ARTICLE III.

# SOCIAL OR INDIVIDUAL REGENERATION?

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RECENTLY Bernard Shaw declared: "Christ is a failure, and God has been kicked out of the back-window in our modern age." This blasphemous utterance was designed to startle the audience, and perhaps did not fail of its effect. However, in recent ministerial conferences, it has become quite plain that the prevailing sentiment among the younger ministers tends to consider the ministry exclusively as a call to social service. We need to-day a social gospel. The ministry of the 'Word' must be supplanted by a ministry to human needs and life. Whatever Christianity may have done in the past, it surely is not available for the needs of our present social conditions. Theology now must yield to sociology, even in parish and pulpit. Social democracy, Christian socialism, if you will, is the workingman's religion, and rapidly coming to be recognized as the only kind of religion worth having. It 'does' things, it struggles for the right of one's fellow-men. It, indeed, beholds a brother when naked and hungry, to clothe and feed him. The 'social gospel' of to-day enlarges its scope into all the activities of life. The Y. M. C. A.'s, the social settlements, clubs, and philanthropic endeavors of all sorts figure as prominently as the church, and maintain the standing of the church. Preaching and teaching of Christian truth is futile under the adverse conditions of congested centers; nay, the proclamation of the old gospel is out of place in the hard, sordid struggles of 'life as it is.' Chris-

tianity does not save under such conditions; and so the modern minister has come to see that he must strike at those 'conditions.' Improve conditions if you wish to improve society, for improved conditions will produce better men. The pet word of evolutionary teachings, 'environment,' has become the basis of the new philosophy, which is to displace—

> "The old American Idee
> To make a man a man, and let him be."

It matters little that evolutionary philosophers subsequently affirmed that 'environment' should not be employed as a leading factor in the much-vaunted modern *Weltanschauung*. The movement which social reformers built on it is beyond their control. The declaration of the bankruptcy of Christianity, whether in the blasphemy of Bernard Shaw and his socialist *confrères*, or in the more sinister facts of a socialized gospel, as many modern pastors seem to understand their calling, leaves us to work upon society through social endeavors. Thus, instead of christianizing society with the gospel of Christ, Christianity is to be socialized, — secularized, if you will. External efforts in the betterment of social conditions constitute the social gospel for to-day. That 'environment' supplies really only the *means* for individual and social development, as the individual avails himself of the materials which the social *milieu* offers, or indeed fails to do so, does not occur to the modern dogmatist. For these socialized modernists the environment, the conditions, are basal facts: they hold the key to all improvement and are the leverage for economic and moral progress. Moral progress, in fact, is only a finer form of economic progress. In stating the situation thus plainly we may facilitate the discussion of the principles underlying the spiritual interpretation of life, which raises the soul-

concern as all-important, and the view which sees behind the individual the conditions, the environment, the social matrix, from which the individual emerges, with all his merits or demerits.

It is quite natural that the socialists, in their struggle for improved social conditions, should carry to its extreme the emphasis upon conditions as primary in life; but it is less reasonable to see ministers of the gospel espouse this doctrine, and give their pulpits up to labor questions and social problems as such. Many of the younger clergymen, schooled in seminaries that were socialized in proportion as their detheologizing had set in, have, open-eyed, accepted socialism as the modern gospel. Others harbor the hopeless illusion that Christianity and socialism should go together, deceiving themselves with the superficial explanation that Christianity should manifest itself in social activities of good-will, and socialism should endeavor to establish civic righteousness in a Christian spirit. What, then, is there incompatible between the two standpoints? why can one not be a 'Christian socialist'? Simply, because the Christian believes, on the high authority of his Master, that "man shall not live by bread alone." The socialist, however, fights only for bread and butter, for better economic conditions. It is difficult to see why or how such a fight for bread and butter can properly be called Christian. On the contrary, so far forth as adhesion is given to the thoroughly materialistic doctrine of socialism, which diverts all interests from the individual soul, on which Christianity centers primarily its attention, precisely so much is thereby detracted from Christianity.

