

No ripple is heard of the wave of the assault of the higher criticism on the Scriptures; no allusion made to the spectre of downgradeism, atheism, agnosticism, and opposition to all religion, which alarm all thoughtful Christians. Those who led the Congress seem to have learnt nothing from history, and forgotten nothing of an evil past—they seem blind even just before dawn.

R. N. C.

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ART. II.—THE SERVANT OF CHRIST.

NO II.—SELF-RESPECT.

**A**MONGST those who do not sympathize with our Christian faith, or who are hostile to it, it is a favourite device to take some very imperfect type of a merely professing adherent, and airily to assume that his unsatisfactory qualities are the necessary and natural results of a genuine love of our Lord. This would not happen if Whately's Logic were more commonly studied; his brilliant exposition of Fallacies is an indispensable part of the equipment of a modern intellect. Education is hopelessly incomplete without such a mental discipline. Never was it easier to use this illogical method of attack than now: for the world and the Church are mixed up together so inextricably. Christians are so worldly, and worldly people are so outwardly Christian; such multitudes of men and women, who have none of the essential marks of the Kingdom of Christ upon them, would be angry and mortified if they were not allowed to share in the advantages of being called by its honoured name, that it requires no great skill in controversy to take one of such persons and to hold him up as a model product of submission to the New Testament in its claim to be the revealed will of God.

It is said, for instance, in an easy, careless, indiscriminating kind of way, that the religion by which the servant of Christ humbly, and very imperfectly, tries to live, is a grovelling superstition, that it consists largely in prostrating himself abjectly and hypocritically before a wrathful deity; that he, and such as he, are, for the most part, content with the intellectual acquiescence in abstract truth without materially altering their conduct; that they are worldly and mean, selfish and grasping, that they do not care for strictness in truth and honour, that they are influenced chiefly by the idea of gaining, at the lowest price, their reward in the joys of paradise, and that they are altogether deficient in the truly noble quality of Self-respect. In other words: Christians, as a class, are said

to be satisfied with bare, mental agreement in a creed, and, as long as they pay a formal attendance at the common worship, to allow themselves to be as unsympathetic, as hard-hearted, as sordid, as ambitious, as dishonourable, as tricky, as base, as ready to grasp every possible advantage to themselves, as the ordinary, unpretending citizen of Vanity Fair.

Now, in examining this accusation, we must put aside altogether those merely nominal Christians with whose unscrupulous indifference and disloyalty it would be plainly absurd, after the smallest reflection and inquiry, except for the purposes of polemical dishonesty, even for the most indiscriminating adversary to charge our faith. For, whatever religion there might be to which large bodies of men should belong, there would always be those who would be attached to it merely from custom, convention, association or convenience, without catching anything of its real intention and spirit. We must rather inquire whether there is anything in the spiritual relation of man towards God and his fellows, as taught by our Lord and His Apostles, which, apart from the natural corrupt tendency of every man's heart (and that the very teaching itself was intended to correct, and, finally, to remove), would be likely either to destroy his Self-respect, or, at any rate, to fail in producing it in the development of his character. We not merely admit to the full that such a Self-respect as would make it repugnant to a man to do mean, base, and ungracious actions is an admirable quality, but we are at one with our critics in insisting that the production of such a disposition of mind must be a supreme object in a religion that is worth the name. It was the Christian philosopher, Francis Bacon, who said: "Self-respect is, next to religion, the chiefest bridle of all vices." It was the Christian astronomer, Herschell, who said: "Self-respect is the corner-stone of all virtues." It was a Christian theologian who wrote: "There is a moral pauperism in the man who is dependent on others for that support of moral life, Self-respect." We agree with our opponents most heartily in our value of this great criterion of morality. What we have to ask is, whether it is only the accidental defects of unworthy, inconsistent, and nominal Christians which the objection has noticed? or, if the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is not rather, beyond all known attempts at moral progress, the one motive power in the soul able, even in the most abject and degraded, to raise the truest, noblest, and most wholesome Self-respect?

Is, then, Self-respect more likely to be found in an unbeliever, or in a sincere Christian? What our experience teaches us, is that without a Divine sanction, and the revelation of the will of God, there can be no fixed moral standard.

