibility, ethical ideals, ends of conduct, responsibility to God, a sphere is entered different from that with which biology has to deal. Yet it is a sphere in which, when regard is had to the constitution and facts of human nature, and the part which undeniably heredity does play in the shaping of character and conduct, very difficult problems arise. Sin, we have seen, stands for something which we distinguish from a result of nature ; for which we attach to ourselves and to others a solemn responsibility ; which we say *ought not* to have been ; which only grows the more lurid in its colouring as we bring it into the light of the divine holiness. But then—the question forces itself—can this view of sin be maintained together with the teaching on heredity with which our text-books and much of our current literature are making us familiar ? How, for instance, if a major part (some would say the whole) of what we call sin is the result

of inherited disposition and tendency,—how, if heredity and environment, the latter itself a product of inherited forces, predetermine for the mass of mankind their place in the moral scale,—how if, as many contend, heredity controls will, while will is without power to modify heredity,—is it possible to represent the existing condition of humanity as abnormal and in contradiction of its true destiny, how vindicate responsibility in the midst of it, how hope to effect the deliverance of the race from it ?

A very definite issue is thus raised. It seems plain that if Christianity, retaining its view of sin, is to accomplish anything in the world, it must, while willingly accepting from heredity the idea of a single organic life of the race, and of descent of good and evil traits from generation to generation, join with this something else—the acknowledgment of an inherent law of good and evil in life, of a personality in man from which forces proceed that act upon environment and modify it, and, not least, of a divine redeeming power able to cope with and overcome the worst manifestations of the world's evil. In affirming God and the

soul, sin and redemption, Christianity lifts life, with all its strands of racial influence, out of the web of fatalism into which heredity, taken alone, tends to sink it.

To gain clearness on this point, a closer view must now be taken of heredity in its present-day developments.

I

What heredity *is*, every one, in a general way, understands. It is simply, to use words of Weismann's, "that property of an organism by which its peculiar nature is transmitted to its descendants."¹ The *fact* of heredity is familiar: it is the *explanation* of it, and the *dêfining* of the *limits* of its operation, which science finds puzzling. The first and most obvious thing about heredity is that, in ordinary course,² type invariably produces type, yet always with some degree of individual variation; further, that these variations, with the other peculiarities that go to make up the individual—themselves results of past variation—tend likewise

¹ *Essays*, i. p. 72. For more elaborate definitions, cf. J. A. Thomson, *Heredity*, pp. 15, 16.

² Allowance is made here for mutations. Cf. Thomson, *Ibid.*, pp. 82 ff.

to be transmitted.¹ Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles.² Wheat may be relied on to produce wheat; maize to produce maize; the eagle an eagle; the horse a horse; the man a man. The negro type is reproduced in the negro, the Indian in the Indian. Mental and moral,³ as well as physical, qualities reappear in offspring, though often curiously distributed, modified, or blended—the qualities of the parents, as Emerson says, being frequently drawn off and “potted” in the several members of the family.⁴ Sometimes the ancestral quality leaps over one or more generations and reappears in a descendant.⁵ Here then is the problem which science sets itself to solve—How is this wonderful result brought about? What is the *rationale* of it? As Weismann again puts it: “How can such hereditary

¹ “There is the tendency to breed true,” *Ibid.*, p. 69.

² Matthew vii. 16.

³ Thomson, *Ibid.*, p. 248.

⁴ *Conduct of Life*, on Fate: “It often appears in a family, as if all the qualities of the progenitors were potted in several jars,—some ruling quality in each son or daughter of the house,—and sometimes the unmixed temperament, the rank unmitigated elixir, the family vice, is drawn off in a separate individual, and the others are proportionally relieved.”

⁵ Thomson, *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

transmission of the characters of the parent take place? How can a single reproductive cell reproduce the whole body in all its details?"¹

The answer or answers given by current biology to these questions are very characteristic. In all the leading modern theories of heredity it is taken for granted as a thing self-evident that the only kind of explanation science can entertain must be a "mechanical" one: all talk of a living, organising principle, of vital agency, of a "directive force," is rigorously excluded. Only that can be admitted which can be stated in terms of physics. As Huxley says in an often-quoted passage: "To speak of vitality as anything but the name of a series of operations is as if one should talk of the horology of a clock."² It will be asked below whether—as other eminent biologists contend³—this huge assumption is not unwarrantable, does not, indeed, demand the impossible; but it is interesting at present to inquire whether,

¹ *Essays*, i. p. 73. ² Art. "Biology," *Ency. Brit.*

³ Prof. Thomson says: "Not a few embryologists, such as Driesch, believe themselves warranted in frankly postulating a vitalistic factor—an Aristotelian 'Entelechy'" (*Op. cit.*, p. 417; cf. p. 399).

notwithstanding the rejection of a vital principle, it is found practicable, when an actual theory is attempted, to get on without it, or its equivalent.

Mr. Darwin led the way in this direction in his theory of *Pangenesis*—a theory still spoken of with respect as anticipative of later discovery.¹ The theory, in brief, is, that every cell in the whole organism is continually, at every stage in its development, throwing off minute portions of itself—“gemules,” as Darwin calls them—which, by a mysterious law, find their way to, and get stored up in, the reproductive cell, whence, under suitable conditions, a new organism is produced, containing all the parts of the former.² But, setting aside the numberless other difficulties of this “gemmule” theory, there is one which even Darwin could not ignore, viz., how, even assuming the parts all safely housed in the reproductive cell, they manage, streaming in from all sides in countless numbers, to arrange themselves in the precise position and relations necessary to

¹ *Dar. and Mod. Science*, pp. 84, 102, 111.

² Cf. Darwin, *Variations of Plants and Animals*, II. ch. xxvii.; Weismann, *Essays*, i. p. 78; Thomson, *Heredity*, pp. 406 ff., etc.

build up the new organism. How is it that each gemmule in this whirl of particles is guided to the exact place it is meant to occupy, and manages thereafter to keep to it? ¹ Darwin's answer is given in the phrase "elective affinities." The gemmules have "affinities" which lead to their arranging themselves in the proper order and relations. What, however, is this "elective affinity" but just the organising, directive principle to which exception is taken under another name? As Weismann in criticising it says: "An unknown controlling force must be added to this mysterious arrangement, in order to marshal the molecules which enter the reproductive cell in such a manner that their arrangement corresponds with the order in which they must emerge as cells at a later period." ² As well postulate the vital principle at once.

Mr. Spencer, in his *Biology*, likewise criticises Mr. Darwin, but it is difficult to see that his own theory is in much better

¹ The difficulty is not lessened on the (Mendelian) theory of "unit-characters" with which some would correlate Darwin's hypothesis.

² *Essays*, i. p. 77.

case. He rejects "elective affinity," but only to substitute what he calls "polarity." There is, he tells us, "an innate tendency in living particles to arrange themselves into the shape of the organism to which they belong." For this tendency, he observes, there is no fit term, so he proposes this word "polarity."¹ Is there any advantage?

Discarding these theories, Weismann takes another line, based on his doctrine of the "immortality" of the (reproductive) "germ-cell," or of the germ-plasm contained in it.² In contrast with the perishable "somatic" or body cells, the germ-cell is absolutely continuous: it divides and subdivides, but never dies. Each part has in it the peculiar molecular structure, with all the other properties, of the original cells; it therefore produces, when developed, precisely the same kind of being. Thus he thinks he solves the problem; "How is it that a single cell of the body can contain within itself all the hereditary tendencies of the whole organism?"³ It may be doubted, however, whether, so far as the essential point is concerned, viz.,

¹ *Biology*, on "Waste and Repair."

² *Essays*, i. p. 209. ³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

how the germ-cell comes to possess this peculiar molecular structure, and is enabled to give off its infinitely complex molecular structure in its entirety to myriads of derivative cells, we are not left as much in the dark as ever. To explain the rise and growing complexity of germ-structure, we are thrown back on the hypothesis of natural selection working on fortuitous variations, in forms of life originally unicellular, therefore presumably structureless. As to perpetuation, "fission" affords no explanation of how the marvellously complex molecular mechanism of the parent cell should divide into multitudes of cells each with the mechanism complete.

It seems, in short, even in these theories, necessary to supplement them by the factor they are so slow to recognise, viz., a soul-life, the presence of a living, organising principle, which is the true agent in building up a structure of a given type from materials which do not originally contain it. Such a principle is not, as sometimes asserted, an imaginary cause, the counterpart of the pseudo-"horology" of the clock. Mechanical and chemical forces are only one side of the

universe : our own soul-life furnishes us with the type of another. We come back to the sound Aristotelian principle that it is the soul which is the cause of organism, not conversely. If this is conceded, the necessity for these elaborate germ-mechanisms largely disappears : the germ has in it the potency for building up structure where none previously existed. To what but this does Weismann himself come back in his admission of the unsolved mystery in cell-life of "assimilation"—the power, as he explains it, which the organism possesses "of taking up certain foreign substances, viz., food, and of converting them into the substance of its own body ?"¹.

II

If, in these discussions, we seem far enough from the doctrine of sin, a remaining step will perhaps bring us within full view of their relevancy. It has already been remarked that heredity hands down not only the specific type, but individual variations. But here the question arises which occupies a chief place in recent discussions on heredity, viz., the possibility of the *transmission of*

¹ *Op. cit.*, i. p. 73.

what are called "acquired characters." Some variations are *congenital*, that is, arise from unknown causes in the organic germ; other characters are *acquired*, or impressed on the organism, in the course of its history, e.g., through external conditions or environment, through use or disuse, through voluntary agency. That congenital variations are or may be inherited all agree; but is it the same with acquired characters? Till within the last twenty or thirty years it was commonly supposed that it was, and evolutionary theory took the fact for granted. Lamarck built his theory of development on the supposed inheritance of changes wrought by use and disuse of parts. Darwin, as time went on, gave an increasing place to the same factor alongside his principle of "natural selection." Herbert Spencer in a manner built his philosophy, especially his psychology and ethics, on the inheritance of acquired qualities. It is through accumulation and registration in the organism of past experiences that he accounts for mental development and the immediacy of seeming "intuitions," as of space and time, of ethical distinctions, etc. All this, it is allowed, falls

to the ground, if inheritance of acquired characters is denied. In Weismann's words, in the Preface to the lecture in which he propounded the opposite view, in 1883: "If these views be correct, all our ideas upon the transformation of species require thorough modification, for the whole principle of evolution by means of exercise (use and disuse), as proposed by Lamarck, and accepted in some cases by Darwin, entirely collapses."¹ The results of the theory for ethics and theology, it will immediately be seen, are not less serious. Besides cutting at the root of the ordinary belief in inherited evil tendencies as the result of vicious lives in the parents, it no less effectually takes the foundations from the doctrine of Original Sin, or of a hereditary vitiation of nature due to a moral lapse in the beginning of the race. For changes due

¹ *Essays*, i. p. 69. Cf. the following from Spencer, quoted by Prof. Thomson (*Heredity*, pp. 164, 195): "A right answer to the question whether acquired characters are or are not inherited underlies right beliefs, not only in biology and psychology, but also in education, ethics, and politics." "Close contemplation of the facts impresses me more strongly than ever with the two alternatives—either there has been inheritance of acquired characters, or there has been no evolution."

to human volition admittedly rank as "acquired characters."

III

It is unnecessary to enter into the keen conflict of opinion among scientific authorities on this difficult point: ¹ it will be enough to look at the *grounds* and *bearings* of the theory as it affects our present subject. It is important to notice, in forming a judgment upon it, that, with Weismann, the case for the theory, developed with remarkable skill, is based partly, indeed, on *the alleged lack of evidence* for the inheritance of acquired characters, but partly also—indeed primarily—on the doctrine of the continuity of the reproductive germ, and the *necessity of finding a "mechanical" explanation* of the transmission of changes from other parts of the organism—the "somatic" cells—to the reproductive cell, so as to become a constitutive

¹ The diversity of view is seen in the volume *Dar. and Mod. Science*. Weismann defends; Haeckel, Schwalbe and others oppose. The *pros* and *cons* are well exhibited in Prof. Thomson's chapter on the subject in his *Heredity* (ch. vii.). Prof. Thomson leans personally to Weismann's view, but admits that the subject is still *sub judice*. The late Prof. G. J. Romanes contests it in his *Darwin and after Darwin*.

part of the latter. As he says in one place : " Use and disuse cannot produce any effect in the transformation of species, simply because they can never reach the germ-cells from which the succeeding generation comes." ¹ This means that he can conceive of no " mechanism " by which they can do so. The theory, in brief, is, that all changes that are reproducible are in the germ-cell, and in the germ-cell alone ; and that this is unreachably by influences from changes in other parts of the organism. ² It cannot escape notice how deeply an assumption of this kind must colour the treatment of evidence ; it is not less obvious that, if the " mechanical " view of the propagation of organism is rejected, the problem assumes an entirely different aspect. If the body is a " mechanism," as no doubt in some sense it is, it differs from every mere mechanism in the fact that it is *animated*. It is a mechanism self-originated,

¹ *Essays*, i. p. 400.

² Weismann puts this briefly : " The foundation of all the phenomena of heredity can only be the substance of the germ-cells ; and the substance transfers its hereditary tendencies from generation to generation, at first unchanged, and always uninfluenced in any corresponding manner by that which happens during the life of the individual which bears it " (*Ibid.*, p. 69).

self-repairing, self-perpetuating. A single life pervades it; every part is in *rapport* with every other; probably no vital change takes place in any part which is not attended by changes in other parts that defy all purely physical explanation. When we can explain, e.g., how the feeling of shame can determine the blush to the face, we may be at liberty to doubt the impossibility of an impure thought or base desire leaving its subtle impress even on the germ-cells concerned with reproduction. One immediate result, it must be seen, of Weismann's theory is to withdraw heredity absolutely from every sphere controlled in any degree by *volition*. It has been generally believed that a man's actions have some influence for good or evil, not only on his own character, but on that of his offspring. Live a vicious life, it has been thought, and you do irreparable mischief, not only to yourself but to your offspring, to whom you transmit, in some measure, your own evil tendencies. This, if Weismann is to be followed, is an entire mistake. Weismann grants, of course, that the effect of vicious habits is a general physical enfeeblement in which, through defective nourishment or from other causes the germ-

cells are involved; in this way, indirectly, offspring suffers.¹ But *directly*, neither in body nor mind, it is held, can offspring be affected by volitional acts on the part of the parent. Any changes flowing from these fall, as already said, under the category of "acquired characters," and cannot be transmitted. Further, as human will has no share in inducing, hereditarily, the deterioration seen in so many broken specimens of the race, so neither can any exercise of will help to secure, through inheritance, improvement in the future. There is, if freedom is granted—which commonly it is not—the possibility of reform for the individual; there is the undoubted gain for posterity of a better social environment. But nothing is accomplished directly through the principle of heredity. That moves on its isolated way, unaffected by accidents of external condition, by helping or hindering influences of surrounding, by good or evil determinations of volition. If it is asked, How then explain the many wrecks of society who do seem to owe

¹ Even this, as critics point out, involves a considerable admission, hardly reconcilable with the general theory. Cf. on a related point, Romanes, *Darwin and After Darwin*, ii. p. 108.

their degradation in some degree to the weakened intellects, depraved appetites, and enfeebled wills inherited from parents? the answer is that what is really effect has been mistaken for cause. Volition had as little to do in the parent as in the child with the depraved tendencies that are inherited. By an unfortunate germinal variation with which will had no more to do than with the colour of the hair, the parent was born with an unbalanced nature and strong propensities to vice. Circumstances favouring, he went the road that might have been anticipated. What, now, the child inherits is the congenital tendency, not the later acquired habit. Here, it must be owned, is a theory that cuts deep into the view it has been customary to take of the sin and crime of society, and of society's duty and responsibility in regard to it.

It has been indicated that the *theological* consequences of the Weismann doctrine are no less far-reaching than the *social*. The evolutionary theory of the "brute inheritance," which takes the place of the Church doctrine of "Original Sin," Weismannism does not, of course, touch, though it seriously affects the possibility of a working out of

“the ape and tiger” strain from humanity.¹ But the idea of an original pure beginning of the race, and of a defection from the right, with a consequent perversion of the nature, and hereditary transmission of this wrong state to posterity, is in its principle subverted by the Weismann theory. Such a “Fall” as the Church doctrine conceives, and as appears to be taught in Scripture, would at most be a case of “acquired character,” and could produce no hereditary effects. The inference is obvious, and has been drawn with exceptional acuteness by Mr. F. R. Tennant in his Hulsean Lectures on *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*. “The question,” the writer says, “turns entirely on the possibility of the transmission of acquired modifications as distinguished from congenital variations,” and he adds, “The conviction very largely prevails amongst the authorities that unequivocal instances of such transmission have never yet been supplied.”²

¹ Only unfortunately man has not come through the “tiger,” and it is becoming even doubtful whether he has descended through the “ape.” See last chapter.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 34, 36. Mr. Tennant, with Weismann, urges the seeming impossibility “of conceiving the nature of the mechanism” by which a specific effect on

IV

Heredity in the naked, unqualified form in which it is often presented by science, with denial of free-will, would seem to *destroy responsibility* at its base.¹ At first glance the theory of Weismann, in questioning the inheritance of contracted tendencies, might appear to relieve the pressure on posterity. In this light Mr. Tennant is disposed to welcome it. In reality, however, no doctrine rivets fatality on man so completely as this of Weismann's. It does so, as has been seen, by withdrawing heredity completely from the control of will. The tendencies now hereditary were in their origin simply unfavourable variations: a rigorous necessity has ruled the subsequent development; will has no influence at all in changing things from their pre-determined course. The question of the degree of evidence for the transmission of acquired characters must be left to the decision of experts, but the issues involved are sufficiently grave to warrant us in asking on general

the organism could modify its reproductive organs (p. 17). But is a "mechanical" explanation necessary? Cf. the writer's *God's Image in Man*, pp. 236 ff.