The message and function of the church is a spiritual one. Sin, the fundamental problem of all ages, is to be overcome by the gracious indwelling of Christ in the hearts of regen-

erate humanity. Christianity aims at better men, socialism at better conditions. They are, therefore, diametrically opposed to each other, both in motive and in spirit. It should not be necessary; but in order to avoid misinterpretation, it may be observed here, that Christianity is of course never unmindful of conditions, but believes that they are created and controlled by man, and that they, as representing human achievement, may be the means of success in human progress. Similarly, socialism is not indifferent to man, but believes that, as he is the creature of circumstances and controlled by his conditions, he will improve as external circumstances improve. The criterion with the Christian is within man; for the socialist, the standard and source of human civilization is without. Now, to proclaim man the product and mere reflection of his social surroundings is to insult the moral sense of even the most depraved. The bold assumption which reduces human civilization to an epi-phenomenon of the natural, makes the 'social milieu' not only formative elements in, but productive of character, and dispenses by so doing with all morality and progress. There can be no struggle for the right when man is borne along on the tide as he happened to arrive upon the shores of time, fatally bound to the condition and the hour. And as to progress, it is hard to conceive of any, thus shut up in the mechanical circle of conditions without motive or standard.

It is time to raise an emphatic protest against socialism, which is death to the individual, conscience, and all progress. Indeed, instead of seeing conditions *behind* the individual, we see the individual placed *in the midst* of conditions. We see the individual struggle with these conditions, modify them, and replace them by others. We often see favorable conditions used for hurt, and bad conditions for good. Is there not

a saying: "Give man a paradise, and he will turn it into a desert, while he will strive to convert the desert into a garden"? Oscar Wilde voices in "De Profundis" the sad experience that, in common with many of his age, he had used the good things of life for his own harm, whilst he won good from the hard experiences of his life. In fact, it is a patent absurdity to maintain that a man's character is made or unmade mechanically by good or bad 'conditions.' Can the most favorable circumstances ever guarantee a man's best development? Do bad conditions hopelessly doom to the production of bad characters? They may give color and form to the development, but never determine mechanically a man's moral flavor.

Man does not merely passively react upon these original, all-important conditions of society; he is responsible for them, he made them, he can change them. He is not the slave of them, and — be they good or bad — himself being the main factor, he appropriates or rejects of their material according to his nature. Selective thinking and the increasing emphasis on the volitional part of man's nature is meaningless jargon, if the socialist's contention be true. But a good man does face bad conditions to grapple with them, often rising superior to them, while a bad man in good external conditions works the quicker his own undoing. It is then, *in* man, not without, that his essential destiny is wrought out, and by himself, not by 'conditions.'

So far from 'conditions' constructing human civilization, projecting it as it were into the individuals, Professor Perry says well: "The external environment of life is in some respects favorable, in other respects unfavorable. Now, strangely enough, it is the unfavorable rather than the favorable aspect of the environment that conduces to progress. Progress, or

even the least good, would, of course, be impossible, unless the mechanical environment was morally plastic. The fact that nature submits to the organization which we call life is a fundamental and constant condition of all civilization. But there is nothing in the mere compliance of nature to press life forward. It is the menace of nature which stimulates progress. It is because nature always remains a source of difficulty and danger that life is provoked to renew the war and achieve a more thorough conquest. Nature will not permit life to keep what it has unless it gains more." [1]

How true this remark is, becomes evident as soon as we analyze these finalities of socialistic theories, the conditions, the system. Good or bad, are they not all man-made? Is not every "milieu" charged with human effort, and subject to human influence? Could man then be so hopelessly subject to the work of his own efforts, good or bad?

Yet, in what fatalistic strain writes the *Boston American* of August 3, 1911, in an editorial on the appointment of four judges! "The four judges whom the Governor has appointed are four good men to-day. What they will be to-morrow, no man knows. They go into a different environment and will lead a different kind of business life. What effect these changes will have upon them only time can tell. Ratigan, Keating, and Dubuque are men of character and ability and good lawyers. Walter Perley Hall has been tried satisfactorily in public office."

