

## ARTICLE V.

CHARACTERISTICS DISTINCTIVE OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM  
AS CREATED BY REDEMPTION FROM THE WORLD, OR  
THE KINGDOM OF SATAN.

BY SAMUEL HARRIS, PRESIDENT OF BOWDOIN COLLEGE.

PART I.—THE ANTAGONISM OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM TO THE WORLD OR  
THE KINGDOM OF SATAN.

CHRIST'S kingdom is created out of the world by God's action redeeming men from sin. It exists and grows by God's redeeming grace delivering sinful men from the power of darkness and translating them into the kingdom of his Son. It implies a perpetual process of transforming the world into itself.

The first thought which flows from this fundamental conception, and is now to be our subject, is this: Christ's kingdom is in antagonism to the world or the kingdom of Satan. God's redeeming grace and the kingdom which it calls into being are in perpetual conflict with the power and kingdom of evil for the deliverance of man.

This kingdom of evil is called in the Bible the power of darkness, as opposed to the kingdom of God's dear Son; the kingdom of Satan, as opposed to the kingdom of Christ; the world, as opposed to the kingdom of heaven. The last is the most frequent designation, not because the world is conterminous with the reign of evil, but because it is subject to it, and the part of it immediately in contact with the kingdom of righteousness. It is only as we understand this use of "the world," as representing the kingdom and power of darkness in its direct antagonism to Christ's kingdom, that we get the full significance of many of the sayings of Christ and his apostles. We miss their power if we suppose "the world," as they often use it, means only earthly goods.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world

This antagonism appears in the opening of Genesis. Man sinless in Eden is encircled and protected by the law which prohibits him from evil. When by transgression he has overleaped the law, which encircled and protected him, into the midst of circumjacent evil, the law becomes a sword of fire shutting him out from good, himself a victim of the power of evil, and henceforth a part of it. Nor was the antagonism that of the law only, but deliverance from the curse of the law is itself to come through conflict and suffering: "it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Men are not represented here as each in an isolated individuality, but as related to powers of good and of evil which existed before man existed, and the scope of whose action outreaches the sphere of human life. This is in analogy with nature. A man's health does not depend altogether on his personal care of it. There are cosmic agencies under which the earth itself sickens and belches out pestilential miasmata; and the black death, the cholera, and plagues of whatever name move around the globe. And there are always invigorating cosmic influences from the sun, the air, the ocean, and the land, without which no human forethought could sustain life. So the Bible, from its very opening, represents the spiritual relations of man. The writer of Genesis knew not the earth's relation to other worlds and systems; but he knew that man's relations extended beyond the earth. The power of darkness has put its blight on man. God is seeking the lost man to bring him back to righteousness and peace. The earth is a battlefield for the soul of man between the powers of heaven and of hell.

hateth you." "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world." "Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Whosoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." John xv. 19; xiv. 30; Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12; 1 John i. 15; v. 4.

This conflict appears throughout the Old Testament. The history of the Jews brings it vividly before the mind, and, as it were, incorporates it into human consciousness. In their history this conflict appears, first, in the separation of this people by a divine call, the promise of blessedness to all mankind through the Messiah to spring from them, and the conditioning of the continuance of God's favor to them on their fidelity to him, involving throughout their history the recognition of Paul's principle, "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, but only he who exercises faith like Abraham's." It appears, secondly, within the chosen people in the continual preaching of the prophets against dependence on birth and outward service, and their testimony to the spirituality of God's requirements and the universality of his promise; and in the faithfulness of the few, like the seven thousand in Elijah's day, and like Simeon and Anna, who stood with the prophets in every generation in antagonism to the national Pharisaism and corruption. It appears, thirdly, in the outlook of the prophecies into the future, revealing the kingdom of the Messiah in its conquest of the world.

When Christ came he not only declared this conflict, but his own life set it forth. From the temptation in the wilderness until his death he was assailed by the powers of darkness; but before he died he saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven, — the token of victory.

It is remarkable that at the beginning of each dispensation we have this conflict set forth between chosen champions, and open to the gaze of all generations. In the beginning, Adam, type of unaided man, meets the adversary and falls. In the opening of the gospel dispensation, Jesus, the Redeemer, type of man quickened by God's grace, meets the adversary and conquers.

The conflict of Christ's kingdom against the kingdom of Satan is constantly insisted on by the apostles, and in the Apocalypse is pictured, as in a panorama, until its final triumph.

Thus the scriptures, from beginning to end, set forth this conflict in didactic expositions, in prophecy, and in history. The history of redemption is the history of this conflict. The history of this conflict is essentially the history of man.

It remains to consider some of the truths involved in this scriptural conception.

I. It assumes the Existence of Sin as the Essential Evil.

The theory, which is gaining currency, that sin is a necessary process in the development of a finite spirit, annihilates the significance of both sin and evil. A process necessary to the development of the being cannot be sin, because it is constitutionally necessary for the perfection of the being; it cannot be essentially evil, since it is the necessary means of the highest good. According to this theory the soul is invigorated by sin as the body is said to be sometimes by a fever. Children are born with a constitutional liability to certain diseases, which can be removed only by having them; and the parent rejoices when his child has taken one of these diseases and is well through it. So the Infinite Father rejoices as his children take and go through the disease of sin. Some have it more lightly than others, but all come out at last freed from the liability to have it again; all alike, even by way of the brothel or the gallows, are passing on through the necessary stages of growth to their full perfection. On this theory, there is neither sin nor evil in the universe, and there can be no antagonism to them. Rather God and man will desire every one to pass through the necessary amount of sin as rapidly as possible. This theory, in annihilating the significance of sin and evil, annihilates the significance of Christianity, which is redemption from sin. Nor is the theory tenable on any consistent doctrine of rationalism. It belongs to sheer naturalism, and is tenable only on the supposition that man is merely a germ or force of nature necessarily developed under the action of cosmic agencies.

II. Love, whether in God or Man, must be in irreconcilable Antagonism and Warfare against Sin, and cannot consent that any Being should be Blessed in it.

1. This is evident *from the nature of sin as transgression of law.*

Law is not the fiat of will, not even of God's will ; but is the truth of reason. Reason necessarily knows itself as authoritative and law-giving ; and every rational being knows himself under obligation to obey reason, that is, to act in harmony with rationality. Will, as the power of choice and volition, will as the basis of character, is subject to law, and incapable of creating law. Even when enforcing law in government, it is only as authorized and required so to do by the superior law of reason to which it is subject. Any other enforcement by will of its own behests is not the reign of law, but of caprice. It is subjugation by force to a despotic will. It is the reign of force : "might makes right." God's will originates no law, but obeys the eternal principles of the divine reason, and in obedience to them enforces them as law throughout the universe. That which is highest in the universe is not power nor will ; it is reason.

When Positivism argues that the order of nature proves the absence of will, the argument is irrelevant ; for law is not of will, but of reason. Every conception of the universe as a cosmos, an orderly and beautiful whole, implies that reason is supreme in it, that it is pervaded by rationality, is expressive of rational principles, and subject to them as laws. This is implied in the arrangement of all individuals in scientific classes and systems, and the reduction of all forces under scientific laws. It is the basis of induction ; it is the fundamental postulate, inadequately expressed in the principle of the uniformity of nature, on which all induction rests. Without it induction reaches no conclusion, observation only accumulates facts signifying nothing, the difference between the rational and the absurd is annihilated, rationality is extruded from the universe, and science itself becomes impossible.

As the thoughts or principles of the supreme reason, the law of nature and the moral law are alike. When in the action both of molecules and of masses we discover mathematical laws, when we discover that natural objects are all arranged in scientific classes and systems, we do but discover the principles of the divine reason expressed in the works of God, and may adopt as literal truth the exclamation of the rapt Kepler, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee." In like manner moral law is the eternal thoughts of God, the principles of reason, the constituent elements of rationality respecting the conduct and character of rational beings, which every such being by virtue of his rationality must recognize as a law to himself.

The laws of nature, so far as now known, are many. The law of rational agents is one; its real principle is expressed in the one word — LOVE. Love, then must present itself first as law. This law must be absolute, supreme, unchangeable. If law were the fiat of will, a beginning, a change, an abrogation would be conceivable. But law, as the truth of reason, is necessarily eternal and unchangeable; for to change it would be to change rationality itself, to annihilate the difference between the rational and the absurd, to make reason itself irrational.

