

wellbeing of their sage was independent, not only of external things and bodily conditions, but of time itself; it was fully realized in a single exercise of wisdom and could not be increased by duration. This paradox is violent, but it is quite in harmony with the spirit of Stoicism; and we are more startled to find that the Epicurean sage, no less than the Stoic, is to be happy even on the rack; that his happiness, too, is unimpaired by being restricted in duration, when his mind has apprehended the natural limits of life; that, in short, Epicurus makes no less strenuous efforts than Zeno to eliminate imperfection from the conditions of human existence. This characteristic, however, is the key to the chief differences between Epicureanism and the more naive hedonism of Aristippus. The latter system gave the simplest and most obvious answer to the inquiry after ultimate good for man; but besides being liable, when developed consistently and unreservedly, to offend the common moral consciousness, it conspicuously failed to provide the "completeness" and "security" which, as Aristotle says, "one divines to belong to man's true Good." Philosophy, in the Greek view, should be the art as well as the science of good life; and hedonistic philosophy would seem a bungling and uncertain art of pleasure, as pleasure is ordinarily conceived. Nay, it would even be found that the habit of philosophical reflection often operated adversely to the attainment of this end, by developing the thinker's self-consciousness, so as to disturb that normal relation to external objects on which the zest of ordinary enjoyment depends. Hence we find that later thinkers of the Cyrenaic school felt themselves compelled to change their fundamental notion; thus Theodorus defined the good as "gladness" (*χαρά*) depending on wisdom, as distinct from mere pleasure, while Hegesias proclaimed that happiness was unattainable, and that the chief function of wisdom was to render life painless by producing indifference to all things that give pleasure. But by such changes their system lost the support that it had had in the pleasure-seeking tendencies of ordinary men; indeed, with Hegesias the pursuit of pleasure has turned into its opposite, and one is not surprised to learn that this hedonist's lectures were forbidden as stimulating to suicide. It was clear that if philosophic hedonism was to be established on a broad and firm basis, it must somehow combine in its notion of good what the plain man naturally sought with what philosophy could plausibly offer. Such a combination was effected, with some little violence, by Epicurus; whose system with all its defects shewed a remarkable power of standing the test of time, as it attracted the unqualified adhesion of generation after generation of disciples for a period of more than six centuries.

Epicurus maintains, on the one hand, as emphatically as Aristippus, that pleasure is the sole ultimate good, and pain the sole evil; that no pleasure is to be rejected except for its painful consequences, and no pain to be chosen except as a means to greater pleasure; that the stringency of all laws and customs depends solely on the legal and social penalties attached to their violation; that, in short, all virtuous conduct and all speculative activity are empty and useless, except as contributing to the pleasantness of the agent's life. And he assures us that he means by pleasure what plain men mean by it; and that if the gratifications of appetite and sense are discarded, the notion is emptied of its significance. So far the system would seem to suit the inclinations of the most thorough-going voluptuary. But its aspect changes when we learn that the highest point of pleasure, whether in body or mind, is to be attained by the mere removal of pain or disturbance, after which pleasure admits of variation only and not of augmentation; that therefore the utmost gratification of which the body is capable may be provided by the simplest means, and that

"natural wealth" is no more than any man can earn. When further we are told that the attainment of happiness depends almost entirely upon insight and right calculation, fortune having very little to do with it; that the pleasures and pains of the mind are far more important than those of the body, owing to the accumulation of feeling caused by memory and anticipation; and that an indispensable condition of mental happiness lies in relieving the mind of all superstitions, which can only be effected by a thorough knowledge of the physical universe,—we see that an ample place is secured in this system for the exercise of the philosophic intellect. So again, in the stress that Epicurus lays on the misery which the most secret wrong-doing must necessarily cause the doer, from the perpetual fear of discovery, and in his exuberant exaltation of the value of disinterested friendship, we recognize a sincere, though not completely successful, effort to avoid the offence that consistent egoistic hedonism is apt to give to ordinary human feeling. As regards friendship, indeed, the example of Epicurus, who was a man of eager and affectionate temperament, and peculiarly unexclusive sympathies,¹ was probably more effective than his teaching. The genial fellowship of the philosophic community that he collected in his garden remained a striking feature in the traditions of his school; and certainly the ideal which Stoics and Epicureans equally cherished, of a brotherhood of sages united in harmonious smooth-flowing existence, was most easily realized on the Epicurean plan of withdrawing from political and dialectical conflict to simple living and serene leisure, in imitation of the eternal leisure of the gods apart from the fortuitous course of atoms that we call a world.

