

hood? Again, when Jesus says that no one knoweth the Son but the Father, does He deliberately exclude the Holy Ghost? Or finally, when St. Paul says (1 Cor. viii. 6), that 'to us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ,' does he not first of all under the name 'Father' include Jesus Christ as God, and then, as a second object of thought, mention Him as Incarnate and in a special sense our Lord?

If these things are so, Mr. Powell claims the liberty to take the expression 'the Father' here as denoting the Triune God, and we do not seem able to refuse it. So, then, our Lord is distinguishing Himself as Incarnate Son, as Man, from the Triune God, with whom as God He is one.

And the addition of the word 'only' in St. Matthew seems to emphasise the contrast. Therefore it was not as God, but as Man, that He was ignorant of the day and the hour. And, as we have seen already, it was as Man in respect of that great function of His Manhood, His mediatorial office. In short, the knowledge of the actual day and hour of the Final Judgment was not part of the *revelation* which, as the Son, He was commissioned to make; therefore the knowledge of this particular had not been communicated to His human mind. Humanly, He did not know it, though as one with the Father He knew it divinely and eternally, after that manner of knowing from which human knowing stands quite apart, the knowing which belongs to none but God.

## The Basis of Morals.

A COLLEGE ADDRESS.

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To search through all I felt or saw,  
The springs of life, the depths of awe,  
And reach the law within the law.

'THERE are two things,' says Immanuel Kant, 'that fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe the oftener and the more steadily they are contemplated—the *starry heavens above* and the *moral law within*. The former reflexion begins from the place I occupy in the external world of sense, and enlarges my connexion therein to a boundless extent with worlds upon worlds and systems upon systems, and carries me into the limitless times of their periodic motion. The second consideration has its starting-point in my invisible self, my personality, and exhibits me in a world of thought which is truly infinite, and with which I find myself to be in a universal and necessary connexion, no less than with those other visible worlds of space. The former view, of a countless multitude of worlds, annihilates my importance as an animal creature, which, after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again

give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits—that planet a mere speck in the universe. The second view, on the contrary, infinitely elevates my worth as an intelligence, since the moral law reveals in my personality a life transcending my animal nature and even the whole sensible world. For this inward law assigns to my existence a destination that is not restricted to the conditions and limits of the present life, but that reaches into the infinite.'

These lofty words of Kant indicate the greatness of the subject before us, and the point of view from which we approach it. It is a subject of vital and urgent interest. Never since the days of Socrates has ethical controversy been so radical; never have the assumptions upon which everyday morals rest been so daringly challenged as they are by our contemporaries. This restless and widespread criticism is due to the concurrent action of several causes. In part it is the effect of the vast progress of natural science in recent times—a progress too rapid for the general development of the human mind. We have not had time as yet to digest our splendid discoveries in the realm of

matter. Meanwhile we are bewildered by their novelty; and the minds of modern thinkers are dominated and saturated by materialistic ideas. It is no wonder if the leaders of this triumphant march imagined for a while that the universe of knowledge was at their feet, that the frontiers of physical science might be indefinitely extended, that like new Titans they would storm heaven itself and wrest its last secrets from the human spirit. Another cause of moral unsettlement is the rise of Socialism, undoubtedly the most pregnant fact of the half-century now closing. This democratic upheaval is the natural consequence of the development of Christian morals and the popularisation of the instruments of knowledge. The multitude has become enfranchised and audible. The loud, insistent cries of the disinherited awaken misgiving in their brethren, and excite a not unreasonable questioning of the basis of a system that appears to have worked out for many such ill results. A third cause of the disquiet we find in the decay of religion in Europe during the last two centuries—a decadence not prevalent in the British races, but lamentably so in the cultivated nations of France, Germany, and Italy, and due to conditions internal to the Church herself rather than, as many assume, to the advance of secular knowledge and political liberty. These and other conditions of our time are preparing a moral crisis in our Christian civilisation. They are giving birth to momentous conflicts, in which the young men now entering on the field of life will be called to take their part.