It follows that sin is an attempt on the part of a rational being to realize an absurdity. It is a fight against reason. And in this, the transgression of the law of love is analagous to the transgression of the laws of nature. The will may refuse submission to the reason, and work in antagonism to it, but it cannot exalt itself so as to nullify or abrogate the law. Thus in the sphere of nature a man may spend his life in trying to produce in mechanism perpetual motion; but in spending his life thus, he expends, wastes, loses it; the effort to realize an absurdity must be in vain. So a sinner spends, wastes, loses himself in a vain effort to realize an absurdity. The divine law is: "Love God and man." The principle which sin aims to realize is that self is supreme, and God and all creatures should serve it; more monstrous

than the old astronomy, that the earth is the centre around which all planets and suns revolve daily. The result must be the waste and perdition of the soul. In the Bible, therefore, the sinner is called indiscriminately a sinner or a fool. It is impossible for any man to miss losing himself or being a castaway when he consumes his energies in antagonism to eternal reason, and to all the laws which rule the universe, and to the cosmic agencies which act in harmony therewith, and thus takes the essential evil into his own character and constitutes of it his own life.

Observe, here, that the selfish character is itself the essential evil. When you put your finger in the fire, the evil is not the pain suffered, but the destruction of the finger. The pain is a good; it evinces the continuance of life in the finger resisting the fire that destroys it and warning you to withdraw it. The evil is complete when the calcined bone lies insensible, consuming in the fire. So the evil of sin is not the suffering which it causes, but the bosom pleasure which it gives. The suffering is a good, evincing the continuance of moral sensibility and warning of the evil. The evil is the heart's joy in sin, when the soul is happy in sin, insensible in the fire that consumes it; when the soul chooses the evil, prefers it to the good, accepts it with joy as the good. The full significance of this preference is given in the words of Milton's Satan:

" All good to me is lost;  
Evil, be thou my good."

Sin, as the transgression of law, being essential evil, love cannot consent that any rational being be blessed in it; love itself must visit it with penalty. Therefore reason, as supreme law, demands love on pain of perdition. Thus is declared the absolute antagonism of love, as supreme, inexorable, eternal law, to sin as the essential evil. The eternal perdition of the ungodly signifies that, under the law of supreme and universal reason, which is the law of love, sin has no tolerance now or hereafter, here or in any place; that in all places in his boundless domain, in all ages of his

reign forever, God meets sin only with antagonism. If this is not so, sin is not essential, but only incidental evil; no conceivable doctrine of immutable right is possible; reason ceases to be contrary to the irrational, and rationality itself ceases to have significance; the powers of the universe, no longer expressing the perfect law of love, are in truce with absurdity and wrong; and evil extinguishes itself by an apotheosis into good.

“ If this fail,  
The pillared firmament is rottenness,  
And earth's base built on stubble.”

2. The same is evident *from the nature of love, as the real principle of law.*

As we have seen, the law which reason imposes on rational beings is the law of love. Love, in itself considered, is the choice of universal being as the supreme end in preference to self. In other words, it is universal good-will. But because universal goodwill is required of every rational being by reason, it is the real principle of a law. Thus the exercise of love is also obedience to law, and involves the harmony of the will with the reason, and its consent and allegiance to the law which reason imposes. Therefore there is necessarily a duality in love; it contains two elements; or rather presents itself in two aspects. Considered in itself, as universal good-will, we call it good-will or benevolence. Considered as the harmony of the will with the reason, the consent or allegiance of the will to law, we call it righteousness. If we had corresponding words of Latin derivation, we should call the former *bene-volence*, the latter *recte-volence*; the former having regard to universal well-being, the latter to universal right, or to the supremacy and universal reign of law.

The duality of reason and will is inherent in the conception of a rational being. The duality of love, as the abiding preference of the will choosing universal well-being as the supreme end, and its harmony therein with reason and obedience to its law, is a necessary consequent. We are thus

able to supply a defect in Edwards's doctrine of virtue, finding for righteousness not merely a place by tolerance, but a necessity for it in the philosophical exposition of the facts.

But, as the duality of reason and will is in unity, they being names of the mind itself in different aspects, the duality of love is also in unity. Since universal good-will is what reason commands as law, the exercise of it is in itself the harmony of the will with the reason, the consent or allegiance of the will to law. It is thus the harmony of the mind with itself in its two inseparable aspects of rationality and freedom. In God is the same duality in unity—a will that is almighty in eternal harmony with a reason that is absolute; so that the word which is the life-giving gospel, “God is love,” is also the true and deepest philosophy of his being. In the love which the gospel requires, the human mind not only comes into harmony with itself, but also with God and with the laws of the entire universe. Ethical philosophers continually omit from their systems one or the other of these two aspects of love; they make virtue to consist either in universal good-will with no recognition of law, or else in obedience to law with no recognition of its real principle of universal love. In the former case, the universe is resolved into a joint-stock company, in which each person has weight according to his number of shares; God himself is of more account than man only because he is greater in quantity; and the idea of a supreme law is lost. Then the appropriate prayer would be that which the Maid of Orleans is said to have extorted from Lahyre: “O Jehovah, I pray thee do as much for Lahyre in this time of his distress, as he would do for thee, if he were Jehovah and thou wert Lahyre”; or that attributed to Richard Coeur de Lion, in the chronicles of his crusade: “How unwilling should I be to forsake thee in so forlorn and dreadful a condition if I were thy Lord and Advocate as thou art mine.” This is the appropriate liturgy of the Benthamites. In the latter case, the theory of virtue comes round into itself in a circle; virtue is choosing the right for its own sake; it is obedience to duty; it is a regard

to worthiness, without defining what is worthy. Thus the law has no real principle, but consists only of the empty requirement of obedience to itself.

Love is thus duplex and yet one; like the sun's ray of light and of heat; like electricity acting at opposite poles with seemingly antagonistic phenomena, yet one force; like all the bipolar forces of nature, two and yet one — two in order to be one.

As such, love must react in antagonism to sin; and the intensity of the reaction must be proportioned to the intensity of the love. The love, which in its essential nature is consent and allegiance to the law, must be as essentially antagonism to transgression. It is as impossible to conceive of love without reaction against sin, as to conceive of light which casts no shadow when obstructed, or of mechanical action without reaction. That comfortable tolerance of wrong, which is mistaken for Christian charity, is proof of the sluggishness of the moral life — sluggishness such that the vitals of virtue may be stabbed and the soul not wince, as the jelly-fish may be torn in pieces and give no sign of pain or offence.

3. The same is evident *from the nature of love considered as to the object loved.*

We are to love God and our neighbor; that is, all beings, or "universal being." But all rational beings are subjects both of character and happiness. No chemistry of thought can identify these two. Love, therefore, must have respect both to the character and the happiness of the being that is loved. Here appears again the duality in unity of love. As love insists on a right character it is righteousness; as it seeks the blessedness of its object in a right character, it is benevolence.

We may present the same thought in another light. Love seeks universal well-being. But the universal well-being or *summum bonum*, which love seeks, is not happiness or enjoyment. It is primarily right character, the perfection and harmony of the being, and secondarily, the happiness or joy

incidental to it. This is blessedness. The only blessedness is the blessedness of the righteous. Happiness or joy is an incident of ill-being as really as of well-being. A drunken man is very happy, but we pity and despise him for his maudlin joy. The very wretchedness of the sinner is his joy in his sin; joy that is unworthy of him; joy in that in which a right-hearted man is capable only of shame and sorrow; joy which makes the subject of it incapable of the blessedness of the righteous; joy which is the heat of the fire that is consuming him. Reason rejects as absurd the doctrine of Bentham, that virtue is the art of maximising happiness — all happiness the same in kind to be measured only by quantity — the happiness of Paul glorying in tribulation and heroic sacrifice and toil for the salvation of men the same in kind with the joy of the sensualist, to be measured by the painful, like the swill which satisfies a swinish appetite. The joys incident to gratified desires are inseparable from sensitivity, and therefore remain to the sinner. But these joys intensify the eagerness and increase the swiftness with which he rushes to ruin. By them his steps take hold on hell; in them he reaches out his eager hands to perdition, stooping downwards as he runs. And while with progress in sin the desires and passions grow more powerful to stimulate, the attendant joys become less satisfying, and are transformed into ghastliness; like the greed which rusts and consumes the miser's soul, and the reeking heats in which the soul of the sensualist ferments and rots.