¹ Cf. the illustrations in Dr. Amory Bradford's *Heredity*, pp. 81 ff.

grounds whether there are not considerations that point to the need of at least *some qualification* of the Weismann hypothesis.

The weakness of nine-tenths of the scientific discussions on this subject, one cannot help feeling, lies in the all but complete ignoring of the factor of *personality*, of will, of moral decision, in man. The physical is viewed as a sphere complete in itself, ruled only by mechanical or chemical laws, and any interaction of mind and body—certainly any action of mind *on* body—is rejected as unscientific. Science, it is assumed, can take account only of physical causation: mental concomitants of molecular changes may be noted,¹ but it cannot be allowed that they have the least influence on the train of the physical phenomena. This may be called science, but it is a science which can never accomplish its task; for experience shows that it is the forces emanating from personality which are the most efficient in the making or marring of human life. Organic changes are not the whole. So far as these changes are the

¹ They may be noted, but they cannot be *explained* by the physical causes, which exhaust themselves in the production of their physical effects.

results of deliberation, forethought, resolve—as in the execution of a purpose—they cannot be explained if the volitional factor is left out of account. This bears on heredity. The moral forces of life, if good, act as a lever to lift up; if evil, operate as a force to break down. Only a violent misreading of history can affirm the opposite.

The writer has argued elsewhere that probably a mistake has been made in these discussions in stating the alternatives *too absolutely*, as if one must hold either that *all* acquired characters are hereditary (though few will be bold enough to maintain this), or else that *none* are.¹ Is it not possible to make a distinction, and may not the principle of the distinction lie in the fact that some changes in the nature go deeper than others—come nearer the seat of personality—and that these may be transmissible, while more superficial changes are not? Purely *physical* changes, e.g.,—mutilations and the like—enter least deeply into the organism, and commonly, at least, are not transmitted. *Intellectual* acquisitions again—those on which Mr. Spencer chiefly builds—still lie outside the depths of personal life,

¹ Cf. *God's Image in Man*, pp. 236 ff.

and do not ordinarily pass to offspring. In the *emotional* life, and life of feeling generally, on the other hand, it is difficult to deny that impressions are sometimes made which go down to the seat of life, and occasionally are transmitted in very definite form. Even here we are outside the properly volitional life—the *moral* life—of man, and it is there, as already suggested, that the deeper effects on character seem to be produced.

There remains the *religious* sphere. To this the same reasonings apply, but with the infinitely intensified significance which belongs to the loss of the soul's true relation to God, and the adoption of a fundamentally wrong principle into the ground of the will. For this, as before seen, is what sin essentially is—not the breach simply of some particular moral precept, as when one is betrayed into an unkind thought or untruthful word, but the exchange of a right relation to God, in which His will is supreme, for an opposed relation, in which God's authority is cast off, and the human will becomes a law to itself. Such an altered relation to God in a primal act of disobedience is the greatest change a nature can undergo, and involves a shock the effects

of which we cannot, on the lower plane in which the irreparable damage is already done, adequately realise. Sin has been spoken of in preceding papers as something tragic, catastrophic, in the history of the race: it is thus, also, that experience, with Scripture, teaches us to regard it. The terrible spectacle presented by heredity on its physical and moral sides—the vice, sin, crime, lust, cruelty, that seem to have their origin in inherited conditions and perverted tendencies—first find an adequate explanation, and are set in their proper moral light, when traced back to an origin in the voluntary turning aside of man from his true life in God. The race is an organism. There is a racial sin and guilt in which the world of mankind is involved,¹ the effects of which it shares, as well as a harm that flows from personal transgression. Heredity is not the denial of this truth, but, in its own way, is the reaffirmation of it.

On the brute-inheritance theory of evolution, which takes the place of the Christian doctrine, it need only be said at present that, if this were the whole, it would in no proper sense be sin at all. "The victim of it," as

¹ Cf. Dorner, *System of Doctrine*, iii. p. 54 ff.

has been elsewhere remarked, "might groan under it as an all but unendurable cross, but he could never judge of it as the religious man does, when he looks down into his heart, and condemns himself for the self-seeking, impure, and God-resisting tendencies he finds in operation there."¹

V

When, however, all abatements have been made, it remains that heredity is a *terrible reality* in human life, and that, under its sway, the position of vast multitudes, even in our nominally Christian lands, is so dark as, at times, to appear all but hopeless. It is not simply inherited tendencies, powerful as these are, but that vast complex of influences—itsself largely an outgrowth of heredity—we call "environment," which gives the problem its tremendous magnitude. The hearts of the best often fail in contemplating the difficulties that confront them here; yet they should not fail. On the basis of naturalism a gloomy pessimism may be permissible, indeed inevitable. But Christianity has a better message. For heredity, after all, is no blind destiny,

¹ *God's Image in Man*, p. 234.

binding human beings to their ruin. There are forces of personality that can be invoked to counteract the evil influences of even heredity and environment, and Christianity does not leave man to mere nature in his conflict, else he would surely fail, but brings to his aid supernatural forces powerful enough to cope with the worst evils with which human nature is infected.

Christian duty, indeed, cannot neglect the task laid to its hand of endeavouring to break down the *evil social environment* which, for so many, destroys, from infancy, almost the possibility of growth in goodness.¹ Even here, no doubt, singular exceptions occur—a proof, if one were needed, that heredity is not everything in human life. But they are exceptions, not the rule. No effort, therefore, is to be spared—here Christianity and the social reformer are at one—in improving external conditions, removing temptations, and, as far as possible, securing, if need be compelling, tolerable and decent conditions of existence for

¹ In a powerful passage Prof. Seeley, in his *Ecce Homo* (ch. xix.) speaks of those who from the first hour of their existence are received into the devil's church by a kind of infant baptism, and shows the disabilities under which they labour.

every member of the community—specially for the *young*. This, however, of itself only removes obstacles—creates opportunities and facilities. To utilise these, higher forces must be brought into play, appeal must be made to the man himself as a moral and responsible being—to reason, to conscience, to will—to the power which every one has of appreciating the good when put before him. The individual must be trained to feel that he *has* personality—is not the helpless plaything of outside forces, but is called to bend these to his own purposes instead of being bent by them. It is here at once that human weakness reveals itself, and that religion, as already mentioned, comes with its mighty aid, furnishing man with resources which nature alone could not supply.

If we turn to Scripture, we find both of the truths now asserted—*heredity* and *human responsibility*—strongly emphasised; emphasised, moreover, not as contradictory, but as complementary. In no case is it hinted that heredity is an entail which cannot be broken by individual repentance. Even the seemingly harsh word of the second commandment, “visiting the iniquity of the fathers

upon the children,"¹ is in its context and intention anything but harsh ; for, in contrast with the inheritance of loving-kindness to thousands of them that love God and keep His commandments, it refuses to contemplate the entail of penalty beyond the third and fourth generation of them that hate God—a suggestion that judgment is God's strange work, and that evil in the end may be swallowed up of good. On the other hand, Ezekiel's repudiation of the proverb, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge,"² and enunciation of the opposite principle of individual responsibility, are not in contradiction of the patent facts of heredity, which the prophet elsewhere plainly enough recognises,³ but supply the balancing assertion that no man will perish for the sins of his fathers who does not make these sins his own, and that the worst entail of a father's wrongdoings can be cut off by personal repentance and right-doing.⁴ Each man, that is, stands or falls at the last by what he himself is, and, while the divine judgment can never call that

¹ Exod. xx. 5. ² Ez. xviii. 1.

³ Cf. chs. iv.-vii., xvi., etc.

⁴ Cf. chs. xv. 14, 20, etc. ; xviii. 14 ff.

good which is in reality evil—be its origin what it may,—the *personal* responsibility of each individual will be measured by the Omniscient with full regard to all the circumstances of his lot. It will be more tolerable, Jesus says, for Tyre and Sidon, and for Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for those who have received and rejected better light.¹

¹ Matt. xi. 20-4. What Christianity does for man with its divine help is considered later.

CHAPTER VIII

SIN ORIGINAL AND ACTUAL—THE DEPRAVED STATE

THE study of heredity in the previous chapter brought into view the question of what is known in theology as Original Sin. Is there such a thing? What has modern thought to say about it? If there are facts on which the doctrine rests, what are they, and how is it proposed to explain them?

This, it is well known, is the fundamental point in which the Augustinian and the Pelagian types of theology separate—the former affirming, the latter denying, the reality of a hereditary corruption and inborn depravity of nature.¹ Between the two came the mediating view known as Semi-Pelagianism, revived in many forms since, which weakened down the Augustinian (later the Calvinistic) view, and allowed to man's will a remanent spiritual

¹ For these views see the writer's *Progress of Dogma*, pp. 153 ff.

freedom, and share in renewal (synergism). The Arminian controversy, the New England controversy, in which Jonathan Edwards took a notable part in defence of original sin, recent discussions in the Ritschlian School—Ritschl himself keenly opposing the doctrine—the new phases of the controversy as the result of the rise of the doctrine of evolution, evince the vitality and abiding importance of the problem.¹

I

The question *thus lives*, but with a difference. Few will dispute in these days, however they may account for it, that there are powerful impulses in man's nature impeding and thwarting the realisation of the good. Some, indeed, treat the matter quite lightly. Sir Oliver Lodge, for example, writes: "As for 'original sin' or 'birth sin' or other notion of that kind,—by which is partly meant the sin of his parents,—that sits absolutely lightly on him [the higher man of to-day]. As a matter of fact it is non-existent, and none but a monk could have invented

¹ A recent discussion in criticism of the doctrine is in Mr. F. H. Tennant's *Origin and Propagation of Sin* (Hulsean Lects.) and *Fall and Original Sin*.

it. Whatever it be, it is not a business for which we are responsible. We did not make the world ; and an attempt to punish us for our animal origin and ancestry would be simply comic, if any one could be found who was willing seriously to believe it.”¹

This, however, does not express the deeper temper of the time. The Rousseau theory of the inherent goodness of human nature, with the superficial eighteenth century optimism that accompanied it, is now as good as dead in serious thought. It was before shown how unsparing was the blow which Kant (certainly no monk) struck at this “heroic opinion,” which, he says, “has perhaps obtained currency only amongst philosophers, and in our times chiefly among instructors of youth,” in his doctrine of “The Radical Evil of Human Nature” in the opening of his book on Religion.² Pessimism, with all its extrava-

¹ *Man and the Universe*, p. 220. Cf. Mr. Campbell's ch. iv. in his *New Theology*.

² Cf. Abbott's translation, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 325 ff., 335, 339 ff. No theologian uses stronger language. “That there must be such a corrupt propensity rooted in men,” he says, “need not be formally proved in the face of the multitude of crying examples which experience sets before one's eyes in the acts of men” (p. 339). He adduces some of the examples.

gances, and works like Nordau's and Zola's, give lurid prominence to sides of evil in human nature, and monstrosities of vice, the disquieting spectres of which can never again be laid. A passage from Professor Huxley—bizarre, and to be taken, where needful, *cum grano*—may be quoted as revealing his sense of the awfulness of the reality which Christianity seeks to express in the doctrine we are considering. "It is," he says, "the secret of the superiority of the best theological teachers to the majority of their opponents that they substantially recognise these realities of things, however strange the forms in which they clothe their conceptions. The doctrines of predestination, of original sin, of the innate depravity of man and the evil fate of the greater part of the race [?], of the primacy of Satan in this world, of the essential vileness of matter [?], of a malevolent Demiurgus subordinate to a benevolent Almighty, who has only lately revealed Himself [?], faulty as they are, appear to me vastly nearer the truth than the 'liberal' popular illusions that babies are all born good, and that the example of a corrupt society is responsible for their failure to remain so; that it is given to everybody to reach

the ethical ideal if he will only try; that all partial evil is universal good, and other optimistic figments, such as that which represents 'Providence' under the guise of a paternal philanthropist, and bids us believe that everything will come right (according to our notions) at last."¹

By general admission, therefore, there are impulses and tendencies in human nature at war with goodness. The thing which original sin stands for is present in the soul. But dispute arises on the borderland between religion, on the one hand, and science and philosophy, on the other, as to its turpitude, its origin and inheritableness, and the degree of its evil. Are these wrong tendencies of the nature of *sin*, or is sin only in act? Are they hereditary—or how far? What is the ex-

¹ He adds: "I am a very strong believer in the punishment of certain kinds of actions, not only in the present, but in all the future a man can have, be it long or short. Therefore in hell, for I suppose that all men with a clear sense of right and wrong (and I am not sure that any others deserve such punishment) have now and then 'descended into hell' and stopped there quite long enough to know what infinite punishment means. And if a genuine, not merely subjective, immortality awaits us, I conceive that, without some such change as that depicted in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, immortality must be eternal misery" (*Life and Letters*, ii. pp. 303-4).

planation of them ? The answer of the reigning scientific school has already been indicated. What the Church names original sin is, from the standpoint of science, an inheritance of man from his brute ancestry—an inheritance which, in its ceaseless struggle upwards, the race is increasingly throwing off.¹ This is the watchword of human progress.

“ Arise and fly,
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.”²

These ape and tiger tendencies, it is held, are not sinful until voluntarily yielded to ; even then the sin, through the all-enveloping

¹ Cf. Fiske, *Man's Destiny* : “ Thus we see what human progress means. It means throwing off the brute-inheritance,—gradually throwing it off through ages of struggle that are by and by to make struggle needless. . . . The ape and the tiger in human nature will become extinct. Theology has had much to say about original sin. This original sin is neither more nor less than the brute-inheritance which every man carries with him, and the progress of evolution is an advance towards true salvation ” (p. 103).

Prof. Huxley says, *Evolution and Ethics, Prolegomena* ; “ That is their inheritance (the reality at the bottom of the doctrine of original sin) from the long series of ancestors, human and semi-human and brutal, in whom the strength of this innate tendency to self-assertion was the condition of victory in the struggle for existence ” (*Works*, ix. p. 27).

² Tennyson, *In Memoriam*.

ignorance of the subject, is hardly reckonable. The natural tendency is inheritable ; not so, on the newer (Weismann's) theory, the effects of the wrong volition. Christianity regards the matter in a totally different light. It sees in the existing perverted condition of human nature, not a natural result—no mere inheritance from the animal—but the baleful effect of a wilful departure from integrity in the progenitors of the race. It brands the state as evil, condemnable, a state of impurity abhorrent to God's holiness. It acknowledges no laws or powers in human nature capable of throwing off this evil inheritance through evolution or any natural effort ; but insists on the need of a spiritual renewal through divine agency. No middle path is visible between these two conceptions. It remains to be asked—which is the true one ?

II

It is not desired to cite Scripture in this connexion save as a witness to what *a given doctrine is*, or as any literature may be quoted, in testimony to *abiding facts of human nature*. This is an aspect of the use of Scripture too frequently ignored. Passages are

freely admitted from ancient pagan writers, from Scriptures of other religions, from modern literature—poetry or fiction—from religious biographies, from narratives of missionaries and travellers, illustrative of human ideas, beliefs, customs, aspirations, follies, traits of character. But how seldom are the vast stores of experience presented in the Biblical books drawn upon for any similar purpose! Here is an extensive literature, profound beyond comparison alongside any literature of religion the world contains, picturing human nature on all its sides in its relations to God and in its ethical workings, yet it receives almost the complete go-by when the question is the scientific study of man's nature in its moral and spiritual relations. As with people who lay aside their Sunday books as too good to be read on week-days, the Bible is relegated to the closets of theologians, and, even when the subjects discussed are the most germane to its pages, is debarred an entrance to the sanctums of scientists and philosophers. Imagine Herbert Spencer introducing the Psalmists or St. Paul into his list of authorities on the subject of moral evil!

Yet, whatever else the Bible is, it contains

undeniably the *classical literature* of the world on sin and righteousness, and on the experiences of men in these matters ; its testimony, therefore, ought not to be left unheard. The question here is not one of adducing " texts " for dogmatic purposes, but of looking at the moral state of mankind in the clearest mirror ever held up to it in time. And what is the picture presented ? How does it bear on the subject now under discussion ?