It is, of course, conceivable that single individuals may fail in surroundings capable of subduing them. Virtue is not always triumphant in this sublunary sphere. But to treat moral integrity as is done here, is certainly to despair of all goodness, also of that of 'environment.' For soon these same

[1] The Moral Economy, p. 130.

men will either call upon virtuous men to bring about or to maintain civic righteousness, after having declared virtue fictitious. And thus it is that socialism confronts us with the amazingly stultifying fact to make its appeal in behalf of the individual whom it ignores, and to fight for civic righteousness, the existence of which it denies and freely disregards. While making its plea for human love the socialist fans class-hatred. He denounces greed, and contends for material gain as the only value of life.

Surely, with the French essayist Montaigne, we realize that "everyone must have 'an inner touchstone' [*un patron au dedans*] by which to judge his actions." Man is a responsible being, and at least the law will hold him accountable. The ethical life assures us that conscience is a mighty fact, not to be discarded by theories. God left his witness in the human heart. None can disobey His mandate with impunity. Each individual faces the issues of life singly and incurs personal responsibility. If life is our own in the last instance, we cannot live it by proxy, cannot resolve it into a mere component part of social life, cannot make it the outcome of 'conditions.' The pinch of individuality is with us, and with the "I" goes a conscience which is more than a social verdict. It is something which concerns me directly, to which I must make a personal response, and thus incur responsibility.

Maurice in his "Lectures on Casuistry" calls attention to the fact that, in behalf of ethical and religious improvement, appeals are made to public opinion to enforce the claims of the individual conscience on the one hand, and on the other to the individual conscience to bear up public opinion; showing thus that the point of leverage is with the individual, embodied in social ethics. All endeavors to make conscience a resulting inner response to external environment, whether in

social interpretation, or legal explanation, or evolutionary analysis, fail to account for its authoritative, apodictive commands. Conscience neither seeks its authority from the things of the world, nor endeavors to justify its laws by them. For one surely does not reason one's self into an obligation which requires sacrifice even unto death. To be sure, the actual ethical responses are considered primarily, or at least mainly, emotional; but this does not account for the strong sentiment of the objectiveness of obligation, and sanction of duty and ought. But more than this, the social self is always transcended by the ideal self.

As Professor Baldwin remarks: "The social influence which determines the development of conscience almost entirely in its earlier stages is itself transcended, in the rational or self-conscious organization of the moral life; so that the conscience becomes not merely a social self, but an ideal self."

Thus Professor Ormond observes in "Foundations of Knowledge": "We are obliged to trace the primary root of the sense of kind to the self in some primary, individual nature, that in becoming internally conscious becomes also the 'fontal type' of all ends which it seeks objectively." "The reaction of the subject-consciousness is a reaction as a whole, and self-apprehension will be a function of this mode of reaction. If we are sure of our self-activity, we have that assurance because we grasp it in an act of immediate intuition. It cannot be disputed, then, that we know the fact of our self-activity. . . . If in the reactive consciousness, self-activity, and not simply activity that has no label, is revealed, then it is clear that we have a qualification of the content as a whole which renders it not merely a 'that,' but a 'what.' The fact that the activity is taking the form of a self shows that it is not formless, but defining itself as a whole."

Similarly, Fouillée remarks in his "Psychologie des peuples européens": "M. Guyau and M. Tarde have strongly insisted that we are under the dominion of continual suggestion, coming from the environment in which we live. . . . We disagree with those who reduce the whole of sociology to a study of these forms, and we believe that the study of its psychological foundation is essential to sociology."

This fact is also clearly brought out in an able essay, in the *American Journal of Sociology*, by Dr. Philip Fogel, who insisted, against Professor Giddings's denial of the same, that there is plainly a metaphysical element involved in sociological studies. The worth of and the authority for the individual agent is assumed to be derived from and sustained by the community in the evolutionary theories, though it is admitted that "natural selection" has been overemphasized in its dual operation with "the struggle for existence" or "adaptation to environment" to bring about "the survival of the fittest."