The two systems that have just been described were those that most prominently attracted the attention of the ancient world, so far as it was directed to ethics, from their almost simultaneous origin to the end of the 2d century A.D., when Stoicism almost vanishes from our view. But side by side with them the schools of Plato and Aristotle still maintained a continuity of tradition, and a more or less vigorous life; and philosophy, as a recognized element of Græco-Roman culture, was understood to be divided among these four branches. The internal history, however, of the four schools was very different. We find no development worthy of notice in Aristotelian ethics; in fact the philosophic energy of this school seems to have been somewhat weighed down by the inheritance of the master's vast work, and distracted by the example of his many-sided activity. The Epicureans, again, from their unquestioning acceptance of the "dogmas" of their founder, almost deserve to be called a sect rather than a school. On the other hand, the changes in Stoicism are very noteworthy; and we are peculiarly well able to trace them, as the only original writings of this school which we possess are those of the later Roman Stoics. These changes may be partly attributed to the natural inner development of the system, partly to the reaction of the Roman mind on the essentially Greek doctrine which it received,—a reaction all the more inevitable from the very affinity between the Stoic sage and the ancient Roman ideal of manliness. It was natural that the earlier Stoics should be chiefly occupied with delineating the inner and outer characteristics of ideal wisdom and virtue, and that the gap between the ideal sage and the actual philosopher, though never ignored, should yet be somewhat overlooked. But when the question "What is man's good?" had been answered by an elaborate exposition of perfect wisdom, the other question "How may a man

¹ It is noted of him that he did not disdain the co-operation either of women or of slaves in his philosophical labours.

² The last charge of Epicurus to his disciples is said to have been *τὸν δογματῶν μεμνησθαι*.

emerge from the misery and folly of the world, and get on the way towards wisdom?" would naturally attract attention; and the preponderance of moral over scientific interest, which was characteristic of the Roman mind, would tend to give this question especial prominence. Thus philosophy, in the view of Seneca and Epictetus, comes to present itself as the healer to whom men come from a sense of their weakness and disease,—whose business is "with the sick not with the whole;" the wisdom by which she heals is not something that needs long dissertations or dialectical subtleties, but rather continual practice, self-discipline, self-examination. The same sense of the gap between theory and fact gives to the religious element of Stoicism a new force and a new aspect; the soul, conscious of its weakness, leans on the thought of God, and in the philosopher's attitude towards external events, pious resignation preponderates over self-poised indifference; the old self-reliance of the reason, looking down on man's natural life as a mere field for its exercise, shrinks and dwindles, making room for a positive aversion to the flesh as an alien element imprisoning and hampering the spirit; the body has come to be a "corpse which the soul sustains,"¹ and life a "sojourn in a strange land;"² in short, the ethical idealism of Zeno has begun to borrow from the metaphysical idealism of Plato.

In no one of these schools was the outward coherence of tradition so much strained by inner changes as it was in Plato's. The alterations, however, in the metaphysical position of the Academics seem to have had less effect on their ethical teaching than might be expected, as, even during the period of Scepticism, they appear to have presented as probable the same general view of human good which Antiochus afterwards dogmatically announced as a revival of the common doctrine of the "ancients"—Plato and Aristotle. And during the eventful period of a century and a half that intervenes between Antiochus and Plutarch, we may suppose the school to have maintained the old controversy with Stoicism on much the same ground; accepting the formula of "life according to nature," but demanding that the "good" of man should refer to his nature as a whole, the good of his rational part being the chief element, and always preferable in case of conflict, but yet not absolutely his sole good. When, however, we have come to Plutarch, the same tendencies of change show themselves that we have noticed in later Stoicism. The conception of a normal harmony between the higher and lower elements of human life has begun to be disturbed, and the side of Plato's teaching that deals with the inevitable imperfections of the world of concrete experience becomes again prominent. For example, we find Plutarch adopting and amplifying the suggestion in Plato's latest treatise (the *Laus*) that this imperfection is due to a bad world-soul that strives against the good,—a suggestion which is alien to the general tenor of Plato's doctrine, and had consequently lain unnoticed during the intervening centuries. We observe, again, the value that Plutarch attaches, not merely to the sustenance and consolation of rational religion, but to the supernatural communications vouchsafed by the divinity to certain human beings in certain states,—as in dreams, through oracles, or by special warnings, like those of the genius of Socrates. For these flashes of intuition, he holds, the soul should be prepared by tranquil repose, and the subjugation of sensuality through abstinence. The same estrangement between mind and matter, the same ascetic effort to attain by aloofness from the body a pure receptivity for divine or semi-divine influences, is exhibited in the revived Pythagoreanism of the first and second centuries A.D. But the