Painting mankind in every light and shade, the Bible does no injustice to the gifts, virtues, affections, or religious susceptibilities, even of those whom it refuses to recognise as godly.¹ Will it, however, be denied that, on the subject of sin, its picture, from first to last, is that of a world turned aside from God, in disposition alienated from Him and rebellious, seeking its own ways, and never, till He in grace seeks and recovers it, finding its way back to Him or to holiness ? A treatise like that of Jonathan Edwards on *Original Sin* may seem harsh in some of its aspects, but

¹ Take e.g., in Genesis, the generosity of the King of Sodom, the courtesy of the sons of Heth to Abraham, the sense of honour of Abimelech at Gerar, the liberality of the Pharaoh of Joseph.

there is no escaping the remorseless logic of its accumulation of the Scriptural evidence on this crucial point. The Bible teaches *the universality of sin*, and the picture it presents unmistakably bears out the charge it brings. The facts are so familiar that it is hardly necessary to dwell on them. Leave aside the story of the Fall—though that, in substance, as said before, is needed to explain what follows,—suppose, if one will, that the Priestly writer (P) “knows nothing” of this catastrophe that lay before his eyes in the J primitive history,¹—it is still the case that the first picture we get of the world in antediluvian times from both writers (J and P) is “that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,”² that “the earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence . . . for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”³ The condition after the Flood is presumed to be not better (“the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth”⁴), and the subse-

¹ It was before mentioned that Wellhausen assumes P’s acquaintance with the history of the Fall in J.

² Gen. vi. 5.

³ vi. 11, 12.

⁴ viii. 21.

quent history shows it was not. Sodom was only an acute anticipation¹ of the rapidly developing corruption of the Canaanitish nations which led, after a period of forbearance,² to their being swept out for their intolerable iniquities.³ A godly seed was preserved in the line of Abraham, but how much sin interweaves itself with the patriarchal histories! Regarding the Israelites themselves, every one knows how, despite their exceptional privileges, the Biblical narratives are little else than a rehearsal of their ingratitude, rebellions, murmurings, and unfaithfulness to Jehovah. Let one of many passages from the prophets suffice to sum up the whole. "For the children of Israel and the children of Judah have done only that which was evil in my sight from their youth; for the children of Israel have only provoked me to anger with the work of their hands, saith the Lord. For this city hath been to me a provocation of mine anger and of my wrath from the day that they built it even unto this day."⁴ Is this language regarded as morbid? It is not so according

¹ Gen. xiii. 13; xviii. 20; xix. ² Gen. xv. 16.

³ Lev. xviii. 24-28.

⁴ Jer. xxxii. 30, 31; cf. Ezek. ii. 3, 4.

to the standard by which the Bible uniformly measures sin. The idolatry, cruelty, immorality of the nations surrounding Israel are pictured in the same prophetic pages.

The testimony of the New Testament regarding the prevalence and malignity of sin, and the hopeless condition of mankind under it, is not less pronounced. Jesus in the Gospels stands over a sick world as the only physician who can give it life.¹ For Him, while the beauty and innocence of childhood furnish a rebuke of the self-seeking ambition that excludes from the Kingdom,² the seat of sin is still in the heart,³ and no language is stronger than that in which He pictures the foul streams that issue from this source, "For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings."⁴ There is no one born of flesh, He teaches Nicodemus, in a discourse the genuineness of which need not be doubted, but needs regeneration.⁵ How else, indeed,

¹ Matt. ix. 12. It is not to be supposed that Jesus accepts the Pharisees as being "whole."

² Matt. xviii. 1-4.

³ Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28, etc.

⁴ Matt. xv. 19.

⁵ John iii. 3-7.

save through an awful and rooted ungodliness of spirit, explain the rejection and crucifixion of One so holy? The light shone in darkness, but the darkness apprehended it not; ¹ "He came unto His own, and they that were His own received Him not." ² St Paul's teaching is too well known to need detailed elucidation. Jew and Gentile are alike under sin. ³ The world, knowing God, parted with that knowledge, and sank into grossest corruption. ⁴ They that are in the flesh cannot please God. ⁵ The Gentile condition is vividly depicted: "Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart." ⁶ "Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." ⁷ Specially valuable because personal, is the Apostle's description of his own experience. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing: for to

¹ John i. 5.

² Ver. 11.

³ Rom. iii. 9, 19, 20.

⁴ Rom. i. 18 ff.

⁵ Rom. viii. 8.

⁶ Eph. iv. 18.

⁷ Eph. ii. 3.

will is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. . . . I find then the law, that, to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"¹ Here is a testimony which science dare not ignore, any more than any other fact of experience, in its theorising upon sin.

This *universal fact* of sin, so deeply imprinted in the history of mankind, demands an adequate explanation. What is that explanation? To speak of education, evil example, environment, as causes, save in a secondary respect, is futile. It is, as has often been pointed out, but to explain the evil of the world by itself.² The problem remains,

¹ Rom. vii. 18-24. The verbal parallel in Ovid (*Met.* vii. 19) is familiar: *Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*. Kant quotes Horace (*Sat.* i. 3, 68): *Nam vitiiis nemo sine nascitur*.

² The remarks of Jonathan Edwards on example are still pertinent: "It is accounting for the thing by the thing itself. . . . For, that bad examples are general all over the world to be followed by others, and have

Whence this prevailing ungodliness? this powerful bias to sin? this disposition in the heart, of which every one is conscious, to go astray? Why no powerful and victorious counter-strain? The confession is without exception: "All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned everyone to his own way."¹ Is blame cast on the constitution of nature—of human nature, or of the world? Then Sir Oliver Lodge would be right: "It is not a business for which we are responsible. We did not make the world."² Responsibility rolls back on the Creator, for it is He who has appointed the constitution which works out these evil results. Is it then free-will? But behind "free-will" stands this propensity which apparently issues in free-will being

been so from the beginning, is only an instance, or rather a description, of that corruption of the world which is to be accounted for. If mankind are naturally no more inclined to evil than good, then how come there to be so many more bad examples than good ones, in all ages? . . . If the propensity of man's nature be not to evil, how comes the current of general example, everywhere, and at all times, to be so much to evil?" (*Original Sin*, Works, i. p. 570).

¹ Isa. liii. 6. A singular corroborative proof is the unwillingness of modern writers to grant even the freedom of Jesus from sin. Cf. pp. 25-6, 294.

² *Ut supra*.

universally abused to sin. Or is it, mayhap, only a temporary handicap, an incentive to progress, from which the race is gradually working itself free? So evolution says, but in the teeth of the experience of the ages. Barbarism does not cure its own evils. Civilisation does not spell freedom from vice—witness the European countries of to-day. The finest civilisations of antiquity ended in moral bankruptcy. One looks in vain to Mohammedan, Buddhistic, Hindu lands to work out their moral salvation. We are compelled to probe deeper in our search for an answer to these questions!

III

The problem resolves itself into several parts.

1. A first question is—Does sin consist solely in voluntary *acts* (thus Pelagius and others), or does it inhere also in *dispositions*? Are there sinful dispositions as well as sinful acts? More generally, have dispositions, or states of soul, an ethical quality equally with acts? It is impossible not to agree with Mozley in his acute discussion of the Augustinian and Pelagian positions on this point

in his treatise on *Predestination*, that there is a goodness and a sinfulness in dispositions as well as in acts.¹ Our ordinary moral judgments and the usage of language alike recognise the fact. There are affections—benevolence, unselfishness, fidelity, etc., which we unhesitatingly pronounce ethically good; there are contrary dispositions—e.g., malevolence, cruelty, envy—which we as clearly declare to be evil. There are evil feelings, evil desires, evil habits, evil *character*. To these wrong dispositions, and the propensities to evil that go with them, we attach, with the

¹ *Op. cit.*, 3rd edit., pp. 62–70. “The general sense of mankind acknowledges what are called good natural dispositions; that some persons have by nature a good bias in one or other direction, are amiable, courageous, truthful, humble naturally, or have a certain happy configuration. . . . It would be absurd to say that such dispositions as these were not virtuous, and that such natural goodness was not real goodness.” Similarly as regards evil: “Amid the obscurity which attaches to this class of questions, something to which mankind had borne large testimony would be relinquished in denying the existence of bad natural dispositions. . . . The general sense of mankind is certainly on the side of there being good and bad natural dispositions” (pp. 64–5, 70–1). See also the writer’s *Progress of Dogma*, pp. 156–7. What is here said of good disposition is not inconsistent with that lack of godliness and sin-ward tendency which the doctrine we are considering affirms (cf. Mozley, pp. 56 ff.).

Apostle,¹ the character of "sin." Even Ritschl, with his uncompromising polemic against hereditary sin, yet acknowledges that the sinful deed reacts on the soul that produces it, and creates a sinful propensity (*Hang*), then a habit, from which results evil character.²

2. A deeper question next arises as to the *voluntary origin* of good and evil dispositions. Are we entitled to pronounce those dispositions alone good or evil which are the products of our own voluntary acts? Some take this ground, which seems favoured by what has been said of the connexion of will with morality. Ritschl, e.g., maintains that nothing can be pronounced evil which does not spring from the moral decision of the individual.³

¹ Rom. vii. 13, 14, 17, 20, 23, 25.

² "Through actions, according to the direction they take, the will acquires its nature, and develops into a good or evil character" (*Justif. and Recon.*, pp. 336-7, E.T.). This rather conflicts with Ritschl's objection to original sin as derived from his theory of knowledge, which allows no subsistence to the soul other than in its activities. Permanent character as much as heredity implies a permanent basis.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 337: "Only if we discern in the individual action the proof-mark of the independence of the will can we ascribe to ourselves, not merely individual actions, but likewise evil habit or evil inclination." Kant would explain the evil disposition by a *super-*

Mozley, on the other hand, speaks of a "natural and necessary" evil, as well as of a "natural" goodness.¹ Augustine has a view which seems deeper and truer, for it is necessary here to make a distinction between good and evil. Of *good* dispositions—here Mozley is surely right—it cannot be affirmed that they must be voluntarily produced in order to be good. On the contrary, unless the good disposition were there to begin with, there could be no acts of good will at all. It is the old question raised by Aristotle—Is a man virtuous because he does virtuous acts, or are the acts virtuous, because they are the acts of a virtuous man? ² The latter is surely the correct view.³ Take, for instance, the supreme command, that we love God and our neighbour. Love to God, plainly, is not the product of acts of love; the love must precede the acts by which it is expressed. Unless there is antecedent love in the heart, how can

sensible act of freedom; Julius Müller by *pre-existent* volition, etc. On Coleridge's peculiar theory cf. Mozley, *Op. cit.*, note xii.

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 70.

² *Nic. Ethics*, ii. 4; cf. Luther, *Com. on Galatians*, on ch. iii. 10; Edwards, *Op. cit.*, Works, i. pp. 177-8.

³ Mozley, *Op. cit.*, pp. 64-5.

the acts be loving? How can the command to love be even understood, not to say fulfilled? What is true here is that to constitute character, habits, in the full sense of the word,—to deepen, establish, strengthen, confirm love,—love must be taken into the will, and embodied in action. “Whoso keepeth his word,” the Apostle John says, “in him verily hath the love of God been *perfected*.”¹

This applies to goodness. But it does not follow that the same law applies to *evil*. Just because it is held that evil is not an original endowment of human nature, but has its origin in perversity, it must be contended that dispositions, so far as they are evil, or the disorder of the soul that makes them evil, are not natural, but have always a *voluntary origin*. That is, what we cannot affirm of primary good dispositions, we must affirm of all evil ones. Here again, however, it is necessary to distinguish. Evil dispositions must have a voluntary origin, but it does not follow that they have this origin, as Ritschl holds, solely in the individual. We are not simply individuals. There is a *racial* life in which, as already seen, all are involved.

¹ 1 John ii. 5.

The voluntary origin of the evil disposition may lie far behind the individual—may go back even to the beginning. This does not destroy its evil character. It is evil through its *very nature*, no matter at what stage in the development of the race it originated. Selfishness, pride, malice, falsity, are evil qualities, and their evil cannot be got rid of by pleading that, to some degree, they are inherited. We do not exonerate a thief when we learn that he has an innate propensity to thieving,¹ or a liar when we are informed that the tendency to lying seemed born with him. We rather judge him to be a *worse* character on this account, though we may allow that he is not personally so responsible as if he had wilfully formed the evil habit. We both pity and condemn him. The place of will here, as before, is seen to be to confirm, strengthen, *fix*, the hereditary disposition. But it may also, under better influences, resist and overcome it.

3. We are thus brought back to the question of *heritableness*, and with it of *responsibility*. The general possibility of the transmission of vitiated tendencies, originating in

¹ A form of insanity, like kleptomania, is differently judged.

wrong volition, was touched on in the previous chapter, and may receive light in what follows. Traducianism and Creationism have long fought their battles, probably each with some measure of truth, as to the mode of the propagation of a corrupted nature, but their disputes need not disturb our present inquiry. God's concurrence is no more involved in the hereditary transmission of an evil quality than it is in its presence and continuance in the individual soul, however originated; nor, if psychical traits are transmitted from parent to child, as assuredly they are, is any contradiction implied, unless on a basis like Weismann's, already discussed, in the inclusion in the transmission of elements of perversion and disorder. It is granted that it is impossible to conceive of such transmission, as modern theories tend to conceive of heredity, as a purely physical or mechanical process. The fault here, however, lies with theories which suppose that the transmission of *any* psychical characters can be thus explained. Soul-life is more than any subtle, even if infinitely complicated, arrangement of particles.

There remains still the difficult question

of *personal responsibility* for inherited evil tendencies—a difficulty to which the remarks formerly made on responsibility under heredity in part apply. Paradoxical it certainly seems to be—still true as paradoxical—that there is a sinful root in our natures, yet that we are responsible for the sin that proceeds from it.¹ That the tendency is evil even natural conscience affirms; that we are responsible for yielding to it, and embodying it in act, is a not less universal experience. Here, on the other hand, the idea of race connexion, of organic constitution, of corporate responsibility, comes in as against an exaggerated individualism. We are not separable units, but parts of a whole, the abilities and disabilities of which we perforce share. On the other hand, deeper even than race-connexion is the reality of *personality*. The individual is conscious of a bondage, yet knows it is not *fate*, but a power of *sin*—a something which *ought not* to be—from which he seeks deliverance. This carries with it a feeling of responsibility for the sin of thought, word, and deed, which springs from the evil state. It may be a mitigated responsibility, but it is

¹ Cf. Mozley, *Op. cit.*, pp. 56 ff.

a responsibility ; for the act is *his*, and it is *evil*. This irrespective of the ultimate origin of the wrong tendency. In personality at the same time,—this *uninherited*, original part of man's being,—lies the hope of his redemption. Deliverance, it may be said with reverence, would be impossible, if sin had really penetrated to the depths of personality,—if the individual were *identified* with his sin, as is the case in the stage of obduracy,—if it were not possible, so to speak, to get behind the sinful decisions of the will, and present it with a new alternative, that which “the law of the mind”—the better self (*νοῦς*) has held before it from the first.¹ Man's misery, then, is great, but not so great that he is not redeemable. Sin is at first a principle, a tendency undeveloped ; in its development the will is enthralled ; but there is a power greater than sin that can break the bondage, if the original enmity is overcome.²

¹ Rom. vii. 21-3. Ritschl is wrong in thinking that the doctrine of original sin recognises no *grades* in sin within that initial separation from God in principle which results from the primal transgression.

² Rom. vi. 12 ff. ; viii. 1-11, etc.

IV

In the light of these considerations, we are better able to judge of the *counter-theories* in explanation of original sin. If there are really, not simply natural, but positively evil tendencies in the soul,—if there are God-denying tendencies,—if these, in their nature as evil, imply a voluntary cause,—then the “brute-inheritance,” the “ape and tiger” theory of original sin is already *ipso facto* condemned as inadequate. The essence of the mystery is untouched. One wonders, as hinted earlier, why “ape and tiger” should be introduced at all. “Ape” characteristics are comprehensible, if man has descended through the apes; but why “tiger,” through whom he has not descended? Or why not extend the list to vulpine, bovine, serpentine, swinish, and all the other animal traits which reproduce themselves as conspicuously in different individuals? Does man, on evolutionary lines, combine all, though descended from none? But even if all animal propensities are accounted for, man’s existing moral condition is not explained.

1. The state in which man finds himself is,

it has been seen, one in which the lower desires and passions hold an *undue ascendancy* over the higher and spiritual, and, the spiritual bond that should hold them in check being cut, are themselves turbulent and disorderly. The higher nature is in "bondage" to the lower. The "flesh" rules. This is not a state which the mere presence of animal propensities can explain to the satisfaction of moral law.

2. It is not animal propensities alone that man is aware of in his nature; he is conscious of principles, tendencies, dispositions, implying reason and will, which are *themselves evil*, and which produce only evil results. St. Paul's list of the "works of the flesh" is recalled here;¹ also Christ's saying, already quoted, on the evils that proceed from the heart.² The Apostle speaks of "evil desire"³ and of "the passions of sin"⁴ in the nature.

¹ Gal. v. 19-21. ² Matt. xv. 19.

³ Col. iii. 5.

⁴ Rom. vii. 5. These representations seem opposed to purely *privative* theories of original sin, favoured even by Jon. Edwards (*Works*, i. pp. 217-19), according to which man's state results from withdrawal of supernatural gifts, and his being left to the sway of "natural and inferior principles," which then work corruption. On patristic views of original [sin, see Mozley, *Op. cit.*, ch. v.