That we have that revelation, we believe, for reasons which have compelled the ready and grateful homage of the wisest, best, and greatest of men. For us, the model of conduct is absolutely settled in the life and teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ. We may not be able to realize it wholly in our own practice, but that is to our own loss and through our own imperfection. Many have come very near it, and they have been acknowledged, not only by Christians, but by all mankind to be the very lights of the world. Where such principles are not established, or are without the authority of the Almighty Ruler and Judge, there we see that each man must be judge for himself, and can adopt his principles to the occasion without restraint or scruple. It is just there that looseness of honour, and temporary dethronement of ideal for the sake of convenience, are most probable. However lofty a man's moral notions may be, we believe, from our common experience and observation, that in no circumstances whatsoever is he strong enough to stand alone without the grace of God. It is not amongst those who are not Christians, but amongst the best Christians themselves, those who are most like their Divine Lord, that we find the truest nobility, the nicest honour, the most absolute self-denial, the most admirable graciousness. Outside the confines of the acknowledged Kingdom of Christ there may be fine types of character: much might be gathered from Plutarch's Lives, from the Morals of Confucius, from the Dialogues of Plato, from the Ethics of Aristotle, from the Counsels of Buddha, from the Meditations of Cicero, from the writings of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Mahomet. These all, as far as they have any truth to tell, we believe to be gleams of the light of God which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. But what we say is, that, whatever a man's theory may be, unless he believes in a Judge of quick and dead, before whom he will have to answer for the things done in the body, and according to whose unerring decision his future existence will be determined; what he may gather from all these sages will affect his opinions rather than his practice. We do not know enough about the distant heroes of whom Plutarch wrote, or about Socrates, or about Aristotle, or Confucius, or Buddha, to be able to say how far they were able to live up to their ideals. But of Cicero, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Mahomet we know much, and, though we find many things in them to admire, we fail to discover any attractive or satisfactory model for our encouragement. Without the grace of God, in no man can the lost image of God be restored.

But more than that: one of the chief charges against us is in reality our greatest moral safeguard. It is held to be con-

trary to Self-respect to kneel down before the Almighty, and cry from the bottom of our hearts that we are miserable sinners. The truth is, that in the fallen and degraded state in which we see the world to be, without the sense of sin there can be neither perfect ideal nor genuine thirst for moral improvement. If a man merely holds that for the most part it is better and wiser to abstain from the sins of the flesh, but that there is no divine command against them, we may depend upon it that occasions will arise when passion will be so strong that the mere notion of what is better will not stand for an instant before its storm. If a man merely considers that it is, on the whole, wiser to speak the truth, but that no Divine message has ever declared that all liars shall have their portion in the banishment of the wicked from the presence of the Lord, we may depend upon it that occasions will come to him when concealment, evasion, and duplicity will be irresistibly attractive. Where is no belief in a Divine revelation, there can be no true sense of sin. It becomes a mere question of policy, prudence, and ideals chosen and adapted by the man himself. Declension from them can cause no permanent anxiety. Breaches of them will be of such slight consequence, that moral growth will be impossible. It is only when we can kneel before a Being who has revealed Himself as of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, yet who loves to pardon transgression and sin, and to heal the wounded conscience, and can say to Him with sincerity, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before Thee; I have rebelled against Thy will, revealed in every particular for my happiness; I can do no good thing without Thee; I am not worthy to be called Thy son"; only when the heart is wrung by sincere contrition, and by the dreary contrast between what it has made itself and what has been revealed to it as its example, that the conscience is sufficiently impressed, the motive for improvement sufficiently distinct, the encouragement and hope of restoration sufficiently powerful.

The fact is, that it is only those who have not studied the truths of the Kingdom of Christ who can pretend to be ignorant that the whole object of its foundation was none other than the restoration of the lost image of God in man. God is the essence of all perfection of every conceivable kind. There is no imaginable truth or beauty which the Word of God does not prepare us to attribute to His universal Being. To reproduce the spirit of this all-wise, all-perfect, all-glorious Mind in the wayward nature of men, that was the reason why the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. The message of Christ teaches that in all possible circumstances and rela-

tionships, external and internal, into which we can be brought, perfection is possible for us; and to seek for that perfection is our daily and hourly duty. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." What inducement to the very highest Self-respect could be greater than this? If we believe that we have an immortal future, and are destined hereafter to an eternal weight of glory, not of mere enjoyment—for that is a sheer libel—but of perfection and enlargement in all our noblest faculties; if we believe that even here we can become partakers of the Divine nature; if we believe that we have dwelling in us, by faith and communion with the Most High, the very Spirit of God Himself, weaning us from the world, setting our affections on things above, purifying our thoughts, putting into our minds good desires, and daily bringing the same to true effect, strengthening our resolves, subduing our passions, and making us fit for the companionship of all that is best and most esteemed in humanity in the pure and tranquil radiance of the regions of light, and of the Fellowship of God Himself, the Father and the Son; then we may well ask what moral scheme or persuasive ideal could be devised by the wit of man which would go anywhere near to produce in us such reason for the truest Self-respect, which is a humble and grateful union with God Himself?