How are these functions related? How does the struggling individual find his place in this unfinished world, according to the plan of the whole which it is to body forth? Is it to be computed, or is the world's explanation to be apprehended only by faith? Spencer's evolutionary definition of conscience as being "the control of the less evolved feelings by the more evolved ones" projects from without those principles that we must find within. Moreover, the decision as to which is the more evolved feeling is to be made by this individual, who is left reacting rather than acting. We have on all sides primarily the subjective reference, for the moral and religious life announces itself as a private and individual experience. It is plain, then, that in philosophical, ethical, and religious questions, we are thrown back on the individual, as our starting-point. And the main objection against sociological the-

ories such as imitation, consciousness of kind, social forms as suggestion, and different evolutionary theories, is that the initiative and interpretation is always without. Conscience, as the basis of moral and religious life, may be ruled by law, but is not produced by it. A law-abiding citizen may be of flavorless morality. This appeal to the personal consciousness is always assumed in the practice of life.

The late Governor Hughes of New York put this impressively when he said: "I do not sympathize very much with schemes of moral regeneration through legislation. We can accomplish a great deal by wise laws, but the impetus of moral movements must as a rule be given by the voluntary work of citizens who, with the force of conviction, press their views upon the people and secure that public sentiment according to which alone any true moral reform can be accomplished. I also have very little sympathy for an ambitious scheme for doing away with all evil in the community at once."

This additional remark of Hughes is so significant in its practical bearings that we make an observation regarding it with reference to American conditions. The actual morality of a community, affected in its usual way by influences within its social life and from without, does not materially change from day to day. Moral progress being as slow as it is desirable, within a given time the morality of a society and its citizens remains practically the same, and with this more or less constant quantity of moral flavor its corresponding conditions are maintained. This fact is sadly overlooked by that zeal without knowledge which often starts crusades, campaigns, and agitations calling upon the devices of law to do away with the evils of society which offend the moral sense. These impatient and cheap emotional reformers have often

forced laws upon communities with the plain result that they were broken and evaded; or, if successfully maintained, they drove the evils into other channels, or spread them so as to escape observation. The real reformer reforms within. Christ thus remakes a sin-stricken race. Moral education is harder than external moral discipline, but it touches the mainspring of human progress, and therefore deserves the enthusiasm of these reformers rather than the restraining agency of the law.

Water does not rise higher than its own level. This impulsive legalism is therefore not only wrong on the strength that the evils of a given society cannot be mechanically removed by enforcing strict laws which would rule them out, but especially since no society furnishes material to apply rigorously those laws which are for its average member too high to attain unto. Thus the law itself becomes a farce, because it has to fall back upon personal application for efficiency. This is even more true in regard to the more serious ailment of society, prevailing greed and dishonesty, than it is concerning the much-talked-about forms of vice.

All schemes of reform are necessarily wrecked upon mercenary officials. And these presuppose of course a prevailing practice of dishonesty, since an honest community as necessarily disposes of a mercenary official, as a dishonest community corrupts or displaces the honest one. What, then, avail laws for safety, purity of food, hygiene, education, etc., if inspectors and supervisors are being bought! It requires the force of moral fiber in the community to enforce moral laws, not the temporary excitement of good-will from otherwise inadequate human nature. Immoral elements can no more stand guard over moral laws than that moral individuals should be called upon to enforce immoral laws or practices.

Of course, in the advocacy of the restraint by law, may be claimed its salutary, educating influence; but this argument, to be valid, presupposes precisely that the law be not too far in advance of the average morality of the community. The common and main assumption, however, in the clamor for laws as cure for social and individual evils, is to treat the positive moral elements of the community as too weak to withstand, to regulate, nay ideally to overcome, the evil in its midst. Thus the positive, regenerating *cure* is abandoned, and resort is taken to restraint, which may beat back evil, but never overcome it. Yet, this negative, outward restraint relies for its efficiency upon a sufficient amount of moral health in the community, which the argument starts out to ignore. In fine, a community whose moral health cannot primarily in some positive way deal with its evils, instead of leaning exclusively on the restraint of law, is doomed, as also this last resort of law-reform is morally bankrupt. It is Voltaire and Frederick the Great again at Sans Souci, strangers to the cause of Christendom, and disbelieving its redeeming power, yet appalled by vice and wickedness whose powers they overrated with the exclamation, "Ecrasez l'infâme!" It is the word of the Frenchman in the grip of sensuality: "Où est la femme? Tuez-la." ('Where is the woman! kill her.') It is the impatient, faithless temper of hysteric revolt against threatening evils whose encroaching powers seem to loom larger than Christ's assuring words teach us: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