3. It was found that sin, in principle, is traceable back to a God-denying "egoism" —to a self-will that exalts itself above God and moral law alike. It is this aspect of sin as "ungodliness" on which the supreme stress is laid in Scripture. Man has forsaken his Creator, is ignorant of His character, disobedient to His will, unresponsive to His calls, cleaves foolishly and recklessly to his own worldly and sinful ways.¹ Only familiarity can veil from us the awful heinousness of such a state; only thoughtlessness can hide the *marvel* involved in it—that beings made in God's image, and capable of knowing, loving, and serving Him, should yet repel, shun, dislike, flee from Him; should resent being reminded of Him, should *wish* to be without Him! Surely no one thinking rightly will say that this is even *natural*. There is more than naturalness, or even *unnaturalness* in it—there is *sin*, guilt.

The explanation of such a perverted moral

¹ E.g., Ps. x. 4; Isa. i. (cf. G. A. Smith *in loc.*); Rom. iii. 18; Eph. ii. 12; iv. 18. Striking historical illustrations of the alternate attraction and repulsion of the idea of God are given in an older work, McCosh's *Method of the Divine Government*, 10th edit., pp. 48 ff.

condition it goes far beyond the province of "evolution" to furnish. It points to a world-wide defection traceable back to disobedience in the beginnings of the race.

CHAPTER IX

SIN AS GUILT—THE DIVINE JUDGMENT

HITHERTO, though constantly implied in what has preceded, the character of "guilt" in sin has not received any independent investigation. The feeling of guilt, indeed, in weaker or stronger degree, is an element in the consciousness of every moral being who knows himself as a wrong-doer. It is there naturally and spontaneously, a spring of disquiet and remorse, neither waiting on theoretical considerations for its justification, nor capable of being got rid of by theoretical reasonings the most subtle and plausible. All serious literature treats it as a terrible fact, and finds its weirdest interest in depicting the agonies of the guilt-afflicted conscience, and in tracking the Nemesis that surely awaits the transgressor.¹

¹ "Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede poena claudo."
—Horace, *Odes*, iii. 2.

Still, the idea of guilt depends, for its proper apprehension, on presuppositions in the general doctrine of sin, which had first to be made good before the nature and bearings of this idea could be intelligently approached. If guilt is a reality, and not simply a deceptive play of consciousness with itself—an illusion, disease, or figment of the mind—it seems self-evident that certain things about it must be postulated. There must be assumed the existence and freedom of the moral agent, the reality of moral law, with its intrinsic distinctions of right and wrong, some authority, be it only in society, to which the wrong-doer is accountable for infringements of that law—in religion, the existence of God as Moral Ruler and Holy Judge of men. Suppose, on the other hand, the view taken—as it is taken by some—that man has not real freedom, that, in words of Mr. Spencer before quoted, freedom is “an inveterate illusion”¹—suppose, again, it is held that sin, or what is called such, is a natural and necessary stage in man’s development—a step to the good,—which seems the implication in most metaphysical and evolutionary theories,

¹ Cf. his *Psychology*, i. pp. 500 ff.

—suppose it is thought, as by many, that good and evil are but relative to the finite standpoint, and have no existence for the Absolute or for the universe as a whole, or, as by naturalism, that morality is only a social convention, and moral ideas the product of casual association and education (“homo mensura”),—suppose, finally, the Personality, Holiness, or Moral Government of God is denied, or the idea of “law” is held to be inapplicable to the relations of God to men,—it seems plain that the logical ground is taken from the conception of “guilt” in any serious sense. The term either ceases to have meaning, or is weakened down to the expression of an affrighted state of the individual feeling, without any objective reality to correspond. There is “guilt-consciousness,” as a subjective experience, but not a “guilt” of which God and the universe must take account.

Is “guilt,” then, a reality, and in what does its nature consist? How is it related to the divine order of the world, and to that “judgment of God” which, St. Paul assures us, “is according to truth against them that practise” evil? ¹

¹ Rom. iii. 2.

I

In asking, first, what "guilt" *is*, we may start, with Mr. Bradley, in his older book, *Ethical Studies*, with the idea of "answerableness"—*imputability*.¹ The sense of guilt arises, primarily, in connexion with the acts which a man imputes to himself as proceeding from his own will in the exercise of his freedom.² These, if wrong, i.e., involving the transgression of some principle of duty, he attributes to himself as their cause, feels that he is "answerable" for them, takes blame to himself on their account, and is conscious that he deserves blame from others. As conditions of such self-reprobatation, certain things, as already hinted, are implied—the agent's consciousness of his self-identity and freedom, some knowledge of moral distinctions, the awareness that he *ought* to have acted otherwise than he has done, a perception of demerit in

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 3. ff. What is it to be morally responsible? "We see in it at once the idea of a man's appearing to answer. He answers for what he has done, or has neglected and left undone. And the tribunal is a moral tribunal; it is the court of conscience, imagined as a judge, divine or human, external or internal" (p. 3).

² Hence the use of *aitía* for guilt, in such phrases as "to hold one guilty," "to acquit of guilt."

the act he has performed.¹ The sense of guilt, therefore, originates in a *moral judgment* of a condemnatory kind passed by the agent upon himself for acts which he knows to be wrong.

Attention must now be fixed more particularly on this idea of *demerit*, or *ill-desert*, attaching to the wrong act and to its doer. Hitherto we have been dealing with sin as something in its nature intrinsically evil—opposed in principle to the good, a source of disorder and impurity, hateful in its manifestations, ruinous in its spiritual results. In this light sin bears the aspect of a *disease*; is something foul, malignant, repulsive, the cause of disturbance, misery, and death. Thus also it appears in Scripture. It is uncleanness, impurity: the abominable thing which

¹ Mr. Bradley puts the matter thus: "The first condition of the possibility of my guiltiness, or of my becoming a subject for moral imputation, is my self-sameness; I must be throughout one identical person. . . . In the first place, then, I must be the very same person to whom the deed belonged; and, in the second place, it must have belonged to me—it must have been mine. . . . The deed must issue from my will; in Aristotle's language, the ἀρχὴ must be in myself. . . . Thirdly, responsibility implies a *moral* agent. No one is accountable who is not capable of knowing (not, who *does* not know) the moral quality of his acts" (*Op. cit.*, pp. 5-7).

God hates.¹ To this aspect of sin some, in their inquiries, would almost entirely confine themselves, ignoring everything which involves what they regard as a *legal* or *juristic* element. But there is another aspect of sin which accompanies all these internal phases of it. Besides possessing the character now described—because, indeed, of its possession of this character—sin has the quality of *evil desert*—of *punishableness*.² Sin is not simply a hateful, it is likewise a *condemnable* thing; not something only that *may* be punished, but something that *deserves* to be punished³—that could not emerge in a morally-con-

¹ E.g., Ps. xiv. 3; Is. vi. 5; Jer. xlv. 4; Ezek. xxxvi. 29; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Eph. iv. 19; v. 4; Jas. i. 2; Rev. xxii. 11.

² Cf. Kant, *Crit. of Pract. Reason* (Abbott's trans., *Theory of Ethics*, pp. 127 ff.). "Finally, there is something further in the idea of our practical reason, which accompanies the transgression of a moral law—namely, its *ill-desert*" (p. 127).

³ Mr. Bradley says: "What is really true for the ordinary consciousness; what it clings to, and will not let go; what marks unmistakably, by its absence, a 'philosophical' or a 'debauched' morality, is the necessary connexion between responsibility and liability to punishment, between punishment and desert, or the finding of guiltiness before the law of the moral tribunal. For practical purposes we need make no distinction between responsibility, accountability, and liability to punishment" (*Op. cit.*, p. 4).

stituted universe and be lawfully passed over as indifferent. This character of the evil desert of sin asserts itself instinctively in every conscience; as conscience develops and grows more sensitive it asserts itself only the more unconditionally. Our feeling regarding a wrong act is, not only that it is something which we blame ourselves for, and are perhaps ashamed of, but something, further, for which we may justly be called to account, and made to *suffer*.

The distinction here made between sin as disease, and sin as entailing evil desert, is one which, as earlier noted, presents itself likewise in ordinary ethical theory. Some schools it is well known, prefer to look on virtue on the *æsthetic* rather than on what is sometimes called the *juristic* side. Virtue is, in this view, the beautiful (τὸ καλόν), the harmonious, the lovable in character; vice, by contrast, is the inharmonious, the turbulent, the irregular, the morally ugly and repulsive. Thus, e.g., in Plato and Shaftesbury. Other moralists, as Kant, start from the side of law, and, emphasising the judicial function of conscience, dwell on the evil desert and punishableness of transgression. One view has

regard more to the quality of character ; the other to the acts in which character is expressed. Both aspects, however, have their rightful place in a complete view of the facts. The prejudice against a " forensic " view of morality may easily be carried too far. Universal speech endorses the conception of conscience as a court of arraignment for the evil-doer ;¹ and heavy and unrelenting, often, are the sentences which this court pronounces.

The relation of guilt and punishment waits closer examination, but one current misconception may here be guarded against. One reason why the term " juristic " is an unfortunate one in this connexion is, that it conveys, or is apt to convey, the impression that ill-desert belongs to, and takes its origin from, statutory law ; that it is enough, therefore, to brand the *legal* standpoint in religion as low and imperfect to get rid of the notion of a judicial dealing with sin altogether. Ritschl, e.g., in denying punitive justice to God, proceeds on this idea.² Certainly, however, it is a mistaken one. The presence of law is, indeed, presupposed in ill-desert ; but ill-

¹ Rom. ii. 15.

² In this theory of Ritschl's, see below. In criticism, cf. Dorner, *Syst. of Doct.*, E.T., iv. pp. 60-3.

desert itself, as an inherent quality of the sinful act or disposition, cleaves, by an intuitive "value-judgment," to the consciousness of wrong-doing prior to any recognition of it by prescriptive law. If it were not already there, law could not make it. It would be there, were that conceivable, even were there no power or authority to call to account for it. Statute law itself, with its imperfect justice, is not an arbitrary thing, but rests, or professes to rest, on principles of right which depend on conscience for their sanction. It would be truer to say that the inner tribunal of conscience is the model on which courts of law are founded, than that it is they which furnish the pattern, and give sanctity to the decisions, of conscience.

Even to the natural consciousness, therefore, guilt is a terrible and woeful reality—not a feeling or alarm of the transgressor's own heart merely (a *guilt-consciousness*), but a guilt that is objectively *there*, and has to be taken account of by the wrong-doer himself and by others. Thus it is regarded in the secret judgments of the soul; thus it is treated in the moral estimates of men by their fellows; thus, when it takes the form of

“crime” against society, it is judged by human law.¹

This, however, still leaves us far outside the full *Christian* estimate of guilt. If guilt has this serious character even in ordinary ethics, infinitely more is its ill-desert apparent when transgression is lifted up into the *religious* sphere, and judged of in its proper character as *sin*. Sin, we have already seen, is much more than simple breach of moral law; it concerns the whole spiritual relation to God. In this higher relation, its demerit is measured not only by the law of conscience—at best a weak and pale reflection of the divine judgment,²—but by the majesty of the holiness against which the offence is committed, the absoluteness of the divine claim on our obedience, and the potency of evil

¹ Cf. T. H. Green, *Works*, ii. pp. 489 ff. Mr. Green perhaps errs in seeking the ground of punishment too exclusively in the harm done to society, but he insists strongly on the punishment being a *just* one—one truly *deserved*. “It demands retribution in the sense of demanding that the criminal should have his due, should be dealt with according to his deserts, should be punished justly. . . . When the specified conditions of just punishment are fulfilled, the person punished himself recognises it as just, as his due or desert, and it is so recognised by the onlooker who thinks himself into the situation” (pp. 491-2).

² 1 John iii. 20.

perceived to be involved in sin's principle, trivial as may seem, on our lower scale of judging, its immediate manifestation. For here, again, is a fallacy to be avoided. In measuring the evil of sin, we are too apt to be misled by what, in our levity, we call the insignificance of the act (untruth, selfishness, unforgivingness, displays of anger, etc.¹); our judgments are unhappily out of proportion because our own standpoint is habitually so far below the level of a true spirituality. It seems to us dreadful, no doubt, that a man should commit forgery, or betray a trust; but the fact that any one's (or our own) heart is alienated from God, and insensible to His goodness; that the spiritual balance of the nature is upset—the flesh strong, the spirit weak; that things below, not things above, enchain the affections,—in brief, that the *centre* of life is a wrong one, and that, judged by the standard of *holiness*, almost every thought and act invite condemnation,—this appears to us not so very evil, and occasions comparatively little concern. It is precisely these standards of judgment, however, which

¹ Cf. Christ's estimate of these things (Matt. v. 22; vi. 15; xii. 36, etc.). Cf. p. 250.

religion inverts, and which we, too, must invert, if we are to see things with God's eyes. It will hardly be denied, at least, that, in the Christian Gospel, the demerit, turpitude, ill-desert of sin throughout assume this more awful aspect. The sin of a world turned aside from God is there judged, not by human, but by divine, standards. Guilt is a reality not to be gainsaid. "All the world" is "brought under the judgment of God."¹ A condemnation rests upon it, which no effort of man's own can remove.² This, however, introduces us to a further circle of conceptions, the nature and legitimacy of which must now be considered.

II

Sin is *punishable*; this belongs to its essence. But what is the ground of this connexion between sin and punishment? How is punishment itself to be regarded in its nature and end? And what place has this conception in a religion like the Christian, which proceeds on a principle of *love*?

Eliminating from punishment, as one must do, the idea of personal vengeance—the

¹ Rom. iii. 19, ὑπόδικος.

² Rom. iii. 19, 20, 23, etc.

simple requiting of injury with injury—the question comes to be: Is punishment *retributive*, i.e., due to sin on its own account? or is it only *disciplinary* or *deterrent*—a “chastisement” inflicted from a motive of benevolence, or a means to the prevention of wrong-doing in others? The latter is the “eudaemonistic” or “utilitarian” view of punishment so severely criticised by Kant.¹ As, however, no one denies that punishment may be used, and in God’s providence largely is used, for disciplinary ends,² the question really turns on the other point of the acknowledgment or denial of its *retributive* aspect. This, on various grounds, is contested. Dr. Moberly, in his interesting discussion of the subject in his *Atonement and Personality*, takes what may be regarded as a mediating view. He grants that punishment *may* be retributive, but holds that its primary purpose is disciplinary, and that only as it fails in its object of producing inward penitence does it acquire the retributive character.³ But

¹ Cf. passage above cited.

² Ch. ii. of the Book of Hosea is a fine example of how God’s severest judgments on Israel had an end of discipline and mercy.

³ *Op. cit.*, ch. i. “This purpose of beneficent love is,

this is a difficult position to maintain. To be productive of any good, disciplinary suffering must always, in the first instance, be recognised as *just*, as *deserved*—one's *due*, and in reasonable proportion to the offence. That is to say, it must include the retributive element.¹ Neither is it easy to understand how a punishment *not* at first due on its own account, can afterwards become retributive simply through its failure to effect a moral change. *Solely* retributive, in contrast with previous moral uses, or more *severely* retributive, with increased hardening in sin, it possibly may become; but essentially the retributive character must have inhered in it from the beginning.²

we may venture to suggest, the proper character and purpose of punishment" (p. 14; cf. p. 24). It is allowed that in human justice the retributive aspect is primary; but this, it is said, belongs to it "not as it is justice, but as it is human . . . to the necessary imperfectness of such corporate and social justice as is possible on earth" (p. 9).

¹ Cf. the remarks in W. F. Lofthouse's *Ethics and Atonement*, p. 102.

² This is partially conceded in the use of the word "latent" (on p. 14). Another difficulty for Dr. Moberly is that, as he rightly holds, the "penitence" he desiderates is "impossible" apart from the saving interposition of Christ (pp. 44-5). But an aspect of punishment (the disciplinary) which is dependent on redemption cannot be thought of as primary; unless, indeed, it is

Objection is taken to the retributive aspect of punishment on the ground that God, in Christ's revelation, is no longer looked on as Judge, but as *Father*. Ritschl, going deeper, would deny punitive justice to God as contradictory of His character as love.¹ Neither objection can be readily sustained. St. Paul also, while upholding retribution,² knew well that God was Father;³ Jesus, revealing the Father, gave sternest expression to the truth that God is likewise Judge.⁴ God is indeed Father: Fatherhood is expressive of His inmost heart in relation to a world of beings made originally in His own image. But Fatherhood is not the whole truth of God's relation to the world. There is another relation which He sustains than that of Father—the relation of Moral Ruler and Holy Judge—Founder, Upholder, Vindicator, of that contended that there would have been no punishment of sin, had grace not entered.

¹ Cf. the writer's *Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 110, 146-9.

² Rom. ii. 3-11.

³ God is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. i. 3; Eph. i. 3), "our Father" (Eph. i. 2), "the Father from whom every family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. iii. 14), etc. In a wider regard all are His "offspring" (Acts xvii. 28).

⁴ Matt. x. 28; xi. 22, 24; xii. 36-7; xxi. 44; xxiv. 35, etc.

moral order to which our own consciences and the whole constitution of things bear witness,—and it is this relation which, once sin has entered, comes into view, and claims to have its rights accorded to it.¹ It was not as Father that St. Paul wrote of God, “Then how shall God judge the world?”² “The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.”³

What, then is the ground of the punishment of sin? It would lead us too far afield to enter into what may be termed the metaphysics of this difficult question. May it not be enough at present to say, what the foregoing has sought to make clear, that transgression, as in principle a break with that moral order of the world on conformity to which all claim on life and its blessings depends, carries in itself the forfeiture of right to these blessings, and the desert of

¹ Cf. on this T. G. Selby, *Theology in Modern Fiction*, on Geo. Macdonald, pp. 151 ff.