The question concerning the basis of morals may be put in two different ways—subjectively or objectively. We may ask, What is there in man that constitutes him moral? what do we mean by morality as an attribute of human nature? Or, on the other hand, What ground is there for morality in the nature of things, in the order and frame of the universe around and above us? The answer to the first question constitutes what is called *psychological ethics*; the second belongs to *metaphysical ethics*. The former method, that commonly pursued by British philosophers, addresses itself to our daily usage and self-acquaintance; the latter leads up to the first principles of knowledge, to those primary concepts and fundamental necessities of thought that lie behind our ordinary thinking and govern our mental operations unawares, and which form the subject-matter of the

highest and ultimate philosophy. We set out upon the former line of inquiry, asking ourselves what are the facts concerning our ethical constitution, and how are we to interpret them? what has our moral nature to say for itself? But we shall find that those facts point us beyond ourselves. The human conscience is not self-sufficient nor self-explaining. We cannot realise the scope of our own faculties without recognising the existence of a Supreme and Holy Being, in whom humanity has its root. For the microcosm is a mirror of the macrocosm. The psychological question pushed far enough in any direction passes, beyond arrest, into the metaphysical. We cannot stop at subjective phenomena and shut ourselves up within the world of self. When you find a reasoner repudiating metaphysics and pouring scorn upon it, his ridicule usually conceals some particularly bad and shallow piece of metaphysics of his own. We are metaphysicians whether we will or no. The soul cannot conceive of itself without some corresponding conception of the world and God.

But to begin with our moral powers as we exert them day by day. Take the words *good and bad, right and wrong, duty, conscience, the purpose of life*,—terms which cover generally the moral phenomena,—and ask yourself what you mean by those expressions? what is in your mind when you use them? You call A of your acquaintance a thoroughly 'good' man; B has done a 'worthy and good,' C a 'mean and evil,' deed; Jesus Christ said, 'None is good but one, that is God': what do these adjectives signify? Is it that the persons or actions referred to produce certain agreeable or disagreeable effects upon yourself or others? Or do you in so judging impute an intrinsic personal quality to them? The latter is certainly the case. There is no distinction clearer to our minds, none more frequently made or more indispensable in practice, than that which holds between *the pleasant, or agreeable, and the morally good*. They frequently coincide in the same person or act; and we may anticipate, as a matter of faith, that they will ultimately coincide to a perfect degree, that good people will be altogether pleasant, and right conduct full of ease and joyousness; but this is one of the things that we see not yet. The pleasurable and the good are as completely distinct as any ideas of the soul can be; and no sane mind confounds them in experience, any more than it confounds the ripeness of a fruit

with its sweetness, or the harmony of a musical note with the pleasure it conveys. We mean by the term 'good,' applied to a person, the excellence of the person himself as such, or the worthiness of his conduct as the conduct of a human person. While a good horse, good weather, a good ship, a good picture, is so called in virtue of its use or pleasingness, and in accordance with some standard outside the object, a *good man* is such in and by himself, and according to the make of his own being. Personal worth is, for us, the sovereign and standard worth. As Kant says, 'Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will.' Virtue and character, apart from all conditions of fortune and degrees of sensible happiness, are the objects to which we pay unbounded homage. These are the objects that, in our serious hours, we covet supremely for ourselves and for our fellows.

By what is *right* in action or disposition, or *righteous* in character, I suppose we mean the morally good generalised and reduced to a rule. Sometimes, indeed, the good appears to be a larger category than the right, and the good man is placed on a higher level than the merely righteous. But that is only because the finer forms of goodness escape our definition; they refuse to be expressly detailed and prescribed. But the right, as commonly conceived, must be capable of definite inculcation; it is formulated in verbal rules such as the Ten Commandments, the increasing adequacy of such rules being a chief sign of moral development. But we are aware, at the same time, of an absolute law of right that is beyond all codes and definitions, demanding from us an infinite goodness, and urging us on to what the apostle calls 'a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Thus we rise above moral formulæ to the ideal standard of life, towards which we must be forever striving. Than this righteousness there is nothing more complete or more divine.

In identifying the morally good with the right, however, and in conceiving the right as matter of general rule, it comes to be seen that goodness is no mere individual quality. Virtue is a common human excellence; it belongs to a realm of persons possessing a like nature and associated by a universal law. The knowledge and practice of right are interests of the community; they are

incumbent on personal beings in contact with each other. They form the basis of human intercourse, the corner-stone of every commonwealth, the understanding that makes social life possible. When a man does any wrong, he sins against his kind as well as against his own soul—his act injures humanity itself. Righteousness, or Moral Order, is, in fact, the foundation and precondition of society.

This brings us to the grand word *duty*, which is a name for the right and good as it is demanded from ourselves. Duty is morality in action; it is the ethical law coming out of the cloudy abstract, and taking hold of a man's understanding and will and saying, 'Thou shalt.' It is one thing to see the right and to reverence it, but quite another to say, 'I have got to do it.' Now, it is just here, at this practical point, that moral worth begins. 'There is nothing unconditionally good,' says Kant, 'but a *good will*.' While scientific knowledge always has its value as pure knowledge, ethical knowledge, without the desire to actualise it, serves only to reveal the worthlessness of its possessor. 'Ye say, We see,' exclaimed Jesus to the Pharisees, —'your sin remaineth.' His keen perception and æsthetic admiration of the good in conduct makes the non-doer the more culpable and contemptible. There is no misery like that of the man who 'knows the right and yet the wrong pursues,' who 'with his mind serves the law of God, but with his flesh the law of sin.'