This unbelief regarding the influences for good is evident in the argument for a bridled press by Sayons in "Le XVIII siècle a l'étranger": "Que l'erreur ne fait de mal qu'a celui qui écrit et que la vérité n'a jamais besoin d'être vengée que par elle même, cela est de vérité rigoureuse dans le royaume

abstrait de la raison pure. La question, après tout, est de savoir si les esprits capables d'être subjugués par l'erreur peuvent être ramenés par la vérité qu'ils ne voient point. Or, quand l'erreur est incompatible avec l'existence de la société civile, la société civile fait peut-être bien de ne pas compter sur les rayons de la vérité pour éclairer des aveugles." ('That error does no harm except to him who writes, and that truth needs no defense but that by itself, is strictly true in the abstract realm of pure reason. The question after all is to know whether minds capable of being influenced by error can be brought back by the truth they do not perceive. Now, when error is incompatible with the existence of civil society, civil society perhaps does well not to count on the rays of light from the truth to enlighten the blind.') In thus placing emphasis upon the positive element as the real principle in progressive moral development, we but repeat the view which held of Mosaic legislation that "the Law must be realized in an inner harmony between the heart of the worshipper and Jehovah; it must be accepted, not as a curb or rein, but as the rule of the inner life. Only thus can the heart and the life correspond, and the outward observance be the true index of the inward moral reality. The Law graven on tables of stone is to be written by the spirit on the fleshly tables of the heart."

The scholarly and able New Jersey governor, Woodrow Wilson, in a recent address also emphatically declared that the people ought to be cured of the appetite for laws as the remedy for all ills. Before the American Bar Association at Chattanooga, Tennessee, he said: "The major premise of all Law is moral responsibility, the moral responsibility of individuals for their acts, and no other foundation can any man lay on which a stable fabric of equitable justice may be reared."

The attempts at social betterment address themselves to the individuals as private persons. Those who seek the betterment of society in education, and in improved conditions, tacitly assume that the individual will be first to respond to the aim of ethical and religious effort. On this score, the principle of social settlement is radically false, though it may work some good through inconsistency. One cannot apply to the slum population a law of life taken from artificially transplanted characters who remain as moral leaders still dependent for success on the disposition of those whom they try to improve. The effort to make the display of moral excellence an inducement to improvement on the part of the socially unfortunate is based upon faulty psychological principles. The initiative in moral and religious life must spring from within; in the response of the will we find our obligated responsibility. Both the tempting and the being tempted are factors to be dealt with. But no temptation obtains where individual inclination does not respond to evil surroundings, nor is there aspiration after virtue if the good is not perceived as such.

Thus Mill's argument that it is never a duty to force civilization upon another nation, not willing to receive it, is rendered superfluous. From the nature of the case, this is an impossibility with individuals and nations alike.

This aspect of appropriating the good through our inner desires makes plain that those are most Christ-like characters who like Christ most. "This aspect of Christianity may properly be elevated into a larger significance. We may view Christianity from its inward, positive, dynamic side; Christ at work on the hearts of the believers, as contrasted with its formal, external, its social and historic course. The issue of an inward religion is the burden of the prophets, and always

centers on the personal accountability to a personal God. Every inward revelation bears the stamp of an authority over the world which it entreats to gracious submission to the Creator's will. In the conflict of moral struggles it asserts: 'Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord' (Jer. i. 8). 'We must obey God rather than men' (Acts v. 20). The distinguishing characteristic of Christianity is that preceptive, legal, restraining codes are turned into dynamic, positive life-principles. Christ buttresses Christianity. As Paul reiterates with persuasive testimony; Christ lives *in* the Christian and thus makes the church 'a collective Christ.'"[1]