² Rom. iii. 5.

³ Rom. i. 18. It is interesting to observe how St. Peter combines and yet distinguishes the two notions: “If ye call on Him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man’s work” (1 Pet. i. 17).

their opposite, loss and pain? Thus Kant would put it; ¹ religion goes deeper in seeing in God's will the last principle of that order, and in sin the turning of the creature will from God in violation of the fundamental demand of moral law, unison of will with God. How then shall it be that a divine holiness shall not react against transgression?

One thing certain is that the presence and working of a retributive justice in men's lives and in the history of the world have ever had a place among the deepest and most solemn convictions of the noblest portions of our race. The Bible need not be appealed to: its testimony is beyond dispute.² It is ever, indeed, to be remembered that in this world retribution never acts alone,—that it is crossed, restrained, on all hands, by an abundant mercy,³—is counteracted by remedial and redemptive forces,—is changed even

¹ Cf., e.g., the Fragment of a "Moral Catechism" in Kant's *Methodology of Ethics* (Semple's trans., Ed. 1869, p. 290 ff.).

² Isaiah: "Say ye of the righteous, that it shall be well with him. . . . Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him," etc. (ii. 10, 11); Jesus and Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii. 32-9). St. Paul has been already cited.

³ "His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering" (Rom. iii. 4). Cf. below, pp. 282-4.

where grace prevails (here is the truth of Dr. Moberly's contention), as far as it continues, into the discipline of a loving Father.¹ But retribution, nevertheless, stern and terrible, there is, interweaving itself with every strain of sinful existence; this universal conscience testifies. It is the underlying idea in the Hindu solution of the inequalities of life—the doctrine of transmigration; it is the meaning of the Buddhist doctrine of "Karma"—that invisible law of moral causation infallibly binding act to consequence, even in the production of a new being, when the original agent has ceased to be at death; ² it is the dread background to the sunny gaiety of ordinary Greek life (Erinnys, Nemesis, Ate), and lends their atmosphere of terror and abiding power over mind and conscience to the great creations of Greek Tragedy (Oedipus, Antigone, Orestes, etc.), not, as will be seen after, without their softer note

¹ Heb. xii. 5 ff.

² Prof. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (Works, ix. pp. 61-2), connects the idea of "Karma" with heredity. It is really very different—an abstract, impersonal law, which has no relation to biological transmission. Its persistence past death Huxley speaks of as transmission "from one phenomenal association to another by a sort of induction" (p. 67).

of mediation and forgiveness¹; it is equally the informing soul of modern tragedy (Macbeth, Hamlet; in Ibsen), and of a great part of our nobler fiction (e.g., Geo. Eliot, Hawthorne²), even of fiction that is less noble (Dumas, Zola, Balzac, etc.). It is the implication of Schiller's "The history of the world is the judgment of the world"; of Matthew Arnold's all too impersonal "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." All this, falling though it does below the height of the Christian conception, with its Personal Holy Ruler of the world, and its law of righteousness, stretching in its effects into the life beyond, is a witness, impossible to be explained away, to the reality of a law of moral retribution, inbuilt inexorably into the very structure of our universe.³

¹ Cf. Plumptre, *Sophocles*, Introd., p. lxxxiii.

² This part of the subject is well illustrated in the book above named, T. G. Selby's *Theology in Modern Fiction* (Fernley Lects., 1896). One thinks here of the teaching of George Eliot's *Silas Marner*, *Adam Bede*, *Felix Holt*, *Romola*, and of Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* and *Twice Told Tales*. Mr. Selby says of George Eliot: "Working through all her plots is a stern, intelligent, unforgetting principle of retribution which brings even the secret things of darkness into judgment" (p. 9).

³ Prof. Huxley's strong words on the punishment of at least "certain actions" were quoted in the previous chapter, (p. 228).

III

Sin, it has been seen, in its very nature, cuts the bond of fellowship with God, but, further, as entailing guilt, creates in man a feeling of alienation and distrust, and calls forth a reaction of the divine holiness against itself—what Scripture speaks of as the “wrath” (ὄργη) of God—which expresses itself in “judgment” (κρίμα; “condemnation,” κατάκριμα), or punishment. The punishment of sin is no more “fate,” or “destiny,” or impersonal, self-acting “law,” without connexion with a moral Will, as in popular writing it is often represented, but has in it and behind it the intensity of a divine righteousness. The truth to be firmly grasped here is, that this is no arbitrary relation of God to the sin of the world. It is grounded in His very nature, and cannot be laid aside by any act of will, any more than the moral law itself can be reversed or annulled. Sin is that against which the Holy One and Upholder of the moral order of the universe, *must* eternally declare Himself in judgment. To do otherwise would be to deny that He is God. This, however,

again gives rise to important questions as to the *manner* and *forms* in which the divine judgment takes effect, and on this point, in view of certain one-sided tendencies in current thought, a little must now be said.

It is a true, if not a complete, thought, that a large part of the punishment of sin—therefore, one form of the judgment of God—lies in the *immanent action* of God in the laws He has established in the worlds of nature and of mind. The first and often least bearable part of the punishment of sin is *internal*,—in the case of greater offences in the miseries of conscience, the pangs of regret, the horror, shame and self-loathing, that make the guilt-laden soul a hell,—but always in the moral and spiritual degradation, discord, and bondage that sin inevitably brings with it. Illustrations might be endlessly multiplied—the class of works already mentioned abounds in them—of the mental torture which the consciousness of guilt can inflict.¹ Not in the

¹ Two examples may be taken from antiquity:—

Juvenal, in his 13th Sat. (191-8), asks: "Yet why suppose that those have escaped punishment whom conscience holds in constant fear and under the noiseless lash—the mind her own tormentor? Sore punishment it is—heavier far than those of stern Caedicius or

inner life of the soul only, however, but *objectively*, in nature and society, the transgressor encounters the punishment of his misdoings. Law is at work here also. Wrong-doing puts the transgressor out of harmony with his environment, as well as with himself, and plunges him into countless troubles. Nature, as Butler said, is constituted for virtue, not for vice, and transgression brings the wrong-doer into collision with its order. Witness, e.g., the effects on health of the indulgence in sinful passions (envy, malice, etc.), or of a life of vice. Society is in arms against the man who violates its laws, or even its proprieties. Everywhere, despite apparent exceptions,¹ the saying is verified, "the way of transgressors is hard."²

It is therefore an important truth that

Rhadamanthus—night and day to carry one's own accuser in the breast."

Tacitus in his *Annals* (vi. 6) depicts the guilty agonies of Tiberius. In a letter to the Senate the emperor writes: "What to write you, conscript fathers, or how to write, or what *not* to write, may all the gods and goddesses destroy me worse than I feel they are daily destroying me, if I know." "With such retribution," adds the historian, "had his crimes and atrocities recoiled upon himself."

¹ Ps. xxxvii. 35-6; lxxiii. 12-20.

² Prov. xiii. 15.

God judges sin through the operation of spiritual and natural laws. But this truth, as already suggested, is in danger of becoming a serious error when it is turned round to mean that laws, automatically acting, *take the place of God* in His judgment of sin, and exclude His personal, volitional action in connexion with it. This idea of inherent, "self-acting" laws, which take the punishment of sin, as it were, out of God's hands into their own, needs to be protested against as an undue exaggeration of the truth of God's immanence.¹ Laws are, after all, but God's ministers, and God remains the supreme, personal Power, acting above as well as within spirit and nature, omnipresently governing and directing both. Even in the internal punishment of sin, it is not always remembered, when self-acting laws are spoken of, how largely a personal

¹ Dr. Dale in his work on *the Atonement* (Lect. viii.) criticises this theory of "self-acting" moral laws in its relation to forgiveness as expounded by an older writer, Dr. John Young, in his *Life and Light of Men*. "God simply looks on. The vast machine of the moral universe is self-acting." Cf. Mr. Selby's remarks on recent views in his *Theol. of Modern Fiction*, pp. 168 ff. He justly says: "A God who has put a huge body of inviolable natural or moral laws between Himself and His creatures is imperfectly personal" (p. 168).

element enters into such experience in the sinner's consciousness of the hostile judgment passed on him by others. It is this personal element of the disesteem of his fellows which, not infrequently, enters most deeply and with most withering effect into his soul, drying up its springs of happiness and rest. More terrible is it, in relation to God, to realise that it is not self-acting laws the sinner has to do with, but a Holy Judge, whose searching glance no transgression can escape, and who "will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."¹

In nature, again, it is not simply self-acting laws which the transgressor has to deal with. We fail of a complete view if, with Martineau and others, we think of nature as a system of physical agencies which moves on its unbending way without any regard to moral character.² Nature, equally with mind,

¹ Eccl. xii. 14.

² Cf. Martineau, *Seat of Authority in Religion*, p. 105 : "The *physical* agency of God . . . can take no separate notice of human life and character, nor of the differences which distinguish us from each other in our lot and in our mind. . . . An administration which, still intellectual, is *unmoral*, and carries its inexorable order

is the sphere of a divine providence. It is not simply that the sinner suffers through his collision with the established natural order; but nature, under the direction of God, takes up a hostile attitude towards the sinner. This, which is undoubtedly the teaching of Scripture,¹ is surely the truer view philosophically as well as religiously. Laws alone do not explain nature. To explain the actual course of nature there is needed, besides, what J. S. Mill, borrowing from Dr. Chalmers, called the "collocation" of laws—the manner in which laws are combined and made to work together.² To this is due the fine threadings and conjunctions in life which, with other factors, make up what we rightly speak of as its providential meaning for us.³ Things, in

through, and never turns aside, though it crushes life and hope, and even gives occasion to guilt and abasement.

¹ Deut. xxviii. 15 ff.; Is. i. 4 ff.; Hos. ii.; Amos iv.; Rev. viii., etc.

² *Syst. of Logic*, Bk. iii. 12. 2.

³ Cf. McCosh, *Method of Div. Govt.*, Bk. ii. ch. 2. "The inquiring mind will discover designed combinations, many and wonderful, between the various events of divine providence. . . . What singular unions of two streams at the proper place to help on the exertions of the great and good! What curious intersections of cords to catch the wicked as in a net, when they are prowling as wild beasts! By strange, but most apposite correspondences, human strength, when set against the

other words, do not fall out by hap-hazard ; they are part of a divine ordering that takes all the conditions—natural and moral—into account. The agencies of nature, therefore, can well be used, and are used, of God, as His instruments in the punishment of sin.

IV

The word in which Scripture sums up, comprehensively, the penalty of sin is “*death*.” “The wages of sin is death.”¹ Death, in this relation, certainly includes a moral element ; it has sin behind it as its cause.² The intimacy of spiritual and physical is maintained here also. The real dying is *inward*,—the result of disobedience, severing from fellowship with God, and issuing, save as grace prevents, in corruption and subjection to evil powers.³ Death is not, therefore,

will of God, is made to waste away under His indignation, as, in heathen story, Meleager wasted away as the stick burned which his mother held in the fire” (p. 198).

Mr. Selby, illustrating from George Eliot, says : “The gathering up of all these tangled threads after years of oblivion implies an over-watching providence of judgment in human life” (*op. cit.*, p. 52).

¹ Rom. vi. 23. ² Gen. ii. 17 ; iii. 19 ; Rom. v. 12.

³ On death as spiritual, cf. John v. 24 ; Rom. viii. 6 ; Eph. ii. 1, 5 ; v. 14 ; 1 Tim. v. 16 ; 1 John iii. 14.

simply physical dissolution. On the other hand, it seems impossible to deny that physical dissolution,—the separation of soul and body, in contradiction of man's true destiny¹—is, in the Scriptural idea,² included in it. The meaning of death for man, in its scientific relations, was considered in a previous chapter, and need not be further dwelt upon. With death, however, in its universal prevalence,³ and, as involved in this, the whole question of hereditary evil, is connected another dark and difficult problem, the possibility of a *hereditary or racial*, as distinct from a purely individual, *guilt*. From what has been said in elucidation of guilt, it would seem as if the very nature of guilt lay in its being individual. I cannot be guilty of another's sin. On the other side, the fact has to be faced that, because of the organic connexion—the *solidarity*—of the

¹ Cf. the writer's *God's Image in Man*, pp. 53, 251 ff.

² This is contested by many, e.g., by Principal E. Griffith-Jones, in his *Ascent Through Christ*, pp. 174 ff. But fair exegesis cannot get rid of this idea of Paul's teaching (Rom. v. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, etc.). Ritschl grants that Paul taught the doctrine, but holds that Paul's thought is no rule for us (*Justif. and Recon.*, E.T., p. 359).

³ Cf. Rom. v. 12-15.

race, the penalties of transgression rarely are confined to the individual transgressor, but overflow on all connected with him. They descend from generation to generation,¹ even to the extent of the inheritance of a polluted nature, and, on the above showing, of universal subjection to death.

How is this antinomy to be solved? It plainly cannot be on the ground of pure individualism. It was before seen, however, that the individual point of view is not the only one; the *social* and *racial* aspects of man's existence have likewise to be regarded, and these entail responsibilities.

1. It is to be recalled that, while personal guilt, obviously, there can be none for the acts of another, this does not preclude even the innocent from the suffering of *painful consequences* which are truly the penalties of that other's transgression.

2. Next, it cannot be denied that, while purely personal action entails only individual responsibility, there are *public* and *corporate responsibilities*, in which all concerned must take their share, though the acts by which they are affected are not their own. A firm

¹ Exod. xx. 5.

is responsible for the defalcations of a clerk or of one of its own members ; an employer is responsible for his servant's carelessness ; a nation may be involved in prolonged war through a rash word spoken or a blow struck. There is not here, indeed, a sharing of the guilt, but there is of the *liabilities* which the wrong act entails—a fruit of the common responsibility.

3. A deeper case is where, besides outward association, there is *kindredship in disposition* with the transgressors—participation in, and heirship of, the *spirit* that prompted the evil deeds. Jesus held the Pharisees responsible for the deeds of their fathers, of whose spirit they were partakers. He spoke of the blood of all the prophets coming on Jerusalem.¹ The French Revolution, as depicted by Carlyle, is a modern illustration of the same avenging law. Guilt, accumulating for centuries, discharges its terrible load upon a later generation. In these cases continuity of spirit knits the generations together into one guilty whole.

¹ Matt. xxiii. 29-39. On the same principle we speak of the sin of *the world* as crucifying Christ Himself. The Jews cried: "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matt. xxvii. 25).

All these principles, it may be held, meet in their application to the *race*. Guilt, as well as sin, has a racial aspect. The race is not innocent. Sprung from a sinful root, itself gone far astray,¹ it shares in the disabilities which sin entails. Without prejudice to individual responsibility, we can speak of a common "guilt" of humanity.

V

The great, the solemn, inquiry yet remains—Does sin's penalty exhaust itself in this life? Or is it carried over into *the Beyond*, and with what issues? Does death end all? The question must here be reserved, but it is that on which everything depends for a satisfying solution of the moral problems of the world. There is, it has been seen, a divine moral administration in this life,—a judgment of sin, inward and outward, continually going on,—but the mind is easily contented which can regard this temporal dispensation of God's justice as either perfect or final. The manifest incompleteness of the earthly system of things, in relation both to the good and to the evil, is, in fact, the

¹ Is. liii. 6.

loudest plea for a Hereafter, and one of the strongest reasons for believing in its existence. The present, too, it is needful again to remind ourselves, is a Day of Grace even more than a scene of Judgment. A remedial system is in operation, the bearings of which on sin are manifold and far-reaching. Rarely, if ever, is sin permitted to work out its full effects; never, in this life is it visited with its full penalty. This, manifestly, is not final. A day is awaited when the veil will fall, when everything will be revealed in its true light, and meet with its due reward. Gospel as it is of all-embracing love, Christianity joins with conscience in announcing "judgment to come."¹

¹ Acts xxiv. 25; Rom. ii. 5, 16; 2 Cor. v. 10; Heb. vi. 1, 2, etc.

CHAPTER X

SIN AND THE DIVINE REMEDY—ETERNAL ISSUES AND THEODICY

UNCHECKED in its development, sin could only issue in complete moral and spiritual ruin—in final separation from God and blessedness. Its end is death: not spiritual and temporal only, but eternal.¹

It has been seen, however, that sin is never in this world left to work itself out in full degree to its fatal results. From the commencement another strain is discernible in human history, working for the counteracting and overcoming of sin's evil: that of Divine Redeeming Mercy. Butler, in his chapter on "Mediation" in the *Analogy*, justly adduces nature itself as a witness to this beneficent side of the divine administration.² We speak of the "inexorableness" of nature; but in nature's benignant operations³ and

¹ Matt. vii. 13; x. 28; xxv. 46; Rom. ii. 8, 9; Phil. iii. 19; 1 Thess. v. 3, 9, etc.

² *Op. cit.*, Pt. ii. ch. v.