general tendency that we are noting, did not find its full expression in a reasoned philosophical system until we come to the latest-born of the great thinkers of antiquity—the Egyptian Plotinus.

The system of Plotinus (205–270 A.D.) is a striking development of that element of Platonism which has had most fascination for the mediæval and even for the modern mind, but which had almost vanished out of sight for six centuries. At the same time the differences between this Neo-Platonism and the original Platonism are all the more noteworthy from the reverent adhesion to the latter which the former always maintains. Plato, we saw, identified good with the real essence of things; and this, again, with that in them which is definitely conceivable and knowable. It belongs to this view to regard the imperfection or badness of things as somewhat devoid of real being, and so incapable of being definitely thought or known; accordingly, we find that Plato has no technical term for that in the concrete sensible world which hinders it from perfectly expressing the abstract ideal world, and which in Aristotle's system is distinguished as absolutely formless matter (*ἄλη*). And so, when we pass from the ontology to the ethics of Platonism, we find that, though the highest life is only to be realized by turning away from concrete human affairs and their material environment, still the sensible world is not yet an object of positive moral aversion; it is rather something which the philosopher is seriously concerned to make as harmonious, good, and beautiful as possible. But in Neo-Platonism the inferiority of the condition in which the embodied human soul finds itself is more intensely and painfully felt; hence an express recognition of formless matter (*ἄλη*) as the "first evil," from which is derived the "second evil," body (*σῶμα*), to whose influence all the evil in the soul's existence is due. Accordingly the ethics of Plotinus represent, we may say, the moral idealism of the Stoics cut loose from nature. The only good of man is the pure existence of the soul, which in itself, apart from the contagion of the body, is perfectly free from error or defect; all higher or philosophic virtues (as distinguished from the merely "civic" forms of prudence, temperance, justice, and courage) are essentially purifications from this contagion; until the highest mode of goodness is reached, in which the soul has no community with the body, and is entirely turned towards reason. It should be observed that Plotinus himself is still too Platonic to hold that the absolute mortification of natural bodily appetites is required for purifying the soul; but this ascetic inference was drawn to the fullest extent by his disciple Porphyry.

There is, however, a yet higher point to be reached in the upward ascent of the Neo-Platonist from matter; and here the divergence of Plotinus from Platonic idealism is none the less striking, because it can to some extent support itself on Platonic authority.³ The cardinal assumption of Plato's metaphysic is, that the real is definitely thinkable and knowable in proportion as it is real; so that the further the mind advances in abstraction from sensible particulars and apprehension of real being, the more definite and clear its thought becomes. Plotinus, however, urges that, as all thought involves difference or duality of some kind, it cannot be the primary fact in the universe, what we call God. He must be an essential unity prior to this duality, a Being wholly without difference or determination; and, accordingly, the highest mode of human existence, in which the soul apprehends this absolute, must be

³ The ultimate notion in Plato's ontology is, as we saw, the "good;" and hence he is led to describe this good as "beyond thought and being" (*ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ οὐσίας*). The phrase might certainly suggest the metaphysical doctrine of Plotinus, though we cannot suppose that his philosophic inference presented itself even dimly to the mind of Plato.

¹ Epictetus.

² Marcus Aurelius.

one in which all definite thought is transcended, and all consciousness of self lost in the absorbing ecstasy. Porphyry tells us that his master Plotinus attained the highest state four times during the six years which he spent with him.