Well-being comprising the two elements of character and happiness, we find again the two elements of righteousness and benevolence in the love which seeks universal well-being. And since the only worthy happiness is incidental to a right character, benevolence desires for men no other happiness, and thus is in unity with righteousness, seeking universal well-being only in harmony with the supreme law, only in the blessedness of the righteous.

Therefore without righteousness benevolence cannot realize its own ends; it deteriorates into a maudlin fondness, and

rejoices in evil as good, until, transformed into the very opposite of itself, all its sweetness is fermented into acidity and corruption. Take away from love the element of righteousness, and you take away its self-consistency, its authority, its god-like majesty, and its power to bless. The benevolence which is left is a mere amiableness, a desire to please everybody, a jelly of good nature yielding to every pressure. The wicked man comes trampling into the presence of this amiable person, defrauding the ignorant, grinding the poor, crushing the weak, rising to office by intrigue, bribery, or oppression, and this amiable man only desires that this Nimrod be very happy, would have him indulged, humored, satisfied. Oh fond amiableness! oh vain benevolence! — benevolence defeating itself, desiring to make everybody happy, and thereby helping to make the ungodly more wicked and his wickedness more destructive.

What is thus obvious in the case of an individual is true of the universe at large. The universe being the expression of the law of reason, the *summum bonum* can be found only in conformity with that law. To attempt to realize the greatest good without righteousness would be an attempt to subvert the supreme reason, to break down the eternal laws of the universe, the “*flammantia moenia mundi*,” which protect the rights and enforce the obligations of all rational beings, and make peace and blessedness possible throughout the worlds.

Therefore love cannot prompt even a desire that a sinner should be happy in his sin. On the contrary it meets him with indignant antagonism; an indignant antagonism, the absence of which is the absence of moral strength and grandeur of character, and marks the man as a sneak; an indignant antagonism justified by all that justifies the supremacy of reason, and the absence of which is the weak consent of the soul to unreason and misrule.

And this antagonism is essential in the very nature of love. Love is righteousness because it is love. It fills the world with blessing; yet it does so by virtue of its persist-

ence in maintaining its own authority as law in antagonism to sin ; does so, therefore, because in the last resort it utters itself in judgment and condemnation. Electricity commonly works quietly, diffusing blessings through all nature ; but when its equilibrium is disturbed, and its silent and life-giving flow interrupted, then it is a thunder-bolt. And its power to bless arises from this very quality of its nature, which makes it, when disturbed, a thunder-bolt. If it could not smite in the red lightning it would be also powerless for good. The sun's light ministers to all life and growth, and sustains the forces of nature. But it could not do so were it not in its nature to burn ; were it not, when disturbed in its diffusion, obstructed, accumulated, a consuming fire. So it is with love. The Scripture says, "God is a consuming fire." It does not mean that God consumes in his wrath all who approach him. He diffuses his love through all the universe to bless it, as the sun diffuses his light. But when that love is concentrated on a transgressor, the love itself is found to be a consuming fire. If this were not so, love would be unable to diffuse its benign influence, quickening life and joy throughout the universe.

4. *This antagonism is accordant with the common moral sentiment of mankind.*

Dr. Channing says : "We must not mistake Christian benevolence as if it had but one voice, that of soft entreaty. It can speak in piercing and awful tones. There is constantly going on in our world a conflict between good and evil. . . . That deep feeling of evils which is necessary to effectual conflict with them and which marks God's most powerful messengers to mankind, cannot breathe itself in soft and tender accents. The deeply-moved soul will speak strongly, and ought to speak so as to move and shake the nations."<sup>1</sup>

Nor should we wonder that faithful men, working and suffering for the kingdom of righteousness and seeing its progress opposed and hindered by the wicked, should pray sometimes for the intervention of eternal justice which

<sup>1</sup> Works, Vol. i. pp. 24, 25.

guards the world from crime, and pray with language so impassioned as to startle us in our peaceful time and our unsacrificing and genteel efforts to advance Christ's kingdom. Such prayers are wrung from the hearts of Christians when they see wickedness armed and in power, violating truth and justice, destitute of mercy, resisting human progress, crushing the defenders of righteousness, undoing the work of generations in behalf of truth, and thrusting society back into the darkness of the past. However in times of peace and indifference, men may think themselves more charitable than the participators in the conflict and suffering of former ages, whose piercing outcry against the powers of wickedness they commiserate as the illiberality and hardness of an unchristianized age, yet, when a similar conflict comes on them, in their anguish they find the need of similar expressions.

In this the sentiments of mankind concur. Children always rejoice at the overthrow of Pharaoh and the punishment of Haman. The savages at Melita believed that the viper on Paul's hand was God's messenger to punish murder. Epics, lyrics, and tragedy, philosophy and religion in all ages teach the punishment of sin. The source of perplexity and scepticism in all ages has been the fact that in the actual courses of human life God apparently does not punish sin; the wicked prosper and the good are depressed. From the days of Job until now the anxious question has been, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power?" And always relief has been found in the same answer, "God will award them just retribution." What a grand chorus of the ages is here, the voices of children and savages, of poets and philosophers, of prophets and apostles, — all generations standing with hands uplifted to God, crying that wickedness may not go on with impunity: "For the crying of the needy, for the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the prisoner arise, O Lord, and render into the bosom of the wicked the reproach wherewith they have reproached thee." And from the holy and blessed heaven opened to John issues the voice of the martyrs slain by

triumphant wickedness: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth"? How grand a chorus! How august a company! But here comes a solitary form, pale offspring of modern sentimentality, its consumptive frame nursed on what John Randolph called the ass's milk of human kindness, and lifts alone her contrary hands and voice: "To me the perplexity is that God does punish the wicked. Oh for a God that never smites the transgressor! Oh for a God of exceeding amiableness, who leaves wickedness unscathed in its triumph, and gives it without discrimination equal reward with the righteous."

### III. Love must carry with it and express in Redemption the Element of Righteousness and its Essential Antagonism to Sin.

Otherwise love in redemption would cease to be love; for whenever righteousness is eliminated from love, love loses its essential nature and ceases to be love.

Otherwise sin would be not essential but only incidental evil, which under certain conditions love may approach with no expression of antagonism. Redemption is redemption from sin; thus the very act of redemption is the recognition of sin itself as the essential evil, from which the whole action of redemption seeks to deliver the sinner, and to which the essential antagonism of love must be exercised and expressed in the very act of redemption.

Hence in redemption the divine love must make atonement for sin. In redeeming the sinner the divine love cannot divest itself of its character as law. It must secure the sinner's redemption in such way as to maintain the authority of law, and to exercise, express, and satisfy the eternal righteousness of God; so that the essential antagonism of love to sin and the nature of sin as essential evil appear even in the act of redeeming the sinner. This law of love being a constituent element of rationality, being eternal in the divine reason and the constituting principle

of the universe, must be equally a law in redemption; and the righteousness, which is the consent of the will to the law and without which love ceases to be love, must be exercised, expressed, and satisfied in redemption. And since redemption is wrought by God for the sinner, and not by the sinner for himself, this exercise, expression, and satisfaction of righteousness in redemption is made by God for the sinner, and not by the sinner for himself. It is therefore vicarious. And since this exercise, expression, and satisfaction have been historically made through the incarnation, in the humiliation, suffering, and death of Christ, it follows that these are historically the vicarious and atoning action of God for the sinner, wherein in redeeming the sinner God both *is* righteous and *declares* his righteousness.<sup>1</sup>

A vicarious atonement is, therefore, inherent in the idea of redemption from sin. Without it the history of the incarnation and the humiliation, sufferings, and death of Christ loses its distinctive significance. Without it, in the redemption of men from sin, love loses the element of righteousness and ceases to be love; law loses its supremacy; and any doctrine of eternal and immutable right becomes impossible.

It must be added that in all action, subsequent to Christ's atoning sacrifice, to extend the benefits of redemption through the world, love must show the same antagonism to sin. Redemption, as it is carried onwards to its consummation, is always a conflict. The love, which carries the glad tidings of redemption through the world, can never divest itself of its authority and severity as law. The hand which it extends to the lost is a holy and a sovereign hand, the blessing which it offers is pardoning mercy, its invitation to the sinner is to faith in the Redeemer, to repentance, humiliation, and self-surrender, and its approach to the sinner to save him is always with a commanding majesty, revealing "how awful goodness is."