³ Ps. xxxiii. 5; Matt. v. 45.

stored resources how much there is of an opposite character—kindly, remedial ; powers that fight against disease, assuage pain, repair waste, heal injury ! Nature speaks here with the same voice as grace. But grace, in the active sense, is never absent. The severest theologians have always recognised the presence of powerful restraining influences of God's providence and Spirit in the hearts and lives even of the wickedest of men.¹ Else earth would already have become a hell ! It is needful, therefore, before proceeding to speak of the last issues of sin, to look briefly at the remedial provision made for it.

I.

This mercy of God to our sinful world is, in Christianity, connected with *the Person and mediatorial work* of Jesus Christ. In that "eternal purpose" of God, "which He purposed in Christ Jesus,"² is to be sought the presupposition of God's whole dealings with sin from the very first—some would say

¹ Cf. Calvin, *Instit.*, ii. 2, 15, 16 ; iii. 14, 2 ; Edwards, *Original Sin*, Pt. i. ch. i. (Works, i. pp. 146-7).

² Eph. iii. 11.

even of the permission of sin ;¹ of His long patience with sin's woeful developments and infinite provocations ;² of all forgiveness and blessing bestowed upon the penitent. This truth, if admitted, has already important implications. Conceive of Redeemer and redemption as one may, if the necessity of a divine interposition for the saving of men is conceded in any form, it is implied that, apart from such interposition, the world is "perishing,"³—that, if the grace it brings is rejected, nothing stands between the sinner and utter spiritual ruin. There is need of clearness here, for, even among those who admit that, in some sense, Christ has come for salvation, it is not uncommon to find the idea entertained that, although He had not come, or, having come, should be disregarded, things would not turn out so ill after all. This is not the teaching of either Christ or His Apostles. Christ's claim to be Saviour is absolute. He is not a *help* simply to a world in trouble, but the world's only, though all-sufficing, hope.⁴

¹ Dorner takes this view. Cf. *Syst. of Doct.*, iii. p. 58 (E.T.), etc.

² Acts xvii. 30 ; Rom. iii. 25.

³ John iii. 16.

⁴ Acts iv. 12.

Is Christianity, however, upheld in this assertion of *the necessity of mediation*? On many grounds it is declared that it is not. (1) On general grounds, from the divine character, for if God is merciful, as His works and our own hearts proclaim Him to be, why should not repentance be sufficient? Is Fatherly love not ready, without anything further, to receive the returning prodigal? Will God, if repentance is genuine, not forgive? (2) On metaphysical grounds, for sin, it is thought, as a stage in a dialectic process, holds in itself the principle of its own cure. (3) On scientific grounds, for evolution, it is believed by some, infallibly works through its own laws for the overcoming of evil, and the perfecting of good.

(1) In the *first* form of objection two things are overlooked. One is that repentance is not something that springs up spontaneously in the sinful breast: God Himself must take the initiative. If He does, and the sinner still does not repent, what then? But, next, is the case so entirely simple even as regards the divine initiative? This is assumed, but is certainly neither proved nor reasonable. Herrmann, in his *Communion with God*, while

criticising the Church doctrine, warns against the idea that forgiveness, on God's part, is a mere matter of course. "The fact is rather that to every one who really experiences it, forgiveness comes as an astounding revelation of love."¹ Sin has broken the bond of fellowship between the soul and God: compelled the withdrawal of God's favour; entailed guilt and condemnation. Does all this count for nothing? Are there no interests to be conserved in God's re-entering into gracious relations with the sinner? Christianity at least does not look on the matter in this light. Guilt as an awful reality is there, and has to be dealt with *somehow* even in the counsels of forgiveness.

(2) The *metaphysical* objection turns on the idea that sin, as the negative stage in a necessary movement of spirit, carries in it the principle of its own remedy in the positive impulse to a return to goodness—the "negation of the negation." The idea is stated with a touch of picturesqueness in a sentence already quoted from Dr. E. Caird: "The turbidity of the waters only proves that the angel has come down to trouble them, and the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

important thing is that, when so troubled, they have a healing virtue.”¹ How little, however, any innate dialectic of spirit can effect to remove the consciousness of guilt, break the power of sin, and restore to holiness and peace, is illustrated for all time in the classical experience of St. Paul (“O wretched man,” etc.²), which multitudes of seekers after righteousness since have endorsed as their own.

(3) The *evolutionist*, while not, indeed, necessarily an optimist,³ still, in his faith in invincible laws of progress, raising nature and humanity to ever higher levels, *ought* to be, and in his hopes for the future of the race generally *is*, one. The typical prophet of evolutionary optimism is Mr. Herbert Spencer, who, in his chapter on “The Evanescence of Evil” in his *Social Statics*,⁴ seeks to bring his proof of a coming perfection to the exactitude of a mathematical demonstration. One or two sentences may suffice to show the line of his argument. “All evil results from non-

¹ *Evol. of Rel.*, i. p. 231. ² Rom. vii. 24.

³ Huxley, e.g., is often profoundly pessimistic. Cf. his art. “Agnosticism,” in *Nineteenth Cent.*, February, 1889, pp. 191-2 (*Works*, v. p. 256).

⁴ *Op. cit.*, ch. ii. pp. 73 ff.

adaptation to conditions. In virtue of an essential principle of life, this non-adaptation of an organism to its conditions is ever being rectified.”¹ “Finally all unfitness disappears.”² “Thus the ultimate development of the ideal man is logically certain—as certain as any conclusion in which we place the most implicit faith; for instance, that all men will die.”³ Was any human soul ever persuaded or helped to goodness by such abstract formulising on the automatic action of laws into which no spark of ethical motive enters? What, one asks, are “fitness” and “unfitness” in this connexion? Is the “fitness” which survives, and the “unfitness” which perishes, necessarily that of moral character? More deeply, what produces the moral “fitness” assumed to be preserved? Have human will and obedience to higher law no share in it? Who that reads history with impartial mind can fail to see that the

¹ P. 74. ² P. 79.

³ *Ibid.* History, it is admitted, cannot prove this thesis. “But when it is shown that this advance is due to the working of a universal law; and that in virtue of that law it must continue until the state we call perfection is reached, then the advent of such a state is removed out of the region of probability to that of certainty” (p. 78).

moral victories of the world have been gained, not by the automatic working of laws such as Mr. Spencer describes, but by voluntary endeavour, inspired by lofty purpose,—by blood, by tears, by sacrifice, by fidelity to high ideals at cost of every earthly advantage—in brief, by the way of the *Cross*; the very opposite of the road, as Mr. Huxley has trenchantly shown,¹ by which cosmic evolution travels?

II

An essential characteristic of Christianity, as providing a divine remedy for human sin, is that its salvation is not due to man's own efforts or devisings, but springs, in a *truly supernatural* way, from God's *free love and grace*.²

¹ Cf. his *Evolution and Ethics* (*Works*, vol. ix.).

² Neander says in the opening of his *History of the Church*: "Now we look upon Christianity not as a power that has sprung up out of the hidden depths of man's nature, but as one that descended from above, when heaven opened itself anew to man's long alienated race; a power which, as both in its origin and its essence it is exalted above all that human nature can create out of its own resources, was designed to impart to that nature a new life, and to change it in its inmost principles" (i. p. 2, Bohn's trans.).

Cf. Dr. P. T. Forsyth in his *Person and Place of Jesus Christ*: "Jesus was for the Apostles and their Churches not the consummation of a God-consciousness, labouring up through creation, but the invasive source of forgiveness, new creation and eternal life" (p. 58).

It is a "gift,"¹ a "heavenly" thing, as Jesus called it to Nicodemus,² in contrast with the "earthly" fact of sin, for which it is the remedy. In its nature, a salvation which is to go to the root of the world's evil must obviously fulfil certain conditions. It must be *historical*, that is, attest itself as real, and be actual and apprehensible, as entering into man's life in time. It must embrace a perfect *revelation* of the character and will of God, restoring the knowledge which man's sin-darkened mind has lost,³ and adding new disclosures of God's grace. It must embrace *reparation* for the wrong done to the divine holiness through sin—a dealing with the world's accumulated *guilt*. This carries with it a demand for repentance and confession of sin on the side of man. It must embrace *spiritual powers* adequate for emancipation from the *dominion* of sin, and the imparting of a new capacity for holy and loving service. It will reveal God, set man right with God before His holy law, restore to holiness. These are old-fashioned thoughts, but they are the essence of what Christianity claims

¹ Rom. v. 15 ff.; vi. 23. ² John iii. 12.

³ Rom. i. 21 ff.

to be and to do as a religion of redemption. Doctrinally, they are summed up in the words, Incarnation, Atonement, Renewal by the Holy Spirit. These, however, are not presented to the mind in Christianity as mere doctrinal abstractions. The living centre of everything in Christ's religion is Jesus Christ Himself, Son of God and Son of Man, in whom the revelation of God is made, reconciliation is effected, new life is bestowed.

In this, its aspect of a *supernatural economy* of redemption, Christianity comes already into direct collision with that "modern" view of the world, the fundamental principle of which, as formerly seen, is that nothing can be admitted into history which does not proceed on purely natural lines. The collision, as was to be expected, is experienced, first, in regard to the *Person* of the Redeemer. It seems plain that, if salvation, in the comprehensive sense above described, is to be achieved for an entire race,—if God is to be perfectly revealed, guilt with its attendant condemnation cancelled, complete fellowship with God restored, the Person by whom this work is to be done can be no ordinary son of man. Doctrinal discussion aside, He who is to

undertake this work must stand in a unique relation to God the Father ; must be Himself without sin ; must, while man, achieving His victory by moral means, possess powers and sustain functions nothing less than divine. This, too, impartial exegesis hardly any longer disputes, is the representation of Jesus given in the Evangelic records, and in the Epistles and remaining writings of the New Testament. The Christ even of the Synoptic Gospels is, Bousset freely grants, as truly a supernatural Being as the Christ of St. Paul or St. John.¹ He is the Christ of apostolic faith. Only, by this school, the historic truth of the picture cannot be conceded. Christ must, at all costs, be reduced within the limits of simple humanity. Supernatural claims and attributes must, by the various devices known to criticism, be ruthlessly stripped off.²

¹ "Even the oldest Gospel," Bousset says, "is written from the standpoint of faith : already for Mark, Jesus is not only the Messiah of the Jewish people, but the miraculous eternal Son of God, whose glory shone in the world" (*Was wissen wir von Jesus ?* pp. 54, 57).

² This is the attitude of the whole new "historical-critical" school to the history of Jesus in the Gospels. Bousset, Weinel, Wernle, Wrede, Schmiedel, are examples. With much that is reverential in the spirit of these writers, one cannot go the length of Dr. Sanday

It was pointed out in the opening paper that one direction in which this "modern" spirit more recently manifests itself is in the growing tendency to deny even the *moral perfection*—the "sinlessness"—of Jesus. Nature has never in human experience produced a sinless Personality. On the other hand, if a sinless Being, such as Jesus is claimed to be, has really appeared in history, He is a miracle, a marvel, only to be explained by a creative act of God.¹ No wonder therefore, the modern spirit stumbles at such a palpable contradiction of its first principle. It is not enough to deny the Virgin Birth; in consistency the Virgin Life must follow it.² This step, accordingly, as before shown, is now very generally being taken. But the attempt to class Jesus with the sinful world which He

in seeing in their teaching a "reduced" form of Christianity (*Ancient and Modern Christologies*). It seems rather like the removing of the corner-stone from the Christianity of the New Testament.

¹ The writer has sought to establish this connexion in his work on the *Virgin Birth of Christ*.

² This is a remark of Prof. A. B. Bruce: "With belief in the Virgin Birth is apt to go belief in the Virgin Life, as not less than the other a part of that veil that must be taken away that the true Jesus may be seen as He was—a morally defective man, better than most, but not perfectly good" (*Apologetics* p. 410).

came to save—to accord to Him less than complete moral perfection—cannot succeed. The facts are too mighty for it. If there is one thing that stands out clear in the Gospel narratives, it is the perfect unity of thought and will of Jesus with the Father—what Ritschl calls His “solidarity” with God in will and purpose.¹ Jesus betrays no consciousness of sin; does no act which gives occasion to any one—even to the Prince of Evil²—to charge Him with it. He distinguishes Himself as Saviour from the world of sinners He came to save. The impression which His life produced on those who knew Him best—the same which the picture in the Gospels produces on us still—was that of perfect holiness. “He did no sin.”³ He was the undimmed image of the perfection of the Father.⁴

Here then, in Jesus of Nazareth, is the appearance of a *Sinless One* for the first time in history. The fact is of unspeakable significance for redemption. It is not simply that sinlessness *qualified* Jesus for His work as

¹ *Unterricht*, p. 20. ² John xiv. 30.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 22; 1 John iii. 5; cf. 2 Cor. v. 21.

⁴ John xiv. 9.

Saviour. What is of greater moment is that here, in the New Head of the race, is already realised the reversal of that "law of sin and death" that reigns elsewhere universally in humanity. A new order of being has begun. The pledge of a Kingdom of God is given. Herrmann justly dwells on the immediate certitude of God's holiness and grace produced in us by the fact that one like Jesus belongs to this world of ours.¹ It guarantees everything else that is needful for salvation.

III

In reconciling men to God, introducing them, through forgiveness, to a life of sonship, and renewing them to holiness, Christ's aim was, and is, to bring in that *Kingdom of God*, or realisation of God's will in a perfected moral fellowship of humanity,² which, it was before seen, is God's own last end in the creation

¹ Through Jesus, he holds, we have the irrefragable certainty that God is present to us, and communes with us—"A God so holy that He at once strikes down the sinner, and yet also forgives him, and reconciles him to Himself by His own act" (*Com. with God*, E.T., p. 26; cf. pp. 79, 80). There are, however, elements in this reconciling work which Herrmann leaves out of account.

² "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (*Matt.* vi. 10).

and government of the world. For this end Christ lived, died, rose again, and now exercises a universal sovereignty in providence and grace.¹ Most who accept the Christian standpoint will agree that such statements correctly describe the work which Christ came to do; the point where difficulty arises for many, both within and without the Church, is with regard to that aspect of Christ's reconciling work commonly spoken of as the *Atonement*.² By not a few the idea of atonement is repudiated altogether; more frequently the term is retained, but in a sense which deprives it of its older connotation of an act by which the guilt of human sin is vicariously expiated. Detailed theological discussion is not here relevant, but a few words may help to set the subject in its true light.

That Christ has "put away sin by the

¹ Matt. xxviii. 18; Eph. i. 20-3; Heb. ii. 9, 10.

² The term "atonement" in the one place in which it occurs in the A.V. of the N.T. (Rom. v. 11) is correctly rendered in the R.V. "reconciliation" (*καταλλαγῆ*). Theologically it is used, as also in the O.T. (Lev. iv. 20, 26, etc.), for the act by which sin is "covered" (*כִּפֶּה*) and its guilt put away before God. This, in the N.T., is accomplished by Christ's death, to which a propitiatory, reconciling, virtue is ascribed. (Rom. iii. 25; Eph. ii. 13-17; Col. i. 20-2; Heb. ix. 26-8; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10, etc.).

sacrifice of Himself”¹ and through his death has “reconciled” men to God²—still, however, under the condition of a spiritual appropriation of His saving act through faith³—seems plainly enough taught in the New Testament. Of “theories” purporting to explain the significance of this redeeming act probably not one is without its element of important truth.⁴ That atonement, while outward in form, is spiritual in essence; that its virtue lay, not in the mere endurance of suffering, but in the *spirit* in which the sacrifice was offered; that it involved (with Maurice, Erskine, Robertson, etc.) the perfect surrender of a holy will,⁵ (with Bushnell) vicarious sympathetic suffering,⁶ (with McLeod Campbell, Moberly) intercession and confession of sin—the word “penitence” should be avoided, (with Ritschl) the final proof of fidelity in vocation,⁷—this all may be assumed without argument. The point in which theories of this class separate themselves from the older “satisfaction,” “govern-

¹ Heb. ix. 26. ² 2 Cor. v. 18-21; Col. i. 20-22, etc.

³ Rom. iii. 22, 25, etc.

⁴ Cf. the writer's *Christian View of God*, Lect. viii.

⁵ Heb. x. 7-10. ⁶ Heb. ii. 14-18; iv. 15.

⁷ Phil. ii. 8.

mental," and "penal suffering" views is in the refusal to recognise that the atonement of Christ has any *judicial* aspect—any relation to *guilt*, or to the *punitive* will of God in His dealing with that guilt. Apart, however, from the fact that, on any fair reading of the New Testament, it is hardly possible to deny that this aspect of Christ's reconciling work is a prominent one—if, indeed, it is not placed in the very forefront,—may it not be contended that, in the nature of the case, if the view previously taken of sin is correct, there is in these judicial theories also an element of truth which ought not to be overlooked? If the world, indeed, lies under a divine condemnation through its sin,—if the "wrath of God" is revealed against its unrighteousness and ungodliness,¹—is not this also an aspect of its condition which any true and complete view of atonement must take account of? In meeting on behalf of humanity the whole attitude of God to sin, as it is presumed Christ did, can the punitive attitude—so real and awful—be ignored?