It has always been indeed the Christian principle and effort to regenerate and improve society through the individual. Thus the leverage of, the principle for, and the approach to moral improvement is within. The spiritual eye of faith discloses the treasure and importance of the individual soul, that it would not profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul. One may gage the spiritual tenor of Christian churches and views largely by their realization of this fact. The more environment, external circumstances, social conditions, engross the attention, the less real Christian nurture of the soul, the formation of character after, yea, in, Christ is lost sight of. The popular verdict that an estrangement of the church's true function to preach the gospel and minister to Christian nurture leads to socialism is only too true. Utilitarian efforts always affect preferably the material surroundings, where effects show more readily than in the spiritual realm. Its mechanical notions find encouragement in the world of visible things in tangible results, while patient devotion to spiritual interests often severely strains the faith

[1] The author's Belief in a Personal God.

of the average believer. This attitude of mind is fostered by an unprecedented industrial development and material prosperity in recent years.

But in 1829 Rev. Edward Irving writes: "Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavor, and in natural force, of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combinations and arrangements, for institutions, constitutions — for Mechanism of one sort or other, do they hope and struggle. Their whole efforts, attachments, opinions, turn on mechanism, and are of a mechanical character. This condition of the two great departments of knowledge; the outward, cultivated exclusively on mechanical principles — the inward finally abandoned, because, cultivated on such principles, it is found to yield no result — sufficiently indicates the intellectual bias of our time, its all-pervading disposition towards that line of enquiry. In fact, an inward persuasion has long been diffusing itself, and now and then even comes to utterance, that except the eternal, there are no true sciences; that to the inward world (if there be any) our only conceivable road is through the outward; that, in short, what cannot be investigated and understood mechanically, cannot be investigated and understood at all. [The Scotch divine anticipated here Dubois Reymond's watchword, "Was nicht mechanisch gefasst ist, ist nicht wissenschaftlich verstanden!"]

"Nowhere is the deep, almost exclusive faith, we have in mechanism, more visible than in the Politics of this time. Civil government does, by its nature, include much that is mechanical, and must be treated accordingly. We term it, indeed, in ordinary language, the Machine of Society, and talk of it as the grand working wheel from which all private machines must derive, or to which they must adapt, their move-

ments. Considered merely as a metaphor, all this is well enough; but here, as in so many other cases, the 'foam hardens itself into a shell,' and the shadow we have wantonly evoked stands terrible before us, and will not depart at our bidding. Government includes much also that is not mechanical, and cannot be treated mechanically; of which latter truth, as appears to us, the political speculations and exertions of our time are taking less and less cognizance. It is no longer the moral, religious, spiritual condition of the people that is our concern, but their physical, practical, economical condition, as regulated by public laws. Thus is the Body-politic more than ever worshipped and tended: but the Soul-politic less than ever. Were the laws, the government, in good order, all were well with us; the rest would care for itself. Dissentients from this opinion, expressed or implied, are now rarely to be met with; widely and angrily as men differ in its application, the principle is admitted by all. Contrive the fabric of law aright, and without farther effort on your part, that divine spirit of freedom which all hearts venerate and long for, will of herself come to inhabit it; and under her healing wings every noxious influence will wither, every good and salutary one more and more expand. The domain of Mechanism, meaning thereby political, ecclesiastical, or other outward establishments, — was once considered as embracing, and we are persuaded can at any time embrace, but a limited portion of man's interests, and by no means the highest portion."

"These dark features," he goes on to say, "we are aware, belong more or less to other ages, as well as to ours. This faith in Mechanism, in the all-importance of physical things, is in every age the common refuge of Weakness and blind Discontent. To reform a world, to reform a nation, no wise man will undertake; and all but foolish men know that the

only solid, though a far slower reformation, is what each begins and perfects on himself."

The liberals, who still recognize Christian tradition, begin to see the harmful influence of this 'reformation from without theory,' when their socialist *confrères* act upon it in consistent manner. Thus the *Congregationalist* remarks in regard to socialist propaganda among the immigrant: "His conscience might in many exigencies take the place of his religious beliefs, but the socialist agitator relieves the individual of all responsibility for wrong-doing, laying the blame on society. The thief, the swindler, the counterfeiter, the 'cadet,' the prostitute, are all victims of the 'corrupt system.'"