The historical character of redemption makes it necessary that the conflict between Christ's kingdom and Satan's turn

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 25, 26.

on the acceptance or rejection of Christ as Redeemer and King. Religious truths and moral precepts are a common heritage of man, and under various forms are to be traced in all history. If Christianity consisted essentially of doctrines or precepts, it would be one of the religions of the world, and on the same plane with them, and would lose all its distinctive characteristics. But Christianity is not primarily doctrine and precept, but history; God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Hence it must be exclusive. It must proclaim: "Neither is there salvation in any other." Therefore the conflict between Christ's kingdom and the world turns on the acceptance or rejection of Christ as Redeemer and Lord. So it is represented in the New Testament: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world. Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

The thought which we have now been considering is the one thought of the wonderful epistle from which these quotations have been made. That epistle is not an argument; it makes no progress. It is rather a lyric, reiterating in varied forms the thought that redeeming love and all that grows out of it are in warfare against sin. In Christ the word of God, the eternal life entered into humanity as a life-giving power, and was manifested among men. All who participate in it come into union with the Father, who is its source, and with the Son, who has made it a saving energy in humanity. Every one who thus is brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son is light, for God is light, and cannot participate in darkness; he is love, for God is love,

and cannot participate in selfishness or hate; he is God's offspring and cannot sin; he is of God's kingdom and therefore in conflict with the world and overcoming it. Herein are the children of God distinguished from the children of the devil; for this very purpose Christ came, to destroy the works of the devil.

IV. The Antagonism of Christ's Kingdom to the World is, as to its Quality, the Antagonism of Love and not of Hate.

God loves the world, and in redemption his love goes out to save the lost. Sin cannot stop its efflux nor change its nature, though it may exclude its life-giving efficacy from the sinner's heart. But God's love still rolls on, filling every creature according to its capacity and disposition with the fulness of God, and flooding with its glory even the heart that shuts itself against it. God's love, converging on the sinner, must act like the sunshine on the seed, and, failing to quicken it, hastens its corruption. But the love remains pure love. All the sin in the universe is powerless to check its outflow, to lessen its fulness and extent, to vitiate its divine purity and sweetness, or to infect it with any taint of malignity or ill-will. When the Bible speaks of God's hatred of sinners, it only declares in popular language the righteousness which is essential in love as the real principle of law, and which is in unchangeable antagonism to selfishness and sin. When President Edwards says of lost sinners, "God never loved them, . . . . but he hates them, and they will be forever hated of God; you will see nothing in God, and receive nothing from him but perfect hatred,"<sup>1</sup> he uses language seemingly denying that God loves the world, and dropping out from love its essential element of good-will. Christ weeping over Jerusalem expresses, under human limitations, the heart of God in condemning the wicked; the tears declaring his inextinguishable good-will, while the declaration of the inevitable doom declares his righteousness. His whole

<sup>1</sup> The End of the Wicked Contemplated.

action in redemption is action in antagonism to sin; this redemption itself implies; but his whole action is the expression of love: "God so loved the world."

The same must be true of all human antagonism to sin. It is necessary to the possibility of antagonism that there be some similarity of nature in the antagonists. A cannon-ball cannot be turned aside by argument or an appeal to compassion; an argument cannot be shattered by a bomb-shell, nor a conclusion overturned with a lever. The only possible antagonist of error is truth, and the only possible antagonist of selfishness is love. Love, then, is in Christ's kingdom the only fighting principle against sin. No other is legitimate or effective. The law of the kingdom is: "Overcome evil with good."

In the Christian character opposition to sin is not primary, but secondary. It is not the action, but the reaction of the love. Religion does not consist primarily in hating the devil, but in loving God and man. The opposition to sin, being a reaction of love, must be in its essence love. And love in every manifestation, whether by God or man, must absolutely exclude selfishness, ill-will, and hate, as light excludes darkness. While in approaching sinners it can never divest itself of its majesty as the real principle of God's law, it is still love.

And love in its conflict with sin, and seeking to save sinners is the highest and most truly divine love. Love to sinners is love in its furthest reach and greatest power; love which even vileness and defiant malignity cannot repel; love embracing sinners as the sunshine cherishes the reeking mould, in its own absolute purity incapable of defilement by the contact, and quickening life in the corruption. Love to sinners is the highest type of love; it is the love of Christ submerged in humanity and bearing the sins of men to save them, yet revealing the indefectible purity of love; declaring the majesty of the law, yet dying to redeem sinners from its curse. Love to sinners is love most distinctively imperishable and unconquerable; the vilest unable by his greatest

sins to restrain the forthcoming of that love, or to check it as it goes on in its divine course of suffering and sorrow, or to prevent its opening wide to the sinner the golden gates of mercy, and proclaiming with infinite tenderness, "Whosoever will, let him come." Like Christ's is every Christian's love. It is love to sinners. However wicked a sinner may become, he has no power to quench Christian love to him, or to suppress it as, imperishable, like the love of Christ, it breathes in prayer, it prompts to efforts, to suffering, and sacrifice, to save the sinner from his sins.

Love is spiritual life. Its processes in its antagonism to sin are analogous to those of life. Life subdues foreign matter by transforming it into its own organization. When an acorn falls into the ground it may be said to enter into conflict with all around it. Yet the conflict is not the primary idea, but secondary, and incident to the life. And the living seed is continually conquering in the conflict, not by destroying its opponents, but by transforming them into its own organization. Thus the slender germ shoots into the upper air, and lifts itself in victory over gravitation, and builds its great trunk and boughs, and crowns itself with leaves, transforming the soil, the air, and the rain into organic strength and beauty. Such is the kingdom of God; a mustard-seed growing into a tree, a vital power from God transforming the world into a kingdom of righteousness.

And in this its strength lies. The earth which lies heavy on a seed cannot suppress its pale and tender shoot rising with the force of life into the air. So it is with the growth of the kingdom of God. However ancient and solid any institution of evil, it cannot suppress the vital force of love quickening any seed of truth. Any reformation, which is thus the bursting into growth of this vital force, will prove itself irresistible.

When a vital organ is invaded by a foreign substance which it cannot transform or expel, its resistance is unpromising and persistent unto death. When a speck of dust enters the eye, the eye resists and expels it with weeping;

and will itself perish, resisting and weeping, if it cannot expel the intruder. So prompt, uncompromising, and persistent is the resistance of love to sin, resistance with weeping and suffering, and, if it does not prevail, persistent unto death.

V. The greater the Energy with which Christian Love acts, the more energetic will be the Antagonism against it.

Christ's word is always a fan winnowing the wheat from the chaff. The power of redemption is necessarily a power of separation. It must separate that which it renews and vitalizes from that which it cannot assimilate. The Saviour's voice calls out into a separate flock the sheep that know it and follow him. The mustard-seed separates from the soil the matter which it transforms into itself and by which it grows. The kingdom of heaven is a net gathering of every kind, the good preserved, the bad cast away. It is the wheat mixed with the tares, distinct already in nature, and to be separated in the harvest. Jesus said: "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." He also said: "For judgment I am come into this world." There is no contradiction here. Christ's work is primarily redemption; but because it is redemption, it must be judgment (*κρίσις*), primarily, separation, — the separation of all that come to him from all who reject him — ultimately, judgment, the condemnation of those who reject him. Therefore Jesus declares that the work of the Holy Spirit, renewing human hearts and transforming the world into the kingdom of Christ, is a perpetual judgment of the prince of this world. The final *κρίσις*, separation, or judgment, will only declare the separation of which redemption had already been the occasion; the sentence, "Depart," will only declare as irrevocable that departure from Christ and his salvation which the sinner has already made a fact by refusing him.

This separation being incidental to redemption, the more energetic the action of Christian love the more rapid must be the process of separation, and the more marked the

antagonism of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness.

In times of indifference truth and error may slumber side by side. But Christianity has always the power of revival; God breathes into the slumbering community a new power; men become sensitive to the difference between sin and holiness; truth is spoken with explicitness; God's law is proclaimed in its breadth, its purity, and its particularity. Thereby evil is both discerned and aroused. Thus the more vigorous the action of Christian love, the more marked the antagonism to it of sin. The great epochs of history are said to be times that try men's souls. Every period when Christian love acts with energy is a time that tries men's souls; it puts men to the test; it discerns between the righteous and the wicked; it compels an answer to the question: "Who is on the Lord's side?"