Should this be deemed strange? Were it requisite it might readily be shown how

¹ Rom. i. 18.

deeply the aspect of atonement now indicated answers to a need of the human heart which has manifested itself in all ages, and still reveals itself in human experience.¹ How constantly in literature, when a great wrong has been done, do we meet with the *desire to atone*—to make amends—to undo, as far as that is possible, the wrong of the past, and so relieve the burden that rests on conscience.² It is felt to be not enough to repent,—even

¹ Neglecting the cruder superstitions of lower religions, the O.T., with its strong sense of sin, might again be appealed to as witness. It is not in the sacrificial law only (whether that is earlier or later does not affect its testimony here; if late, it shows only the more convincingly the craving for atonement generated by the consciousness of sin); but in prophetic writings also (cf. Isaiah's cleansing in his vision, ch. vi. 5-7; the prophecy of the Servant, ch. liii.; Zech. xiii. 1).

² The note is a deep one in Greek Tragedy. C. Plumptre's *Sophocles*, p. lxxxv. :—

“One soul, working in the strength of love,
Is mightier than ten thousand to atone.”

In *Prometheus Bound* (Mrs. Browning's trans.), Hermes says—

“Do not look
For any end moreover to this curse,
Or ere some God appear to accept thy pangs
On his own head vicarious, and descend
With unreluctant step the darks of hell
And gloomy abysses around Tartarus.”

Various literary illustrations are given in C. A. Dinsmore's *Atonement in Literature and Life*. Their number might be largely increased.

to know oneself to be forgiven,—there is the longing to be at peace with one's own sense of right—to lift off the load of self-condemnation, of deserved condemnation by others, that cleaves to the sense of guilt.

This is one side of the matter ; another is, the desire, in that strange unity that links human beings together, to atone, as far as possible, for the *sins of one another* specially of those nearly related to us ; to make amends on their behalf. In the absolute sense—in relation to God and His perfectly holy demand it is obvious that no one can thus atone either for his brother or for himself.¹ Much less can he atone for the sin of a whole race. Only One can be thought of as capable of sustaining such a task—the Holy One Himself, who, uniting in His own Person both Godhead and manhood, perfectly represents both,—who, knowing what the sin of the world is to its inmost depths, yet voluntarily identifies Himself with the whole position of the world under sin,—who, entering fully, as McLeod Campbell would say, into the mind of God about sin, yet, under experience of sin's uttermost evil in death, and with full con-

¹ Ps. xlix. 7 ; cxxx. 3 ; Mic. vi. 6, 7.

sciousness of its relation to sin, yet maintains unbroken His unity of spirit with God,—who, acknowledging the righteousness of God's judgment on sin,¹ renders in humanity a tribute to this righteousness so complete, that, to hark back on a thought of Anselm's in his *Cur Deus Homo*, all the guilt of the world cannot countervail against it!

There is, it is granted, a mystery in an atonement such as Christ alone could make,—an act which was His, yet which can truly be ascribed to humanity so far as it spiritually identifies itself with it,—which human formulas must always fail to compass, even while the truth they imperfectly convey, viz., a reconciliation in which the imputation of guilt and the condemnation attending it entirely disappear, is felt to be most real. As casting light on the *racial* aspect of this work accomplished for humanity, aid is afforded by that idea of the *organic unity* of the race found to be so important in the discussions connected with heredity. If the fact of organic connexion renders possible the suffering—even

¹ McLeod Campbell speaks of the "Amen" which went up from Christ's humanity to God's judgment on sin in his experience of death (*Nat. of Atonement*, cf. chs. vi., xi., xii.).

the ruin—of many through the sin of one, is it not, as St. Paul argues,¹ the necessary counterbalancing thought that righteousness and life may come through the obedience of One ?

IV

The view of Christianity as presenting the divine remedy for sin connects itself, not simply with the truths of Incarnation and Atonement, but with the fact of the *Resurrection*, as the pledge of victory over *death*, and source of a *new life* for all who accept the salvation which Christ brings. The reality of Christ's Resurrection is here assumed.² It is the needful completion of what precedes ; the commencement of the new era of exaltation and subjugation of opposing powers ; the prelude of the gift of the Spirit. Without resurrection, if man is to be redeemed in his whole personality—body as well as soul—the remedy would be imperfect, for the "enemy," death,³ would still retain his hold over both Redeemer and redeemed. Is the "sting" really taken from death⁴—that

¹ Rom. v. 12-21.

² The evidence is discussed, with reference to recent thought, in the writer's work, *The Resurrection of Jesus*.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 26.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 55.

supreme contradiction of man's nature and destiny, as dissolving the union of spiritual and corporeal which differentiates man's position in creation.¹—if death still retains its unbroken sway, and spirit and body remain eternally apart? Justly, therefore, in both Old and New Testaments, is death's "destruction" regarded as the goal of God's redemptive action.²

Death, with Christ, is for the sake of life. His risen life He shares with His people. Removal of sin's guilt and condemnation—the Pauline *δικαίωσις*—with its forgiveness of the past, is not the whole. Provision is needed for the *renewal* of man in the core of his personality—for deliverance from sin's *power*. The rule of sin in the soul must be met and broken through the mightier power of "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus."³ Christianity is a religion, therefore, of Regeneration and Sanctification—of an Indwelling Spirit—acting, indeed, not,

¹ It has already been argued that death is unnatural to man—a mutilation, a rupture, a separation of the parts of his compound being, not contemplated in his creation. (See above, pp. 190 ff.) Cf. the writer's *God's Image in Man*, pp. 251 ff.

² Is. xxv. 8; Hos. xiii. 14; 1 Cor. xv. 26, 54–5; Rev. xx. 14. ³ Rom. viii. 2; cf. vi. 8, 14, 22.

magically, but through appropriate moral and spiritual agencies.¹

In this possession of the Spirit, in turn, is embraced the whole hope of the future.² As death, commencing in the loss of the soul's true life in God, has its outward concomitant in physical dissolution; so, in the new life imparted through Christ, lies the germ of future resurrection.³ The immortality (*ἀφθαρσία*, incorruption) held forth in the Gospel as "brought to light" through Jesus Christ⁴ is no mere prospect of ghostly survival in some Sheol-like condition of semi-existence, but a true "life everlasting" in God's own presence in holy perfection of both body and spirit.⁵ Of this immortality Christ's Resurrection is the immutable pledge.

V

We are thus brought back, though on a

¹ The Word, the Church, means of Grace generally. These are not further considered here.

² Eph. i. 13, 14; Col. 1. 27. ³ Rom. viii. 2.

⁴ 2 Tim. i. 10.

⁵ Rom. viii. 23; 1 Cor. xv. 42 ff.; Col. i. 22; Jude 24.

Huxley's words, previously quoted, may be recalled: "If a genuine, not merely subjective, immortality awaits us, I conceive that, without some such change as that depicted in the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, immortality must be eternal misery" (*Life and Letters*, ii. p. 304).

higher plane, to the point at which the discussion was broken off in the last chapter—the question of the *Life Beyond*, and have still to ask, in view of the issues which that question raises, how far any light is cast on the vexed problems of what is called *Theodicy*—the vindication of the ways of God in His permission of sin, and government of the world of mankind under it.

For the Christian, as just seen, the question of *immortality* is solved once for all in Christ. Christ is the Theodicy for him. The problem of sin is solved, in his case, by a redemption. Suffering and death meet with their infinite compensations.¹ Life has its adequate end.

On natural grounds the question of life beyond death is much less easy to deal with. It has already been shown how serious is the break in modern thinking with the belief in immortality.² By many the belief is openly and uncompromisingly parted with. To others it is a vague and uncertain hypothesis. Science is alleged to discredit it;³ others,

¹ 2 Cor. iv. 17: "Our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." ² See above, pp. 43, 58, 85.

³ Prof. James's Ingersoll Lect. on *Immortality* vividly sets out the difficulties from the side of science. Haeckel

who cling to the belief, seek a quasi-scientific support for it in spiritualistic phenomena.¹ The reason for disbelief is often to be found in the particular philosophical or scientific theory adopted: Darwinism has peculiar difficulties in this respect.² Frequently, again, denial has its root in a low view of human nature, and an inadequate conception of immortality itself. Only as man is regarded as made in the image of God, and life as having a moral end, is the argument for immortality felt to be cogent.³ Mere continuance of existence without anything to give that existence content or value can awaken no enthusiasm and inspire no hope.⁴

The arguments on which it is customary to rely in support of belief in a future life need not here be enlarged on. Chief stress is laid treats immortality as one of the superstitions science has to destroy,

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge, in his *Man and the Universe*, pp. 189 ff., presents considerations of this sort. He has, however, better reasons, and seeks to do justice to the Christian doctrine of bodily resurrection (p. 160).

² See above, pp. 189-90.

³ It was from their sense of fellowship with God that O.T. believers derived their confidence that He would not let them perish (Pss. xlix. 15; lxxiii. 24-26, etc.; cf. Heb. xi. 13-16).

⁴ Prof. Huxley, in an interesting letter to Charles Kingsley, takes the ground of neither confirming nor

on the whole make of man's being as needing for its development and perfecting a larger sphere than the earthly life affords.¹ On this ground Kant includes immortality among his "doctrinal beliefs," intermediate between theoretical proof and mere opinion.² J. S. Mill was specially impressed by the fact that only under the influence of this hope do the human faculties find their largest play and scope—life is relieved from "the disastrous feeling of 'not worth while.'"³ Science

denying the immortality of man. He sees no reason for believing in it, but has no means of disproving it. The idea has no attraction for him. (*Life and Letters*, i. pp. 217 ff.). But see below.

¹ Cf. Tennyson (*In Memoriam*), but specially Browning (*Pauline*, etc.), as poetical exponents of this thought.

² "In the wisdom of a supreme Being, and in the shortness of life, so inadequate to the development of the glorious powers of human nature, we may find equally sufficient grounds for a doctrinal belief in the future life of the human soul" (*Krit. of Pure Reason*, p. 501, Bohn's trans.).

³ Cf. the whole eloquent passage in *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 249. Notwithstanding Mr. Huxley's disparagement of the hope of a future life in his letter to Kingsley, he sometimes expressed himself very differently. Mr. Mallock, in his *Is Life Worth Living?* (pp. 128, 171-2) quotes him as saying: "The lover of moral beauty, struggling through a world of sorrow and sin, is surely as much the stronger for believing that sooner or later a vision of perfect peace and goodness will burst upon him, as the toiler up a mountain for the belief that beyond the crag and snow lie home and rest."

may not prove, but, as both Mr. Huxley and Mr. Mill admit, cannot *disprove* immortality.¹ It is enough here to advert to the point which mainly concerns our present inquiry—the manifest *incompleteness of the earthly life*, regarded as the scene of a *divine moral administration*. Professor Huxley, indeed, in his aggressive mood, will admit no inequality, no injustice, needing redress. Everything is “wholly just.”² This, however, is a manifest exaggeration. Grant a moral government of the world, moral probation and discipline, a justice that gives every one his due, and on the side neither of goodness nor of evil is it possible to claim that the issues of conduct are exhausted in this life.³ Immortality

And he adds that, could a faith like this be placed on a firm basis, mankind would cling to it as “tenaciously as ever drowning sailor did to a hencoop.”

¹ Huxley, as above; Mill, *Three Essays*, p. 201. The staggering difficulty, of course, which belief in immortality has to encounter is the fact of death itself, which seems a palpable contradiction of such a destiny. The genuine Christian view meets this difficulty with a denial that death is natural to man, and presents a Gospel which proclaims a victory over death.

² Letter to Kingsley, above quoted. “The absolute justice of things,” he says, “is as clear to me as any scientific fact” (*Op. cit.*, i. p. 219).

³ Cf. Browning, *La Saisiaz*: “There is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught,” etc. (*Works*, xiv. p. 178).

becomes a postulate of the moral nature.¹

It is only in accordance, therefore, with its claim to meet the deepest needs of man's conscience, that Christianity proclaims that life on earth is *not the end* for any. Not for the good—the Christ-like—for they depart to be with their Lord, which is “very far better”;² not for the bad, for they pass, with their evil, into a world where just recompense of their deeds awaits them. After death, it is testified, “cometh judgment.”³ Theodicy, too, has its place, for with the close of time—at what interval it would be presumptuous to inquire⁴—is associated, in Christian teaching, a yet more public manifestation and vindication of the divine righteousness (*dies irae, dies illa*)⁵—a day when, all secrets of men being laid bare,⁶ judgment will be passed on each “according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”⁷

¹ Thus Kant (cf. Abbott's trans., *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, pp. 218 ff.). Carrying out this idea, Kant finds in the Christian doctrine of the Kingdom of God the conception “which alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical reason” (p. 224).

² Phil. i. 23. ³ Heb. x. 27. ⁴ Mark xiii. 32.

⁵ Matt. xxv. 31 ff.; John v. 29; Rom. ii. 5–11; Rev. xx. 11–15.

⁶ Rom. ii. 16. ⁷ 2 Cor. v. 10.

VI

When "Theodicy" is spoken of, it must be apparent in *how modified a sense* that great word can be employed of any grasp of the divine purposes attainable by man in time. Has the road we have travelled, then, been utterly without result? That it would be equally unwise to affirm. Numerous as are the perplexities that still crowd upon us, the master-key to their solution, at least, is given when it is discovered that sin is an alien element in the universe, and that it is balanced, in God's grace, by a redemption which means its final overthrow, and the establishment in its room of a Kingdom of God, already begun, growing to triumph, and awaiting its perfection in eternity. Only it is to be acknowledged that our lights on these vast matters are in this life "broken," refracted, partial; ¹ that it is but the "outskirts" of God's ways we can discern. ² Till that higher standpoint is reached where, as just indicated, the light of the Great White Throne beats on the unrolled scroll of God's providence, and the principles of His unerringly wise government are disclosed to the world

¹ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

² Job xxvi. 14.

that has been the subject of it, glimpses to steady our thoughts, and guide our feet amidst the shadows, are the utmost that can be asked or hoped for.

1. Theodicy has mainly occupied itself with the question of *physical* evil—the apparent recklessness and cruelty of nature, still more the misfortune, pain, sorrow, and misery of human life—that dark region in which Pessimism finds its perennial text. It was pointed out at the beginning how closely connected the problem of physical evil is with that of moral evil—how large a part of the solution of the one is found in the solution of the other.¹ Not, however, entirely. The world, even physically, is not in the condition we should expect were it *morally* in a state well-pleasing to God.² Is there no bond of sympathy between man and his physical environment? Scripture here has its own point of view in the idea of an arrested development—a “vanity” (*ματαιότης*) or profitlessness—to which even nature is subjected

¹ See above, pp. 2, 3; cf. *Christian View of God*, 194, 217 ff., where the question of physical evil is discussed at length.

² Interesting illustration is afforded in a long note in Luthardt's *Saving Truths of Christianity* (pp. 330 ff. E.T.), drawn from various writers.

through the sin of man.¹ But it holds out hope also for creation, "groaning and travailing in pain until now," of a share in the coming redemption.² This is its Theodicy.

2. The *permission of sin* is, and remains, a dark riddle. It is not an adequate answer to the difficulty to say—Man is free. This is true, but it is not *all* worlds in which freedom would have been abused, and the problem is that, foreseeing the abuse, God created *this* one.³ The ultimate solution lies, we must believe, where Christianity places it, in the larger results in glory to God and good to man,—the nobler virtue attained through conflict and temptation, the loftier holiness and higher reward of those who "overcome,"⁴ the diviner blessedness of sonship in Christ,—that accrue from its permission. Sin has appeared. Redemption is God's answer to it, and vindication of His allowance of it.

¹ Rom. viii. 20 ; cf. Gen. iii. 17, 18.

² Vers. 19-22 ; cf. 2 Pet. iii. 13 ; Rev. xxi. 1.

³ It is a daring speculation, but the thought is one which forces itself—Could a universe have been created in which, at some point, in the exercise of freedom, sin would not emerge ? If not, divine wisdom has to do, less with the permission, than with the ordering of how, when, where, under what conditions, this entrance of sin shall take place, and how it shall best be overruled for good when it does appear.

⁴ Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26 ; iii. 5, 12, 21.

3. But does even this, in view of all the facts, furnish us with more than the *beginnings* of a Theodicy? If there is a Kingdom of God already begun on earth, vast numbers yet to be gathered into it,¹ a perfection beyond imagination to be attained in the future, this is unspeakable gain. But what of the *cost* of this result in the vast multitudes meanwhile left outside—of the countless generations that have never known, or still are in ignorance of, the grace that saves? Do they perish? If they do, where is the Theodicy? If not, what is their fate? A problem this, when all has been said that can be said of the wide extension of God's mercy to those who fear Him and work righteousness in every nation,² according to the light they possess,—even to far more imperfect seekers, with inferior opportunity, of discrimination in judgment according to degrees of responsibility (light, talent, heredity, environment),³—of the justice of the retribution falling on those who choose evil rather than good,⁴—which baffles, with our present knowledge, a complete solution. The elements of a solution

¹ Rev. vii. 9. 10.

² Acts x. 35.

³ Matt. xi. 20-24; Luke xii. 46-7, etc.

⁴ Prof. Huxley's words, already quoted (p. 228), may be again referred to.

are wanting ; the calculus fails us for dealing with it.