Neo-Platonism is originally Alexandrine, and more than a century of its existence has elapsed before we find it flourishing on the old Athenian soil. Hence it is often regarded as Hellenistic rather than Hellenic, a product of the mingling of Greek with Oriental civilization. But however Oriental may have been the cast of mind that eagerly embraced the theosophic and ascetic views that have just been described, the forms of thought by which these views were philosophically reached are essentially Greek; and it is by a thoroughly intelligible process of natural development, in which the intensification of the moral consciousness represented by Stoicism plays an important part, that the Hellenic pursuit of knowledge culminates in a preparation for ecstasy, and the Hellenic idealization of man's natural life ends in a settled antipathy to the body and its works. At the same time we ought not to overlook the affinities between the doctrine of Plotinus and that remarkable combination of Greek and Hebrew thought which Philo Judæus had expounded two centuries before; nor the fact that Neo-Platonism was developed in conscious antagonism to the new religion which had spread from Judea, and was already threatening the conquest of the Græco-Roman world, and also to those fantastic hybrids of Christianity and later paganism, the Gnostic systems; nor, finally, that it furnished the chief theoretical support in the last desperate struggle that was made under Julian to retain the old polytheistic worship. To the new world of thought, that after the failure of this struggle was definitely established upon the ruins of the old, we have now to turn.

III. CHRISTIANITY AND MEDIEVAL ETHICS.—In the present article we are not concerned with the origin of the Christian religion, nor with its outward history; the causes of its resistless development during the first three centuries; its final triumph over paganism; its failure to check the decay of the Hellenistic civilization that centered in Constantinople, or to withstand in the east and south the force of the new religious movement that burst from Arabia in the 7th century; its success in dominating the social chaos to which the barbarian invasions reduced the Western empire; the important part it took in educing from this chaos the new civilized order to which we belong; the complex and varying relations in which it has since stood to the political organizations, the social life, the progressive science, the literary and artistic culture of our modern world. Nor have we to consider the special doctrines that have formed the bond of union of the Christian communities in any other than their ethical aspect, their bearing on the systematization of human aims and activities. This aspect, however, must necessarily be prominent in discussing Christianity, which cannot be adequately treated if considered merely as a system of theological beliefs divinely revealed, and special observances divinely sanctioned; as it essentially claims to rule the whole man, and leave no part of his life out of the range of its regulating and transforming influences. It was not till the 4th century A.D. that the first attempt was made to offer anything like a systematic exposition of Christian morality; and nine centuries more had passed away before a genuinely philosophic intellect, trained by a full study of the greatest Greek thinker, undertook to give complete scientific form to the ethical doctrine of the Catholic church. Before, however, we take a brief survey of the progress of systematic ethics from Ambrose to Thomas Aquinas, it may be well to examine the chief features of the new moral consciousness that had spread through

Græco-Roman civilization, and was awaiting philosophic synthesis. In making this examination it will be convenient to consider first the new form or universal characteristics of Christian morality, and afterwards to note the chief points in the matter or particulars of duty and virtue which received an important development or emphasis from the new religion.