Professor Wenley, in the *Educational Review* for October. 1907, in an article "Can we stem the Tide?" remarks: "Careful, and even thoughtful, about processes, the democracy omits to understand that the thing to be gained by the process constitutes the essence of the affair. So it stresses every conceivable aid to life, and lets life itself slip. In the effort to govern everything else, the modern man has failed to provide arrangements whereby he may govern himself. If one thing be plainer than another about our trumpeted 'recent' achievements, it is this — they verge on the hopeless bankruptcy in wellnigh everything relating to the elevation of the human spirit."

Professor Munsterberg observes on page 21 of "American Problems": "The whole radicalism of the prohibition movement would not be necessary if there were more training for self-control. To prohibit always means only the removal of the temptation, but what is evidently more important is to remain temperate in the midst of a world of temptation. The rapid growth of divorce, the silly chase for luxury, the rivalry in ostentation and in the gratification of personal desires in a

hundred forms cannot be cured if only one or another temptation is taken out of sight. The improvement must come from within. The fault is in ourselves, in our prejudices, in our training, in our habits, in our fanciful fear of nervousness."

"Better methods," says Professor Peabody, "may simplify the social question, it can be solved by nothing less than better men." Similarly, we may add, upon the stage there is instilled in the minds of thousands, by cheap melodramas, the unnerving conviction that man is merely, and nothing but, the creature of circumstances. With the exception of the customary villain, who is an impersonation of evil, the characters of the modern plays are inevitably urged on to fall, though sometimes with the display of a half-hearted battle against their evil stars. Could not this very seamy side of life, with its baseness, its vice, misfortune, abandonment, and misery, be illumined as the scene where determination for the right resists the onslaught of evil in the struggles of life? Is it not as human to battle for the right as to drift along with the evil currents! Must man's belief in himself be undermined by those who have most trumpeted his greatness?

Dr. Siegmar Schultze, in his dark picture of modern literature, in "Der Zeitgeist der modernen Litteratur Europas," makes the significant remark: "In der Philosophie, in der Weltweisheit der Hoch-gebildeten ist freilich der trübe Materialismus im Erlöschen, statt dessen lodert er immer wilder im Reiche der Halbgebildeten und des Volkes. Unsere Zeit sieht die Wahrheit nur in der Wirklichkeit, und so heftet sie den Blick an die Erde. Ihr blödes Auge sieht den Sieg des guten Princips nur im aüserlichen Erfolg, nicht in den innern Gütern, die jener Kampf dem echten Menschen erringen muss." ('In philosophy, as in the worldly wisdom of the educated, the

sad materialism to be sure is diminishing, but it is increasing instead with the half-educated and the people. Our contemporaries see truth only in reality, and thus are earthly-minded. They see the victory of the principle of goodness only in external results, not in the inner good which comes to the real man in the struggle of life.')

Thus, as we inquire into the moral progress of man or of society, we are inevitably led to the individual as a starting-point. And there, in the heart of man, we cannot fail to recognize as its goal the source of all moral goodness and truth. To recognize God in Christ in all things about us, especially in our fellow-creatures, and to live, so to speak, Christ into this world of institutions and men, linking it from the past to a better future, is a Christian's faith. He proclaims this recognition of God's authority over himself and the world an individual act, but knows that, as a man responds to his choices, so is he responsible; and refusal of God's claims spells ruin to individual and society alike. As Professor Bowen declares in his "Lowell Lectures on Metaphysics and Ethical Science": "The civilization which is not based upon Christianity is big with the elements of its own destruction." The gospel, therefore, ever urges, in loving appeal upon man, his soul-concern as his sole concern.

> "Know'st thou *Yesterday*, its aim and reason?
> Work'st thou well *To-day*, for worthy things?
> Then calmly wait the *Morrow's* hidden season,
> And fear not thou, what hap' so e'er it brings!"