Hence the great epochs of human progress are often epochs of great darkness. They often seem for the time to be epochs of the triumph of evil. When Christ was on earth demons thronged the scene of action in numbers never seen before or since. When he was about to offer the great sacrifice of redemption, he exclaimed, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." The hour of the world's redemption was emphatically the hour of the power of darkness. So that it may be considered as a law in the progress of Christ's kingdom that every epoch of its advancement is also an epoch of Satanic achievement. Of every such epoch we may say, not only, "Rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them," but also, "Wo to the inhabitants of the earth! for the devil is come down unto you having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

#### VI. Every Christian life is a Battle against the Powers of Darkness.

In the long course of education preparatory to the Christian ministry, a young man is in danger of forgetting this aspect of life. Living for years in a literary atmosphere and

occupied in intellectual pursuits, he may come to regard intellectual attainments as the great object of life and the ministry as a profession subordinate to this end. In preparing sermons his chief aim may be to produce a finished and able oration, and his highest ambition may be satisfied with the admiration of the more cultivated of his hearers; thus he makes his sermon an end not a means, and his ministry degenerates into a contemptible diletteism. This is not the warfare against Satan's kingdom.

Nor is the battle merely against inward corruption, the ghastly conflicts of the cloister and the desert. Religion is not a dream, but an action. It is not meditation, nor excitement, nor emotion, nor worship terminating in itself. It is a fight with the falsehoods and sins of human life. Every Christian is a Hercules slaying monsters.

As Jesus put himself into actual contact with humanity, entered into it, so as to be in quick sympathy with its life and "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," as he bore its sorrows and its sins, and virtue was always going out of him to save, so every Christian, and especially every Christian minister, with whatever knowledge, culture, spiritual power, lives in immediate contact with humanity, *touched* with the feeling of its infirmities, in sympathy with its sorrows and its joys, meeting its wants, its errors and its sins, and constantly with virtue going out of him to help and save.

The battle is against the kingdom of darkness, not in the abstract, but in the actual sophistries, temptations, and sins, the actual evil opinions, customs, and institutions, by which the powers of darkness are deceiving and destroying men.

It is important to be sure that our warfare is in reality, and not in name only, against the kingdom of darkness. In addressing an assembly of students for the ministry it may not be amiss to say that ministers have usually been sufficiently given to controversy and warfare; but it is often internecine, for differences in philosophy and forms, against faithful servants of Christ; so that there needs to be a moral

parallelogram of forces to determine what small resultant bears on the object to be moved. It has even been urged, to their discredit, that exhausting their strength in these feuds they have exerted no earnest and effectual influences against the rapacity, dishonesty, and oppression, which are corrupting society. It must be added that in the present unsettling of thought and confusion and conflict of opinion respecting reform and progress, when the advocacy of the pope's infallibility and temporal power goes on side by side with the advocacy of woman's suffrage and of agrarian rights for working-men, it demands spiritual discernment to know the truth and to escape being found fighting against God. The security is, that the soul be in fresh and living sympathy with the living Saviour rather than with the *hortus siccus* of creeds and systems, and in living sympathy with humanity in its actual life. The Saviour says: "My sheep hear my voice." It is only as we are in sympathy with him, receiving through the Spirit his thought and life into our own, and in sympathy like him with man, that we shall know his voice amid the babel of voices in this age: "I understand more than the ancients because I *keep* thy precepts." Spiritual discernment and far-sightedness come from keeping God's precepts. When statesmen, having no affinity for the law of God and the spiritual life of love, recommend measures for the welfare of the state which assume that selfishness is the only power to be considered in human affairs, and so fatally mistake the drift and movement of human thought and miss the measures needed for the welfare of society, the spiritual mind discerns the spiritual forces which the carnal mind knows not, and proclaims with prophetic far-sightedness the principles of justice in which alone safety can be found. This is the "poor wise man" who delivers the city.

The fact that life is a battle demands of every Christian the spirit of martyrdom. There cannot be a Christian life without it. He who has not learned to value duty, fidelity, the kingdom of Christ, more than property, reputation, or life, has not learned the first lesson of Christian living. He

whose end in life is only to attain ease, comfort, fame, culture, the gratification of taste ; he who does not accept life as a warfare, demanding the endurance of hardness for Christ, has not yet accepted the Christian idea of life. But if any Christian sacrifices his ease, or suffers persecution or reproach for Christ, Christ with his own hand writes his name in the glorious catalogue of the martyrs, saying of him : " So persecuted they the prophets." Thus the most common-place soul becomes luminous with heavenly glory, as a lump of coal at the touch of fire bursts into flame, and is glorified with brightness while it is consumed.

Paul animates the suffering Christians of his day by pointing to those who had been faithful to God in preceding ages, who now, a great cloud of witnesses, look down as in an amphitheatre on them in their conflicts. In that assembly of spectators Paul himself and the apostles and innumerable faithful ones in the ages since, have already taken their places. They have transmitted the great conflict to us to hold and extend their victories. In their presence we are fighting the good fight of faith. Their plaudits do not break the silence of eternity and fall on mortal ears ; but " there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth." In times of declension when Christ's kingdom is overborne by the world, the ear of faith can hear the cry of the martyrs wailing the triumph of wickedness : " How long, O Lord, faithful and true " ? And the great cloud of witnesses exult in the grand and solemn joy of eternity for every instance of fidelity, for every heroic achievement of love, and send to the combatant their words of cheer : " Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive the crown of life."

## PART II.

THE PECULIARITY OF CHRISTIAN VIRTUE INVOLVED IN THE FACT  
THAT IT ORIGINATES IN REDEMPTION.

AT the banquet in Boston to the Chinese embassy, a distinguished literary man quoted the maxim of Confucius: "Do not to others what you would not that they should do to you." On that remarkable occasion when heathenism and Christianity were confronted before the world, he evidently intended to intimate that the morality taught by heathen philosophy is the same with that taught by Christ. This represents a type of thought which has acquired currency as an argument against Christianity. The argument is, that all the more profound philosophies and religions of the world recognize with more or less distinctness the same principles of morality; that therefore Christianity is merely one of the religions of the world and has no pre-eminent claim to a divine origin.

The first reply is that the New Testament explicitly teaches that conscience gives all men a knowledge of moral law, so that they are without excuse for sin.<sup>1</sup> Without this, Christianity would have no basis; a universal religion, and even a universal community of moral sentiment, would be impossible. The defenders of Christianity have been earnest to vindicate this against sceptics, who have endeavored to establish atheism by denying man's moral nature and the universality of moral principles. Christian apologists have cited the common moral sentiments of different literatures; and have met the objection, founded on the conflicting judgments of different peoples respecting the moral character of outward actions, by showing that they all appeal to the same

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 18-32; ii. 12-16.

principles in justification of these diverse actions. The heathen woman who religiously throws her child into the Ganges, the slaveholder, the despot, if they attempt to justify their actions, appeal to the same principles to which we appeal in condemning them. We welcome the concession of this point by Comte, Buckle, and writers of their school, and rejoice in the research which has established the Christian doctrine beyond further controversy.

A second reply is, that Jesus was not distinctively a teacher of philosophy or of ethics, nor even a lawgiver; but he was the Redeemer of the world. He assumes that God's law is already known and already transgressed. He comes to redeem men from sin and guilt of which they are already conscious. He presupposes and takes up into his teaching the religious and moral truths acknowledged in the religions and philosophies of the world; but he himself is the Redeemer, bringing God's love into human history as an energy of redeeming grace, making propitiation for sin, and quickening sinners into the life of faith and love. He speaks the word of promise and of hope to man, quickens in sinful humanity the germinant forces of a new and spiritual life, establishes his kingdom of righteousness, and sets humanity forth in a progress to realize the ideals of moral and spiritual perfection both in the life of the individual and the civilization of society. To whatever extent it may be possible consistently with historical facts to demonstrate an agreement between Christianity and the religions and philosophies of the world, the demonstration has no force against the distinctive claim of Christianity to divine origin and authority.

The English writers of the last century on the Evidences of Christianity, in urging the superior morality of the New Testament, sometimes wrote as if they regarded Christianity as simply a system of ethics. They thus unwittingly admitted rationalism into the very defences of Christianity, and betrayed their position to their adversaries; they invited the objection under consideration and others of a similar character, which have no force against Christianity as an historical redemption.

But, for the very reason that Christianity is distinctively redemption, Christian virtue must have certain distinctive peculiarities; the Christian conception of virtue must be distinct from and superior to the conception of virtue in the mind of one who is ignorant of redemption, and knows only the moral law. This is our present subject: The Peculiarity and Superiority of Christian Virtue involved in the fact that it originates in Redemption from Sin.