Some would seek a solution of the problem in the thought of *universal salvation*. Thus Origen of old ;¹ thus Schleiermacher ;² thus modern advocates of the "Larger Hope." These deem it the only solution congruous with the divine love and Fatherhood. Calm reason, however, not to say regard for revelation,³ forbids us to take refuge in this tempting conclusion. The possibilities of resistance to God and goodness in the human will, of which history in this world affords such terrible examples, cannot be made light of.⁴ Character tends to fixity, and wills that have resisted God's goodness in this life are not likely to be readily subdued to penitence by His severity in the next.

¹ *De Principiis*, iii. 6. ² *Der christ. Glaube*, Sect. 163.

³ Cf. *Christian View*, p. 391, 530 ff. The strongest Pauline passages are perhaps 1 Cor. xv. 21-28, and Eph. i. 10, but exegetes like Meyer and Weiss will not allow that they teach universalism. Cf. Meyer, *in loc.* ; Weiss, *Bib. Theol.*, ii. pp. 73, 107, 109.

⁴ Farrar, in his *Mercy and Judgment*, grants : "I cannot tell whether some souls may not resist God for ever, and therefore may not be for ever shut out from His presence," etc. (p. 485). But if one soul may be thus finally lost, why should not ten, a thousand, a million ? The principle is here admitted on which the chief difficulty turns.

The alternative theory to which some resort, of *annihilation* of the finally impenitent, though not without important advocates,¹ is equally inadmissible as an attempt to solve a moral problem by a *tour de force* which has in it no elements of a real solution. In its more rigorous form, it sweeps into extinction the vast majority of the race; supplemented, as it is in Mr. E. White, by a doctrine of *second probation*,² it extends evangelisation into the future on a scale for which no warrant exists either in Scripture or in reason.³ Every ray of exhortation and appeal in the New Testament is concentrated in the present,⁴ and judgment in the future is always represented as proceeding on the basis of the deeds done in the body.⁵

The theory of an *extended probation* commands the sympathy of many as providing for the case of those who have had no opportunity of learning of the Gospel here.⁶ With it Dr. Dorner connects the view—in which

¹ E.g., Rothe, Ritschl (hypothetically).

² *Life in Christ*, ch. xxii.

³ The "destruction" Scripture speaks of takes place at the *Parousia*, not, as in Mr. White's theory, ages after.

⁴ 2 Cor. vi. 2. ⁵ 2 Cor. vi. 10; Rev. xx. 12, etc.

⁶ The theory is advocated by theologians like Dorner, Oosterzee, Martensen, Godet, and by many among ourselves.

lies the principle of his Theodicy—that every soul must have the opportunity of definitive acceptance or rejection of Christ.¹ As usually presented, the theory goes, as just said, beyond the limits of Scriptural evidence, and tends seriously to change the centre of gravity of Gospel presentation.² What is true is that, in eternity, all must be brought into the light of Christ; whether for condemnation or for salvation the event will determine. The result may be *revelation* of character—of the will's inmost bent—rather than change of it. Many in that day may be found saying, in the prophet's words, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him," though the "veil" till then had been upon their minds.³ The problem, too, of unformed characters may find solution then in definite decisions. Yet on all this how little can we know?

Beyond lie *the eternal ages*, the secrets of which, known only to God, it is equally presumptuous and vain for man to attempt to penetrate. The veil, in Scripture, falls on

¹ *Syst. of Christ. Doct.*, iii. pp. 69 ff.; iv. pp. 408 ff.

² The obscure passage, 1 Pet. iii. 18-20, is a very precarious foundation for it. Cf. the apposite remarks on Geo. MacDonald's "Gospel in Hades" in Selby's *Theol. of Mod. Fiction*, pp. 158 ff. ³ Is. xxv. 7-9.

what seems to be a duality, yet not to the exclusion of hints, even more, of a future final unification—a gathering up of all things in Christ as Head—when God is once more “all in all.”¹ Such language would seem to imply at least, a cessation of active opposition to the will of God—an acknowledgment universally of His authority and rule,—a reconciliation, in some form, on the part even of those outside the blessedness of the Kingdom with the order of the universe.²

Here, without our presuming further, the subject may be left to rest. It becomes too vast for human thought. An Apostle’s words are the fitting close: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past tracing out! . . . For of Him, and through Him, and unto Him, are all things. To Him be the glory for ever. Amen.”³

¹ Acts iii. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; Eph. i. 10; Phil. ii. 9–11.

² Theologians have often spoken of the last judgment as compelling the acknowledgment of God’s righteousness in the minds even of the condemned. In this may lie the germ of the ultimate submission to the divine order which the above passages seem to anticipate.

³ Rom. xi. 33, 35.

INDEX

- Annihilation, theory of, 316
 Argyll, Duke of, 167, 177, 189
 Anselm, 112, 302
 Atonement, craving for, 270, 300 ff.; in Christianity, 297 ff.; theories of, 298 ff.; Christ's work in, 301 ff.
 Augustine, 113, 107, 117, 224, 242
 Babylonia, ethical conceptions, 45; ideas of God, 73; of sin, 74
 Balfour, A. J., 40, 44
 Blatchford, R., 16 ff., 55, 76
 Bradley, F. H., on the Absolute, 40 ff., 49, 81, 84 ff.; on freedom, 55, 57; on responsibility, 51, 255 ff.
 Brahmanism, 5, 239, 269
 Bentham, J., 48
 Bousset, W., 25
 "Brute-inheritance," 107, 116, 139, 212-13, 218, 229, 248 ff.
 Budde, K., 64
 Buddhism, 5, 43, 239, 269
 Butler, Bp., 10, 44, 155, 273, 283
 Caird, E., on God, 81 ff.; on sin, 83, 287
 Calvin, 34, 122-3, 284; Calvinism, 102, 224
 Campbell, McLeod, J., 298, 301-2
 Campbell, R. J., 13, 138, 226
 Christianity, conflict of modern thought with, 8 ff., 18 ff., 57, 75 ff., 97 ff., 129 ff., 163 ff., 183 ff., 229 ff., 253 ff., 286 ff.; supernatural character of, 290 ff.; mediation in, 283 ff.; objections to mediation in, 286 ff.; ethical influence of, 16 ff.; idea of God in, 7, 62 ff., 91 ff.; of sin, 7, 30 ff., 71 ff., 100 ff., 196 ff., 217-19, 232 ff., 248 ff.; of man, 94, 144 ff., 182-3, 190 ff.; of Christ, 24 ff., 248 ff., 292 ff.; of redemption, 24, 223; atonement in, 297 ff.; renewal in, 291-2, 303-4; victory over death in, 303 ff.; judgment to come in, 282, 310; eternal issues, 314 ff.

- Conscience, in heathen, 30 ; Schopenhuaera on, 32 ; condemns sin, 258 ff.
- Darwin, C., evolutionary theory of, 133 ff., 136, 148, 156 ff., 169 ff. ; bearings of theory on Theism, 130, 135 ff. ; on Pangenesis, 201 ff.
- Davidson, A. B., 63, 65
- Death, abnormal to man, 190 ff. ; relation to sin, 189 ff., 304 ; Weismann on, 193-4 ; Scriptural significance of, 277, 283 ; conquest of, 303 ff.
- Decalogue, the, 35-6
- Depravity, 119 ff., 232 ff., 248 ff. See Fall, Sin, Original Sin
- Determinism, in modern thought, 22-3, 54 ff., 76 ff., 98
- Dillmann, A., on holiness, 62 ff., 66, 76 ; on fall, 140
- Dorner, I., 93, 106, 114-5, 218, 259, 285, 316
- Driver, S. A., 166, 180
- Edwards, Jonathan, on original sin, 225, 232, 237, 242, 249, 284
- Egoism, in sin, 117 ff., 123 ff., 126 ff., 250
- Egypt, ethical ideas in, 45 ; ideas of God, 73
- Eliot, George, 124, 270, 277
- End, the moral, 7, 93 ff., 296
- Evil, natural, 2 ff., 86, 312 ff. ; moral, *see* Sin
- Evolution, organic, 22, 115-6, 129 ff. ; Darwinian theory of, 139 ff., *see* Darwin ; naturalism of, 134 ff. ; bearings on sin, 129 ff., 137 ff., 142 ff., 163 ff. ; changes in theory, 149-50, 155 ff., assumptiveness of, 150 ff. ; teleology in, 160 ff. ; creation and, 167 ff.
- Fall, the, Scriptural doctrine of, 138 ff., 164 ff., 233 ; modern denials of, 27, 138, 147, 183 ff., 230 ff. ; in philosophy, 104-6 ; evolutionary explanations of, 141 ff.
- Freedom, modern denials of, 22, 54 ff., 145 ff. ; implied in responsibility, 31, 38, 52, 106, 118
- God, holiness of, 7, 62 ff. ; personality of, 91 ; denials of latter, 78 ff.
- Good, principle of the, 110 ; the chief good, 7, 95
- Gnosticism, 4, 103
- Gore, Bp., 141-2
- Green, T. H., 40, 79 ; on eternal self-consciousness, 80 ff. ; on punishment, 261
- Guilt, 139, 252 ff., 255 ff. ; in Christianity, 261 ; en-

- tails judgment, 271 ff.; denials of, 253 ff., *see* Sin
- Haeckel, E., 40, 55, 77, 150, 174, 176, 179-80, 182
- Hawthorne, N., 270
- Hegel, 46; on morality, 58; on sin, 79-80, 98-9, 118; on fall, 104-5; evolution in, 133
- Heredity, 195; bearing on sin, 196 ff.; on original sin, 209, 212 ff.; theories of, 198 ff.; on acquired characters, 205 ff.; responsibility under, 221 ff.
- Herrmann, W., 22, 286, 296
- Holiness, divine, 7, 62 ff.; in O.T., 63 ff.; modern denials of, 75 ff.; need of recognition of, 88-9; sin in light of, 7, 8, 62, 68-70, 72 ff., 91 ff., 144
- Hume, David, 2, 33, 47, 87
- Huxley, T., 9, 99, 200; on materialism, 77; on evolution, 136, 150, 154, 175, 290; on Darwinism, 171; on sin and punishment, 227, 270; his pessimism, 288; on immortality, 269, 307-9; 305
- Immortality, modern denials of, 43, 52, 85, 306-7; difficulty for evolution, 190, 307; Scriptural view of, 191 ff., 307; grounds for belief in, 281-2, 307 ff.; in Christianity, 310
- James, W., on freedom, 54; on immortality, 306
- Jesus, moral ideal of, 16 ff., 36-7; idea of the good, 111-14, 144; teaching on sin of, 6, 112-13, 235, 249, 262; denials of perfection of, 25, 238, 294 ff.; critical view of, 293; place in Christianity, 284 ff., 292 ff.; supernatural attributes of, 292 ff.; atoning work of, 296 ff.; resurrection, 303
- Kant, 2, 31, 43, 46, 82; on kingdom of God, 93; on the good will, 111; on radical evil, 105 ff., 118, 226, 237, 241-2; on universality of sin, 121, 237; on guilt and punishment, 251, 264, 268
- Kingdom of God, 95, 181, 296, 311, 318
- Lang, A., 46, 72
- Laws of nature, 274 ff.
- Lodge, Sir Oliver, 12, 99, 225, 307
- Lotze, 31, 93
- Luthardt, C. E., 76
- Lyell, Sir Chas., 172, 177, 179
- Macdonald, Geo., 267, 317
- McTaggart, J. M. Ellis, on Theism, 41, 78, 86 ff.; on immortality, 43, 50; on

- moral ideal, 44 ff., 49, 90; on determinism, 55-6, 86; on Hegel, 58, 79-80, 99, 118-19
- Man**, moral nature of, 31 ff.; a compound being, 190 ff.; primitive condition of, 138 ff.; 147, 182, 184, 230; antiquity of, 22, 183 ff.; in evolutionary theory, 22, 129, 138, 143, 163, 183 ff.; sinfulness of, 105 ff., 115, 145 ff., 163; death abnormal to, 191 ff., 304
- Martensen**, Bp., 20, 44, 66, 67, 68, 116-18, 316
- Materialism**, 40, 76; Huxley on, 77
- Mediation**, in Christianity, 283 ff.; objections to, 286 ff.
- Mill**, J. S., 33; on nature, 2, 19; on morality, 47; on God, 88 ff.; 103; on immortality, 308-9
- Moberly**, R. C., on punishment, 264 ff., 269
- Morality**, Christ's influence on, 16-18; implications of, 30 ff., 52; schools of, 31, 258; relation to religion, 32, 43 ff., 68 ff.,
- Moral law**, 7; sin as transgression of, 29 ff.; implications of, 30 ff.; spirituality of, 35 ff.; modern treatment of, 37 ff., 76 ff.; ground of in God, 30, 32 ff., 43 ff., 65 ff., 253 ff.; moral codes, 45; in conscience, 258 ff.
- Mozley**, J. B., on sinful dispositions, 239 ff., 242, 246, 249
- Müller**, J., 107-8, 123, 242
- Neo-Hegelianism**, 40 ff., 80 ff.; on sin, 83
- Nietzsche**, F., 23, 38, 42, 49, 59 ff.
- Nordau**, Max, 120, 126-9, 227
- Oehler**, G. F., 66-7
- Original Sin**, heredity and, 213, 218; in theology, 224 ff.; denials of, 225 ff.; Kant on, 105 ff., 118, 226 ff., *see* Kant; reality of, 233, ff.; in evolutionary theory, 248 ff.
- Otto**, R., on evolution, 5, 132, 136, 149, 160, 168, 173, 174, 179
- Paul**, St., on sin, 29, 35-6, 46, 83, 94, 101, 108, 138, 143, 236-7, 241, 249, 288; on judgment on sin, 234, 263, 266 ff., 277-8, 299, 310; on resurrection, 191, 305; on redemption, 284-5, 303, 304-5, 313; on restitution, 315, 318
- Pearson**, K., 42-3, 55, 59
- Pessimism**, 85, 103 ff., 120, 226
- Pringle-Pattison**, A. Seth, 78-9, 105

- Punishment, of sin, its ground in ill-desert, 257 ff., 263; not primarily disciplinary, 264 ff.; certainty of, 268 ff.; in Christianity, 271 ff.; forms of, 272 ff.
- Racial responsibility, 218, 243 ff., 246, 278 ff.
- Rashdall, H., 33, 40
- Retribution, its reality, 264 ff.; its ground, 267; universal conviction of, 268 ff. *See* Punishment
- Rig-Veda, idea of sin in, 74
- Ritschl, A., 31, 92, 93, 106, 110, 115-16, 241, 243, 247, 259, 266, 278
- Romanes, G. G., 129, 151, 208, 211
- Rothe, R., 101
- Sabatier, A., 55, 169
- Schelling, 104, 109
- Schleiermacher, on sin, 79, 115; on restoration, 315
- Schopenhauer, on conscience, 38; pessimism of, 104
- Second Probation, 316-17
- Selby, T. G., 267, 270, 277, 317
- Sin, mystery of, 1 ff., 313; connection with physical evil, 3, 4, 312; real nature of, 1, 29 ff., 97 ff., 107 ff., 163 ff.; modern attitude to, 8 ff., 28 ff.; implications of moral law, 29 ff.; of divine holiness, 62 ff.; philosophical theories of, 22, 41 ff., 76 ff., 80 ff.; principle of, 97 ff., 115 ff., 125 ff., 250; forms of, 120 ff.; evolutionary theories of, 129 ff., 137 ff., 163 ff.; heredity and, 196 ff.; original sin, 244 ff.; universality of, 1, 233, 237 ff.; guilt of, 139, 252 ff.; divine judgment on, 64, 69, 71, 261 ff.; 266, 271 ff.; punishment of, 263 ff., 266 ff., 281 ff., 283, 314 ff.; death and, 189 ff., 277 ff.; grace and, 121-2, 282, 283 ff.; eternal issues of, 282-3, 310, 314 ff.
- Smith, W. R., 63, 65
- Spencer, H., Agnosticism of, 40; optimism of, 288 ff.; on determinism, 55, 77, 98, 253; on ethics, 58; on evolution, 159; on heredity, 202-3, 206
- Spinoza, 55, 78, 79, 85
- Stade, B., 64, 70
- Stout, G. F., on freedom, 36-7
- Strauss, D., 19
- Taylor, A. E., 40; on the "Overman," 42; on the ego, 50 ff.; on moral conceptions, 49 ff., 58-9; on freedom, 56-7
- Tennant, F. R., 140, 213-14, 225
- Tertullian, 72

- Theism, modern denials of, 39 ff., 84 ff. ; and evolution, 130, 136 ff., 168 ff.
- Theodicy, 2, 28, 306 ff. ; in Christianity, 306, 310-11 ; incompleteness of, 28, 311 ff.
- Thomson, J. A., 132-4, 137, 148, 150, 154 ff., 160 ff., 168, 170, 172, 207, 181, 185, 188, 198 ff.
- Universalism, 315
- Wallace, A. R., 177
- Weismann, A., on evolution, 136 ff., 148, 150 ff., 152, 154 ff., 156 ; on death, 193 ff. ; on heredity, 198, 230, 245 ; on acquired characters, 207 ff.
- White, Ed., his theory, 316
- Zola, E., 120-1, 227, 270
- Zoroastrianism, 5, 103

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