The first point to be noticed is the new conception of morality as the positive law of a theocratic community, possessing a written code imposed by divine revelation, and sanctioned by express divine promises and threatenings. It is true that we find in ancient thought, from Socrates downwards, the notion of a law of God, eternal and immutable, partly expressed and partly obscured by the various and shifting codes and customs of actual human societies. But the sanctions of this law were vaguely and, for the most part, feebly imagined; its principles were essentially unwritten and unpronounced, and thus not referred to the external will of an Almighty Being who claimed unquestioning submission, but rather to the reason that gods and men shared, by the exercise of which alone they could be adequately known and defined. Hence, even if the notion of law had been more prominent than it was in ancient ethical thought, it could never have led to a juridical, as distinct from a philosophical, treatment of morality. In Christianity, on the other hand, we early find that the method of moralists determining right conduct is to a great extent analogous to that of juriconsults interpreting a code. It is assumed that divine commands have been implicitly given for all occasions of life, and that they are to be ascertained in particular cases by interpretation and application of the general rules obtained from texts of scripture, and by analogical inference from scriptural examples. This juridical method descended naturally from the Jewish theocracy, of which Christendom was a universalization. Moral insight, in the view of the most thoughtful Jews, was essentially knowledge of the divine law, to which practical efficacy was given by trust in God's promises and fear of his judgments; this law having been partly written and promulgated by Moses, partly revealed in the fervid utterances of the later prophets, partly handed down through oral tradition from immemorial antiquity, and having further, before Judaism gave birth to Christianity, received an extensive development through the commentaries and supplementary maxims of several generations of students. Christianity inherited the notion of a written divine code acknowledged as such by the "true Israel"—now potentially including the whole of mankind, or at least the chosen of all nations,—on the sincere acceptance of which the Christian's share of the divine promises to Israel depended. And though the ceremonial part of the old Hebrew code was altogether rejected, and with it all the supplementary jurisprudence resting on tradition and erudite commentary, still God's law was believed to be contained in the sacred books of the Jews, supplemented by the records of Christ's teaching and the writings of his apostles. By the recognition of this law the church was constituted as an ordered community, essentially distinct from the state; the distinction between the two was sharpened and hardened by the withdrawal of the early Christians from civic life, to avoid the performance of idolatrous ceremonies imposed as official expressions of loyalty, and by the persecutions which they had to endure, when the spread of an association apparently so hostile to the framework of ancient society had at length caused the imperial government serious alarm. Nor was the antithesis obliterated by the recognition of Christianity as the state religion under Constantine. The law of God and its interpreters still remained quite distinct from the secular law and jurists of the Roman empire; though the former

was of course binding on all mankind, the church was none the less a community of persons who regarded themselves as both specially pledged and specially enabled to obey it,—a community, too, that could not be entered except by a solemn ceremony typifying a spiritual new birth.

Thus the fundamental difference between morality and (human) legality only came out more clearly in consequence of the jural form in which the former was conceived. The ultimate sanctions of the moral code were the infinite rewards and punishments awaiting the immortal soul hereafter; but the church early felt the necessity of withdrawing the privileges of membership from persons guilty of grave offences, and only allowing them to be gradually regained by a solemn ceremonial expressive of repentance, protracted through several years; while in the case of still graver sins this exclusion lasted till death, or was even made absolute. For minor offences, again, all Christians were called upon to express penitence ceremonially, by fasting and abstinence from permitted pleasures, as well as verbally in public and private devotions. "Excommunication" and "penance" thus came to be temporal ecclesiastical sanctions of the moral law; as the graduation of these sanctions naturally became more careful and minute, a correspondingly detailed classification of offences was rendered necessary; the regulations for observing the ordinary fasts and festivals of the church became similarly elaborate; and thus a system of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, prohibitive and ceremonial, was gradually produced, somewhat analogous to that of the rejected Judaism. At the same time this tendency to develop and make prominent a scheme of external duties has always been balanced and counteracted in Christianity by the ineffaceable remembrance of its original antithesis to Jewish legalism. We find that this antithesis, as fantastically understood and exaggerated by some of the Gnostic sects of the 2d and 3d centuries A.D., led, not merely to theoretical antinomianism, but even (if the charges of their orthodox opponents are not entirely to be discredited) to gross immorality of conduct. A similar tendency has shown itself at other periods of church history. And though such antinomianism has always been sternly repudiated by the moral consciousness of Christendom, it has never been forgotten that "inwardness," rightness of heart or spirit, is the special and pre-eminent characteristic of Christian goodness. It must not, of course, be supposed that the need of something more than mere fulfilment of external duty was ignored even by the later Judaism. Rabbinic erudition could not forget the repression of vicious desires in the tenth commandment, the stress laid in Deuteronomy on the necessity of heartfelt and loving service to God, or the inculcations by later prophets of humility and faith. "The real and only Pharisee," says the Talmud, "is he who does the will of his Father because he loves Him." But it remains true that the contrast with the "righteousness of the scribes and pharisees" has always served to mark the requirement of "inwardness" as a distinctive feature of the Christian code,—an inwardness not merely negative, tending to the repression of vicious desires as well as vicious acts, but also involving a positive rectitude of the inner state of the soul.