I. Christian Virtue springs from the Consciousness of Sin through Consciousness of Justification or of Reconciliation with God.

Christianity does not create the sense of sin and guilt. It has been powerful in all religions. We look with awe on the human race, bound and writhing through all history in the sense of guilt, like the Laocoon in the embrace of the serpents, the marble anguish unchanging through all the ages.

The consciousness of guilt is not ennobling, but the contrary. It involves a certain abjectness. In its nature it is the consciousness of failure, of unworthiness, of ill-desert. It compels the substitution of self-loathing and self-condemnation for self-respect. It is the consciousness of having no claim to the approval of either God or man. It depresses with fear; it overshadows with superstition; it crushes in despair. It makes life a dread of the future, a despair of the present, a lament for the past. The whole consciousness becomes concentrated in the one daily and doleful cry: "We are all poor creatures."

Both the ethnic religions and the ethnic philosophies fail in the presence of this terrific fact — the consciousness of sin. Neither can evoke a life of virtue from it. Their failures, however, are in opposite directions.

All religions necessarily intensify the sense of sin. They quicken the moral nature; they bring God and the unseen world and retribution close to the soul. The first effect is depressing. The greatness of God overpowers, and his

holiness terrifies. The presence of an unseen, mysterious, everywhere-present Being, whom no cunning can deceive, no art elude, no speed evade, and no power resist, paralyzes the soul; his burning inquisition for sin scorches it. It is only as God is known in his redeeming love that his presence inspires and quickens. The defect of all ethnic religions is, that while they bring God near to the soul, they bring only the depressing influences of his presence; while intensifying the sense of guilt, they leave the soul scorching in its fiery heat. The service to which they impel is sacrifice and penance to appease the divine wrath, not the life of love which ennobles the man. The service itself is a superstition which abases. We cannot respect the man whose life is a prolonged abjectness and terror in the sense of guilt, a continued suppression of the joyousness and freedom of the spirit, whose loftiest meditations are on a skull and crossbones, and whose greatest deeds are the infliction of torture on himself or compelling his sons to go through the fire to Moloch. Hence in heathen civilization the highest nobleness of character has not ordinarily been the outgrowth of the popular religion.

Philosophy, on the contrary, turning away from religion, refuses to take notice of sin. It develops virtue from self-respect. It develops a right character, not from the sense of sin, but from the pride of virtue. Such was stoicism, the best type of Greek philosophy. At the first glance heathen philosophy seems to have taken the better side of human nature, and to have realized a higher result than the heathen religions. But philosophy reaches only a few. Even with the few whom it reaches, it is as one-sided as the religions. It gets rid of the sense of sin only by ignoring it. But it can ignore sin only by ignoring God. Man cannot know God without the consciousness of sin. But when the consciousness of sin is awakened, self-respect ceases and a virtue founded on self-respect is no longer possible. Heathen philosophy, therefore, leads away from God; or, if the idea of God is retained, it is so abstract, so difficult to be grasped,

so impersonal, as to be divested of moral power. Thus excluding God and the sense of sin, self-respect, which philosophy presents as the essence of virtue, becomes pride or self-sufficiency, which is the essence of sin. Philosophy preaches the very gospel which the serpent preached in paradise: "Ye shall be as gods"; it inculcates the very self-sufficiency which was the original germ of human sinfulness, and which is declared by Paul to be also its culmination in the anti-Christ, "who, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Besides, the sense of sin springs from the facts of human history and character; philosophy ignores it, but does not remove nor heal it. Therefore, in spite of philosophy, it perpetually re-asserts itself.

Christianity, more than any other religion, by its clearer revelation of God and of his law, declares his holiness and justice, and intensifies the sense of sin and guilt. At the same time, by its revelation in Christ of God's redeeming love to sinners, it takes from the divine presence its power to terrify and paralyze, and makes it the source of inspiration and hope; the sinner looks in God's face and sees a Father hastening to the returning prodigal to fall on his neck and kiss him. It takes from the sense of sin its power to depress and abase, frees from the abjectness of self-contempt, terror, and despair; and creating instead the consciousness of justification and of sonship with God, quickens a new life of free, joyous, and loving service. Thus quenching the consuming fire of conscious guilt, and transforming the sense of sin into dewy and refreshing penitence, it calls forth virtue from the consciousness of sin, life out from death. The religious life is no longer a life of penance and sacrifice to appease God's wrath, but it is the budding and blossoming and fruiting of the soul in faith and love beneath the outpouring of God's love, like the opening life of spring beneath the returning sun. Christianity thus combines the otherwise separate and incompatible ideas of religion and philosophy; and in a Christian excellence distinctively religious and

growing out of the sense of sin, realizes the nobleness of character which philosophy abortively attempts to develop from the pride of virtue.

This origin of Christian virtue gives it the following peculiarities. The sense of sin is deepened by the thought that the sin is against God's love. Thus is brought into it an element of tenderness and penitence, as if God's love had melted the sense of sin and guilt into its own nature as love. Hence is also developed in Christian virtue a peculiar delicacy of spiritual sensibility to the difference between right and wrong; the soul is sensitive to sin, as the eye to a speck of dust. Another characteristic is aspiration. The sense of sin, healed through God's redeeming grace, issues in the most intense aspiration to be free from sin and to be like God. The aspiration is lofty as well as intense. God in Christ is not only the Redeemer of man, but his ideal. He dares to aspire both to live in intimacy with him and to be like him. His whole life becomes an aspiration, a prayer to be morally perfect as God is; to live and love like Christ. Here the Christian character takes up into itself all the virtues which cluster around self-respect and constitute nobleness, no longer as philosophy presented them, as pride and self-sufficiency, but transfigured by the knowledge of redemption, of intimacy and sonship with God, and of the promise of being like him. The incitement to a noble life now is, "See that ye walk worthy of your high calling, that ye walk worthy of God."<sup>1</sup> Also the Christian's belief that the Holy Spirit dwells in him — so much above the inspiration by which Socrates thought himself restrained from evil — gives courage to attempt great things and joyous confidence in the realization of the highest ends. And, further, on account of his own deep sense of sin, a Christian, in doing good, will seek first, and as indispensable to blessedness, the deliverance of men from sin by bringing them, through the consciousness of sin, into reconciliation with God by faith in his redeeming

<sup>1</sup> J. S. Mill is singularly at fault when he suggests the perfecting of ethical science by the recognition of *Nobleness* as a new constituent.

love. He stands, therefore, in uncompromising antagonism to sin. No fondness for the sinner can beguile him into consent to the sinner's transgression. A Christian must indeed be meek and forgiving. But a man can forgive only personal offences. Sin is not a personal offence against the Christian; it is an offence against reason, against the universe, against God. "Who is this that forgiveth sins also? Who can forgive sins but God only?" At the same time his own consciousness of sin takes away from his uncompromising antagonism to sin, all ill-will, arrogance, and self-righteousness, and creates the tenderest compassion for sinners and Christ-like earnestness to save them from their sins.

Since Christianity, more than any other religion, intensifies the sense of sin, while bringing with it justification and deliverance through God's redeeming grace, it is not surprising that the Christian experience often moves the soul to its depths, passing from profound sorrow and darkness, through many fears and struggles, to the joy of forgiveness and the enthusiasm of faith and love. Such was the experience of Paul, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, Edwards. Such an experience has been familiar in all ages. This type of experience, and the sense of sin out of which it grows, are less noticeable now than in some former ages. This does not necessarily prove a decay of religion. One may grow up with faith in God's redeeming grace healing the sense of sin, and so the whole life may pass peacefully beneath the sunshine of God's love. This type of the Christian life has never been wanting. As Christianity shall prevail this will be more and more the prevalent type. On the other hand, the infrequency of this type of experience may indicate the decay of religion. The placidity may not be the peacefulness of faith and hope joined with earnestness and energy of love; it may be the placidity of indifference. If your soul has never been moved to its depths in an experience like that of Paul and Augustine, you have no reason to look down on them as from the superior heights of a serenity above the storms. Your placidity may indicate the superficialness of your life. You

may never have sounded the depths of your own being, nor known the grandeur of its relations, obligations, and possibilities. It is a fatal exchange to escape the consciousness of sin by losing the consciousness of God.