It is by having ever in our hearts and minds, by God's grace, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, in life and teaching, in psalm and prophet, in gospel and epistle, in private reflection, in common worship, in Divine communion, that we can grow to this freedom from all that would make us ashamed, this control over self so greatly to be desired, this daily-increasing consciousness of the presence, and blessing, and favour, and smile of God. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory." If ever there was displayed on the page of history a character of consummate dignity, of absolute self-possession, of immeasurable nobility, of perfect refinement; of truth, honour, and beauty revealing themselves in the very smallest details of life; of utter majesty, both mental and moral; of a perfection from which everything short of it was so far removed that it could only be an object of pity and sympathy; if ever there was a type of fearless courage, of absolute candour, of sublime truthfulness, it was in the Person of Him who alone was able to say, "I and My Father are One."

We are not, in this respect, in a different position from St. Paul and the Apostles. Before us we have the same Divine mirror. With St. Paul it was a living Presence, combined with a living tradition. With us it is the same living

Presence, not only through the living tradition of the continuity of Christian thought and life, but through the living Word of God. For three centuries and a half it has been, thanks to His Divine favour, the peculiar honour of the Church of Christ in England to place in the hands of each of her sons, free and untrammelled, that written mirror of the glory of her Lord, that truest picture of an ideal of highest nobility and dignity for man. To one great English Churchman, more than to any other, we owe this immortal benefit of a free access to the secret of Self-respect. To Vilvoord, in the Spanish Netherlands, the place of the martyrdom of William Tyndale, every true Englishman must look with earnest and grateful homage. To his courage, to his loyalty, to his gracious and humble persistence, we owe the English version of the Word of God, which has, ever since his day, been the delight of our Church and the inspiration of our family life. Of all the succeeding versions his translation was the groundwork. It was his singular fortune that the hand of the same king, Henry VIII., who persuaded the Emperor Charles V. to imprison, strangle, and burn him, afterwards authorized the publication of that for which he was martyred; that the same Bishop of London, Tunstal, who had ordered the public destruction of his books, was in the end obliged to append his name to the title-page of the accepted edition.

“Strong in the Lord, and in His mighty power,  
Gird on the Spirit’s sword, the word of God.  
’Tis God’s own voice that bids : ‘None like to this,  
Of heavenly temper, and two-edged force.’

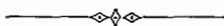
Deep in the sheath confined, as if the sun  
Were lost in midnight, still for ages lay  
That sword celestial, while in ancient tongues  
Blind superstition kept the Scriptures locked.

Tyndale! thy famous toil the scabbard stript :  
Forth flew the imprisoned word : the darkness past,  
Light shines on England : the shut Bible opes.  
Thy highest meed on earth Vilvoord bestows  
In rope and flame ; but Heaven the crown confers.”

In the face of the picture of the perfect dignity of our Lord thus constantly and habitually before us, it is greatly to our reproach that there should be any ground at all, not in our principles but in our practice, for the charge of the incompatibility of Christianity with Self-respect. In these days of inquiry, and the scrutiny of all things human and Divine within the limited ken of man, on the servant of Christ is laid a very serious burden. More than ever he is a city set on a hill, the light of the world, the salt of the earth. In the name of Christ and of His kingdom he is charged daily to look to this, that he is in some real sense being changed from

glory to glory. What was the glory of yesterday? What is the glory of to-day? What does he hope it will be of to-morrow? Does he, indeed, find his faults falling from him, his temptations abating, his graces and gifts unconsciously lighting up his home and the circle of his friends? These are the questions that must be asked by the servant of Christ when he compares his practice with his principles, and examines his conduct in the light of his ideal. Self-satisfied he will never be; but of this he will be growingly ambitious, that from his heart may ever be more thoroughly divested every failing and inconsistency, everything selfish, mean, base, dishonourable, discreditable, everything that could make him ashamed of himself; and that on him may fall the zealous earnest prayers of St. Paul himself, when in his eager self-devotion he longed that all the servants of Christ should be more and more conformed to His image. Then, indeed, he will have cause to respect God within him, the hope of glory.

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ART. III.—THE USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN  
THE NEW.

*(Concluded from page 199.)*

NOT more probable than the supposition that our Lord's reference to Scripture is to be interpreted as a usage merely conventional, is the supposition that we may regard His reference to it as the result of ignorance and His professed subjection to the requirements of prophecy as a case in which His knowledge as the Son of God was limited by His assumption of man's nature; but then in this case it becomes very difficult to draw the line between the instances in which we can rely upon His declarations, and those others which are open to the correction of our wider knowledge, our larger experience, the discoveries of criticism, and the like. Why are we to believe Him in His assertion about Himself—"Before Abraham was, I am" (John viii. 58, and the like)—and His professed revelations of the Kingdom of God, if we are to suppose that He did not know whether the stories of Noah, and Lot, and Abraham were or were not on a level with those of the "Arabian Nights"? Or, to put it otherwise, suppose that we have discovered that they are on a level with them, and are alike mythical; will it not follow as a matter of course that we shall think the less of His knowledge and judgment in other matters? Having found out that He knew less than we know in matters of this kind, can