In this aspect Christianity invites comparison with Stoicism, and indeed with pagan ethical philosophy generally, if we except the hedonistic schools. Rightness of purpose, preference of virtue for its own sake, suppression of vicious desires, were made essential points by the Aristotelians, who attached the most importance to outward circumstances in their view of virtue, no less than by the Stoics, to whom all outward things were indifferent. The fundamental differences between pagan and Christian

ethics do not depend on any difference in the value set on rightness of heart or purpose, but on different views of the essential form or conditions of this inward rightness. In neither case is it presented purely and simply as moral rectitude. By the pagan philosophers it was always conceived under the form of Knowledge or Wisdom, it being inconceivable to all the schools sprung from Socrates that a man could truly know his own good and yet deliberately choose anything else. This knowledge, as Aristotle held, might be permanently precluded by vicious habits, or temporarily obliterated by passion, but if present in the mind it must produce rightness of purpose. Or even if it were held with some of the Stoics that true wisdom was out of the reach of the best men actually living, it none the less remained the ideal condition of perfect human life; though all actual men were astray in folly and misery, knowledge was none the less the goal towards which the philosopher progressed, the realization of his true nature. By Christian evangelists and teachers, on the other hand, the inner springs of good conduct were generally conceived as Faith and Love. Of these notions the former has a somewhat complex ethical import; it seems to blend several elements differently prominent in different minds. Its simplest and commonest meaning is that emphasized in the contrast of "faith" with "sight;" where it signifies belief in the invisible divine order represented by the church, in the actuality of the law, the threats, the promises of God, in spite of all the influences in man's natural life that tend to obscure this belief. Out of this contrast there ultimately grew an essentially different opposition between faith and knowledge or reason, according to which the theological basis of ethics was contrasted with the philosophical; the theologians maintaining sometimes that the divine law is essentially arbitrary, the expression of will, not reason; more frequently that its reasonableness is inscrutable, and that actual human reason should confine itself to examining the credentials of God's messengers, and not the message itself. But in early Christianity this latter antithesis was as yet undeveloped; faith means simply force in clinging to moral and religious conviction, whatever their precise rational grounds may be; this force, in the Christian consciousness, being inseparably bound up with personal loyalty and trust towards Christ, the leader in the battle with evil that is being fought, the ruler of the kingdom to be realized. So far, however, there is no ethical difference between Christian faith and that of Judaism, or its later imitation, Mahometanism; except that the personal affection of loyal trust is peculiarly stirred by the blending of human and divine natures in Christ, and the rule of duty impressively taught by the manifestation of His perfect life. A more distinctively Christian, and a more deeply moral, significance is given to the notion in the antithesis of "faith" and "works." Here faith means more than loyal acceptance of the divine law and reverent trust in the lawgiver; it implies a consciousness, at once continually present and continually transcended, of the radical imperfection of all human obedience to the law, and at the same time of the irremissible condemnation which this imperfection entails. The Stoic doctrine of the worthlessness of ordinary human virtue, and the stern paradox that all offenders are equally, in so far as all are absolutely, guilty, find their counterparts in Christianity; but the latter, while maintaining this ideal severity in the moral standard, with an emotional consciousness of what is involved in it quite unlike that of the Stoic, at the same time overcomes its practical exclusiveness through faith. This faith, again, may be conceived in two modes, essentially distinct though usually combined. In one view it gives the believer strength to attain, by God's supernatural aid or "grace," a goodness of which he is

naturally incapable; in another view it gives him an assurance that, though he knows himself a sinner deserving of utter condemnation, a perfectly just God still regards him with favour on account of the perfect services and suffering of Christ. Of these views the former is the more catholic, more universally present in the Christian consciousness; the latter more deeply penetrates the mystery of the atonement, as learnt by the chief Protestant churches from the Pauline epistles.