We ought to look with suspicion on speculations which tend to destroy the consciousness of sin and to stigmatize as fanaticism and superstition the deeper emotions, the more severe inward struggles and the more extatic joys of religious experience. Such is the rationalism now gaining some currency, which regards Christianity as one of the religions of the world, in the same plane with the heathen religions, and, like them, partial, imperfect, and destined to pass away, and which offers itself as containing the essential truths of all religions and worthy to supersede them all. This rationalism starts from the pride of virtue, and ignores the sense of sin. It is a philosophy, not a religion. We see in it, what has been often seen in former ages, philosophy striving to thrust out religion and to usurp its place.

For the antagonism of the ancient philosophers to religion an apology is possible. Even in that antagonism the philosophy commands respect as a legitimate outgrowth of human thought. When religion intensified the sense of sin only to abase the soul in terror, when the religious service was itself a superstition, it is not wonderful that the best minds should reclaim the nobler elements of humanity, even at the expense of religion. But now that Christ has come, reconciling man to God, and quickening the noblest growth of humanity out of the sense of sin, there is no longer an apology for philosophy in maintaining its antagonistic position. And this modern rationalism has no right to disown its own parentage and family, and to baptize itself as a religion. It has no right to teach as its own the love of God to man, seeking to bring man into friendly relations to himself, the right of man to loving intimacy with God, the divine promise of the progress and renovation of society, and the human hope of its realization through the energy of God's love acting as a life-giving and renovating power in

human history, nor the privilege and duty of man to be a worker with God for this end, as Jesus was, and with love as all-embracing and as self-sacrificing as his. For these are truths for which the world is indebted distinctively to Christ. It is a historical fact that, aside from Christ, religion has been too great for sinful man, and has crushed him by its greatness; the approach of God to the sinful soul has terrified and paralyzed it. Christ alone has brought God in his majesty, the law in its purity and supremacy, eternity in its grandeur and glories close to the human soul as a power of inspiration and of life. When modern rationalism appropriates to itself Christian ideas, christens itself religion, and offers itself to supersede Christianity, it is still only a philosophy disguised in what it has appropriated from Christianity.

## II. Christian Virtue springs from Faith in God.

Philosophy fails to recognize this, or positively denies it. Thus Cicero makes Cotta urge, as an indisputable maxim, that men do not look to God for help in leading a virtuous life: "All men regard outward advantages, fruitful harvests, and the comforts of a prosperous life as received from the gods; but no man ever referred his own virtue to God as a divine gift. And this is right; for we ourselves are justly praised for our own virtue, and properly glory in it; which could not be, if virtue were a gift from God. But when we obtain honor or wealth, or escape calamity, then we give thanks to the gods, and take no credit to ourselves. Who ever gave thanks to the gods for being a good man? We give thanks only that we are rich, honored, in health; and for these things we pray to Jupiter optimus maximus, but never that he would make us just, temperate, or wise."<sup>1</sup> The ethical philosophy of the stoics involved in its fundamental principle the sufficiency of man for himself in a life of virtue.

Since, as has been already said, the heathen religions

<sup>1</sup> *De Natura Deorum*, Lib. iii. cap. 36.

present God as a power to menace and alarm, since the sentiment which they awaken is superstitious fear, and the service to which they impel is sacrifice and penance to appease the divine wrath, they neither present God as the object of faith, nor make that faith an inspiration to a life of virtue.

Christianity teaches, on the contrary, that virtue springs from faith in God. The doctrine of justification by faith does not mean, as it is often misrepresented, and sometimes by Christians themselves misunderstood, that God is induced to pardon a sinner on account of an act of faith which the sinner performed one day. This misconception makes faith an isolated act, and not the inspiration of a life; and implies that its efficacy consists in its persuasiveness with God, not in quickening and inspiring the man. Even the sense of pardon thus viewed is not ennobling; for it is only the criminal's gladness that he has escaped penalty, not the consciousness of sonship towards God. Religion thus becomes a hope of heaven, instead of a divine life on earth, and the religious life is sundered from the secular. The gospel is distinctively God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. God loves the sinner, and seeks him in his sins to bring him back to himself, as the shepherd seeks the lost sheep. He encompasses the sinner with his love, as the sunshine encompasses every earthly thing with its quickening and invigorating beams, grace sufficient for him in every need and every emergency of his life. Faith is the sinner's trust in God as thus revealed in Christ, the Redeemer of men from sin. Faith does not make God a Redeemer, nor induce him thus to love and seek the sinner; it simply trusts God as being thus the Redeemer of sinners, and revealed as such in Christ. Christian faith is distinctively faith in Christ, because, while without Christ God is known as a holy God, as a Lawgiver, a Judge, a God who inflicts just retribution on sin, it is only in Christ that God is clearly known as loving even sinners, and extending to them grace always freely offered and always sufficient for

them. Faith is the sinner's confidence in this divine love. The life of faith in God is, therefore, a life of filial trust, of loving service, of confidential intimacy. Faith thus becomes an inspiration, at every moment quickening to a life of love.

This origin of Christian virtue causes in it certain peculiarities.

It brings into virtue the element of personal love to God. Christian faith is not primarily the intellect's belief of a truth; but it is the heart's trust in a person. Trench says: "There is a natural gravitation of souls, which attracts them to mighty personalities—an instinct in man which tells him that he is never so great as when looking up to one greater than himself, that he is made for this looking upward, to find, and finding to rejoice and to be ennobled in, a nobler than himself." In the emergencies of life men feel the need of a wisdom, a goodness, a power superior to their own. When they find, or think they find, the possessor of these superior endowments, they trust him; and him whom they trust they follow. In a village, a college, a political party, in every association of men are leaders who thus draw to themselves a following. The man who thus trusts a leader surrenders himself to him, thinks his thoughts, adopts his policy, is his man. When, in addition to superior endowments the follower sees in his leader intense love to him, attested by disinterested and self-sacrificing services, and when he has thus received from him the most signal benefits, the self-surrender of the follower glows with enthusiastic loyalty to the leader. Such is the nature of Christian faith. When we feel our ignorance, weakness, and sin, and then discover both God's greatness and his love in Christ, we are drawn to him, we trust him, we surrender ourselves to him, we think his thoughts, we do his bidding, we are his men. Thus there enters into Christian virtue the element of personal trust, affection, and loyalty. We respond to the call of Jesus: "Do it for my sake." For his sake Christians attempt the great things of Christian heroism, and patiently do the little things of a righteous and loving

life. Thus a Christian life is lifted up, not merely to obey an abstract command, but to please the loving God, the Redeemer.

This personal element inspires Christian virtue with a peculiar enthusiasm. Christianity goes even beyond philosophy in teaching the eternity and immutability of right, the supremacy of law, and the sternness of duty. Even more than philosophy it clarifies and quickens the conscience and makes its voice terrible. But in quickening trust in God's redeeming grace, it warms and vitalizes duty with the enthusiasm of personal affection and loyalty. It tints the cold precepts of reason with the glow of sentiment. Thus it combines the two mightiest principles of human action, the clear truths of reason, and the inflexible commands of conscience with the glow, enthusiasm, and passion of personal confidence and love.

Thus the moral element acquires a prominence and power in the life of the individual and the civilization of Christian nations which neither philosophy nor any heathen religion has been able to give. The life of the individual becomes an aspiration and a prayer for moral perfection; and society concentrates its thought and action on the removal of moral wrongs and the realization of moral ideals.

Since virtue originates in faith, the converse is also true, that faith unfolds into virtue. "Faith worketh by love." Thus morality and religion are brought into unity. Virtue grows out of religion, and religion unfolds into virtue. Thus the secular life is no longer separated from the religious, but is lifted into the religious, and ennobled as being itself a service of God. So long as religion is conceived of only as an action of man to propitiate the offended God, men offer their sacrifices, perform their penances, and commit their crimes. It is only when Christianity reveals God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and proclaims: "There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," that religious service ceases to be sacrifice and penance, and becomes a service of universal love. Then its very garment is light.

It is a remarkable fact in history that wherever Christianity has not come in its purity, an impassable gulf has separated the secular thought and life from the religious. In the sphere of thought philosophy and religion remain irreconcilable. Philosophy either turns away from religion, as a sphere with which it has no concern, and constructs some fine theory of virtue without God; or it turns against it in avowed scepticism. Religion either turns away from philosophy as a sphere of thought so alien that its truths cannot be antagonistic to religious doctrine, as two bodies moving on different parallels cannot meet, as the university of Paris is said to have decided that a certain proposition was true in philosophy but false in theology; or religion assails philosophy as infidel and usurps the whole domain of thought.