Now, duty implies several things. It implies *freedom of the will*. Without freedom there is no will, no rational activity. 'The will,' says Kant, 'is a kind of causality belonging to living beings in so far as they are rational; and freedom is the attribute of such causality, in virtue of which alone it is efficient and undetermined by foreign causes, just as physical necessity is the attribute marking the causality of irrational beings, which are determined to activity by foreign causes.' It is useless either for theologians or materialists to fly in the face of facts; it is idle for them to deny human liberty, assumed as that is in every personal action, because they cannot reconcile it with their notion of the sovereignty of God on the one hand, or with the continuity of natural causation upon the other. Jeremy Bentham declared that 'the word *ought* ought to be banished'; but neither he nor we can get rid of this imperious, and often most uncomfortable, idea. It belongs to the make

of the human mind. A young man under a deep religious impression feels that he *ought* to go to China as a missionary: he knows, moreover, that he *must* take ship to get there; and that, to preach to the people, he *must* learn the Chinese language. The two requirements are utterly different—the *ought* of moral necessity and the *must* of physical or intellectual necessity. I am bound to love my neighbour: I am bound to think that two straight lines cannot enclose a space. No sort of analysis or explanation can ever reduce the one necessity to terms of the other, or translate the constraint of personal obligation into the compulsion of impersonal force. The 'ought,' in cases of clear duty, is unconditional; outward difficulties or remonstrances, even the terrors of death, weigh as nothing against it; it rests only upon one contingency, that of the individual will—the ultimate mystery within us each. The 'must' of natural law, on the other hand, leaves us no alternative: it laughs at our freedom, and enforces instant and unvarying submission. It forbids peremptorily my counting two and two as five, or lifting with my arm a ton weight. But, within the range of personal competence, we are self-directing as we are self-conscious beings, each one of us a burning focus of reflexion and energy, each the author of his own action and the shaper of his own destiny, each invested with the tremendous power of saying in word and deed, to GOD and man, 'I will' or 'I will not.'

Son of immortal seed, high-destined man,  
 Know thy dread gift,—a creature, yet a cause!  
 Each mind is its own centre, and it draws  
 Home to itself, and moulds in its thought's span,  
 All outward things, the vassals of its will,  
 Aided by heaven, by earth unthwarted still.

Freedom of will is the crown set upon our heads, as men made in the image of the Most High God—a burning crown it may prove, a crushing crown; but we cannot decline it. Our royalty is limited and perverted in countless ways, but it is inalienable while thought and being last. And with freedom comes *responsibility*, which loses all meaning upon the necessitarian hypothesis. Duty, Freedom, Responsibility, Personality—these are ideas inseparable from each other: their unity makes up our moral being.

A further principal consideration about duty is this: it involves what we have already called in speaking of 'the right,' *a realm of persons*, a kingdom of related wills. Obligation, synonymous with duty, signifies the bond which links us morally to other beings. Life is a network of mutual duty, a continuous moral tissue, the mystic fabric woven in the loom of time for the wearing of eternity, with all men, of all races and generations, past and present and to come, for its weavers. Duty is our heritage as rational and related creatures—our heritage and our bequest. We are units in an ethical system, a vast connexion of persons—all 'neighbours,' as Jesus understood it. All of us have a moral property in each, and each in all. While duty, then, appeals to freedom, and thus gives us with our responsibility a sense of our individual worth and of the grandeur of our being, at the same time duty subjects us to a boundless world of our fellow-beings; it yokes our freedom to a thousand exacting tasks, and constrains us by love to serve each other. Thus duty unfolds to us the moral universe in which we move and live.

(To be concluded.)

## Requests and Replies.

In the translation of the New Testament into current English, which you reviewed some time ago, I find the rather startling assertion that Paul and his friends, Aquila and Priscilla, were by profession 'landscape painters' (Acts xviii. 3). Will you kindly say how this translation arises, and what foundation there is for it?—N. P. of M.

As an addition to the answer of Professor Ramsay, in the last number of THE EXPOSITORY TIMES, I may be permitted to refer to a little article

of mine in the (American) *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1892, p. 206, on 'St. Paul's Handicraft.' I mentioned there that in the Latin form of the legend on the Finding of the Cross (A. Holder, *Inventio sanctae Crucis*, 1889, p. 6), it is said: *Paulus qui ante templum sedebat exercebat artem SCAENOGRAPHIAM*, i.e. scene-painting. I explained the last word, just as Professor Ramsay does, as a confusion with *σκηνογραφία*. In the Greek