The same antagonism appears in practical life. Religion either abandons the secular life as essentially worldliness, and withdraws to the desert or the cloister; or it attempts to crush the native instincts, and to occupy life with a saintliness which is ascetic, dehumanizing, and ghastly; or else taking up both spheres into one life, it gives us the Pharisee, making long prayers in his religious life and devouring widows' houses in his secular life, tithing mint and anise to the Lord but driving hard bargains with men, lengthening his own face in sanctimoniousness while grinding the faces of the poor.

But when the gospel of salvation by faith in God is received, this antagonism disappears. Philosophy acknowledges God; morality finds its root and vitality in faith; the whole action of life goes on religiously in filial trust and loving service towards God and confidential intimacy with him. Thus while scope is given to the loftiest enthusiasm and heroism of Christian love in the service of man, the humblest life and the most petty duties are ennobled as a service of God — lifted and luminous in the divine love, like a speck of dust floating and shining in the sunshine.

III. The Christian Law of Love is distinguished by superior Clearness and Comprehensiveness in the Enunciation both of the Principle and its Applications.

In comparing the moral teachings of heathen philosophy with those of Christ, it is necessary to suggest the caution that some recent writers overstate the merits of the former, and depreciate, and sometimes even misrepresent, the latter. In their obvious partiality to heathenism they become its eulogists rather than its critics. If they find a fine moral sentiment they expand and display it, as the optician expands a ray of light in all the colors of the rainbow. From their own knowledge of Christianity they interpret into an isolated sentence of a heathen author a meaning which the connection does not warrant, and which the author did not design to express. They gather fragmentary truths scattered through the heathen literature of all ages to obtain material to compare with the teachings of Christ. They give niggardly recognition of the beauty and completeness of his teachings. One recent writer has even put forth the gross misrepresentation that the morality of the New Testament is entirely negative or prohibitory, and disparages it as such in contrast with the positive requirements of heathen ethics. Others misrepresent it as in its tendencies wholly antimundane and ascetic. Therefore, while admitting a universal moral law cognizable by human reason, truth still requires the assertion that the law of love, as declared and applied in the New Testament, is superior to any heathen exposition of that law and its applications. To exemplify this thought the following distinctive peculiarities of Christian love may be mentioned.

The enunciation of the law is more clear and comprehensive. Especially is this apparent when we know that the sacrificial love of Christ in his humiliation, sufferings, and death to redeem man from sin, is itself the expression of the true nature of love in God, and the type and measure of all love in man.

Since Christian love grows out of faith, it involves the unity of religion and virtue. Christianity implies communion

with God not less than service to man. The communion with God gives quickening, guidance, purity, and efficacy to the service of man. Worship does not terminate on itself; is not a self-friction to induce a glow of emotion; it is the soul coming to God for his help in doing the work of a Christian life. In this particular, also, Christian love has a superior comprehensiveness and completeness. While it manifests itself in the two opposite poles of faith and love, it completes the electric circuit of the Christian character.

In its applications it becomes philanthropy. It manifests itself in reverence for man, a sacred regard to his rights, a zeal for his highest welfare. And this love to man becomes universal, as opposed to all clannishness and all enmities of race.

It also inspires hope for the future of society and quickens the progress of man.

It is not necessary, however, to delay on the question whether, in the enunciation of moral principles, Jesus declared anything absolutely new. The grand distinction of Christianity is that it has made its ethical principles powers of life and of civilization. When we pass from heathen literature to Christian, the change in the tone of thought and feeling is like a change of climate. And a similar change affects us in the transition from the study of heathen life and civilization. The Christian church in the outset conquered the world by Christ-like love. When in the Decian persecution the plague desolated Alexandria, and the heathen in terror abandoned their sick and dead, the Christians formed themselves into classes, and devoted their personal services and contributed of their property to the care of the sick and the burial of the dead of their persecutors. The same was their action in the plague at Antioch and elsewhere. And in the progress of Christ's kingdom the law of love is slowly but irresistibly gaining for itself assertion and realization, not only in the enthusiasm and heroism of individuals, but in the constitutions and laws of states, and the customs and civilization of society. Lecky, alluding to the reconstruction

of society after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, says : that after making the fullest allowance for other influences, it remains "an undoubted fact that the reconstruction of society was mainly the work of Christianity. . . . It did this in three ways ; it abolished slavery, it created charity, it inculcated self-sacrifice."<sup>1</sup> The reverence for man, the regard to his rights and welfare, the broad philanthropy characterizing modern civilization, are the outgrowth of Christianity, of the life and love of Christ penetrating the life of humanity.

#### IV. A Distinctive peculiarity of Christian Virtue is Spiritual Freedom.

From the ancient Pythagoreans, who defined virtue as "a habit of duty," to Reid, who defines it as consisting "in a fixed purpose or resolution to act according to our sense of duty," ethical philosophy has recognized no principle of virtue higher or more effective than the sense of duty. This is, indeed, a grand principle ; and its presentation by some philosophers rises to the sublime.<sup>2</sup> Christianity does not reject it. Christianity broadens and spiritualizes the

<sup>1</sup> History of Rationalism, Vol. ii. pp. 227-229.

<sup>2</sup> "Duty! thou great, sublime name! thou dost not insinuate thyself by offering the pleasing and the popular, but thou requirest obedience; although to move the will thou dost not threaten and terrify, but simply settest forth a law, which of itself finds entrance to the mind, which, even though against the will, wins approval and reverence, if not obedience, before which the passions are silent, even though they work secretly against it. What origin is worthy of thee, and where is the root of thy noble pedigree, which proudly disowns all relationship with the passions, and descent from which is the indispensable condition of that worth which alone man can of himself confer on himself? It can be nothing less than that which lifts man above himself as part of the world of sense, which unites him to an order of things which the understanding can only think, and which subjects to itself the entire world of sense, and the empirically determined existence of man in time. It is nothing less than personality; that is, freedom from and independence of all the mechanism of nature, which implies the subjection of the person considered as belonging to the world of sense, to his own personality so far as he belongs to the world of intelligence. No wonder, then, that man, belonging to both worlds, in regard to his highest destiny, must regard his own being with reverence and its laws with the highest veneration." — *Kant, Kritik der Praktischen Vernunft*, p. 214.

law, and emphasizes its authority, its immutability, and its sanctions. It quickens the conscience, and adds to the delicacy of its discernment and the authority of its commands. It makes the voice of duty to be nothing less than the voice of God. But the voice of duty is the voice of God proclaiming his law; it is in its nature regulative, not impulsive; it carries in it the constraint and restraint of authority, not inspiration; it is like the balance-wheel in machinery, regulating, but not originating, the motion. Christianity makes virtue consist in love inspired by faith in God's redeeming grace. Love outstrips the sense of duty; it moves with the quickness of the lightning, which the thunder of the law follows, but cannot overtake. Before conscience can utter its "categoric imperative," the willing work of love is done. A virtue driven only by the sense of duty, and never quickened by love, is imperfect. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." In ethical philosophy moral power is presented as regulative and restrictive; in Christianity, as motive, inspiration, life. The former gives us only law and government; the latter gives us also gospel and redemption.

Therefore freedom, spontaneousness, joyousness, are distinctively and pre-eminently characteristic of Christian virtue. It is a new life — faith working by love, and spontaneously unfolding in all the beauty and fruitfulness of a Christian life. It is an entire misapprehension and misrepresentation of Christianity to say that it restrains the freedom and development of humanity, and suppresses the spontaneousness and joyousness of life. There may be a propriety in bringing this charge against ethical philosophy which presents nothing higher than the restraints and constraints of the sense of duty; and still more against the ethnic religions, which make the fear of the divine wrath for past transgressions more urgent than the sense of duty commanding to obedience. But the contrary is true of Christianity. It reveals to the sinner God's redeeming love in Christ; and

faith in God the Redeemer becomes the inspiration of a new life. It is precisely this Christian faith which creates in man the true consciousness of his own greatness and worth, quickens irrepressible aspirations to realize the highest possibilities of his being, delivers him from the bondage of passion and desire, quickens him to obey the lofty commands of reason, and to aim to realize the ideals of truth, right, and perfection, makes his obedience spontaneous, and gives him in obedience the consciousness of freedom. This is the service of filial love, as distinguished from the servile spirit of bondage. It is the freedom wherewith Christ maketh free.