But faith, however understood, is rather an indispensable pre-requisite than the essential motive principle of Christian good conduct. This is supplied by the other central notion, love. On love depends the "fulfilling of the law," and the sole moral value of Christian duty—that is, on love to God, in the first place, which in its fullest development must spring from Christian faith; and, secondly, love to all mankind, as the objects of divine love and sharers in the humanity ennobled by the incarnation. This derivative philanthropy, whether conceived as mingling with and intensifying natural human affection, or as absorbing and transforming it, characterizes the spirit in which all Christian performance of social duty is to be done; loving devotion to God being the fundamental attitude of mind that is to be maintained throughout the whole of the Christian's life. But further, as regards abstinence from unlawful acts and desires prompting to them, we have to notice another form in which the inwardness of Christian morality manifests itself, which, though less distinctive, should yet receive attention in any comparison of Christian ethics with the view of Græco-Roman philosophy. The profound horror with which the Christian's conception of a suffering as well as an avenging divinity tended to make him regard all condemnable acts was tinged with a sentiment which we may perhaps describe as a ceremonial aversion moralized,—the aversion, that is, to foulness or impurity. In all religions to some extent, but especially in Oriental religions, the natural dislike of material defilement has been elevated into a religious sentiment. In Judaism, in particular, we find it used to support a complicated system of quasi-sanitary abstinences and ceremonial purifications; at the same time, as the ethical element predominated in the Jewish religion, a moral symbolism was felt to reside in the ceremonial code, and thus aversion to impurity came to be a common form of the ethico-religious sentiment. Then, when Christianity threw off the Mosaic ritual, this religious sense of purity was left with no other sphere besides morality; while, from its highly idealized character, it was peculiarly well adapted for that repression of vicious desires which Christianity claimed as its special function.

Distinctive particulars of Christian morality.

When we examine the details of Christian morality, we find that most of its distinctive features are naturally connected with the more general characteristics just stated; though many of them may also be referred directly to the example and precepts of Christ, and in several cases they are clearly due to both causes, inseparably combined. We may notice, in the first place, that the conception of morality as a code which, if not in itself arbitrary, is yet to be accepted by men with unquestioning submission, tends naturally to bring into prominence the virtue of obedience to authority; just as the philosophic view of goodness as the realization of reason gives a special value to self-determination and independence (as we see more clearly in the post-Aristotelian schools where ethics is distinctly separated from politics). Again, the opposition between the natural world and the spiritual order into which the Christian has been born anew led not merely to a contempt equal to that of the Stoic for wealth, fame, power, and other objects of worldly pursuit, but also, for some time at least, to a comparative depreciation of the domestic and civic relations of

the natural man; while a keen sense of man's impotence to make this disengagement of the spirit complete induced the same hostility to the body as a clog and hindrance, that we find to some extent in Plato, but more fully developed in Neo-Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism, and other products of the mingling of Greek with Oriental thought. This latter feeling is exhibited in the value set on fasting in the Christian church from the earliest times, and in an extreme form in the self-torments of later monasticism; while both tendencies, anti-worldliness and anti-sensualism, seem to have combined in causing the preference of celibacy over marriage which is common to most early Christian writers.¹ Patriotism, again, and the sense of civic duty, the most elevated and splendid of all social sentiments in the general view of Græco-Roman civilization, tended, under the influence of Christianity, either to expand itself into universal philanthropy, or to concentrate itself on the ecclesiastical community. "We recognize one commonwealth, the world," says Tertullian; "we know," says Origen, "that we have a fatherland founded by the word of God." We might further derive from the general spirit of Christian unworldliness that repudiation of the secular modes of conflict, even in a righteous cause, which substituted a passive patience and endurance for the old pagan virtue of courage, in which the active element was prominent. Here, however, we clearly trace the influence of Christ's express prohibition of violent resistance to violence, and his inculcation, by example and precept, of a love that was to conquer even natural resentment. An extreme result of this influence is shown in Tertullian's view, that no Christian could properly hold the office of a secular magistrate in which he would have to doom to death, chains, imprisonment; but even more sober writers, such as Ambrose, extend Christian passivity so far as to preclude self-defence even against a murderous assault. The common sense of Christendom gradually shook off these extravagances; but the reluctance to shed blood lingered long, and was hardly extinguished even by the growing horror of heresy. We have a curious relic of this in the later times of ecclesiastical persecution, when the heretic was doomed to the stake that he might be punished in some manner "short of bloodshed."²

It is, however, in the impulse given to practical beneficence in all its forms, by the exaltation of love as the root of all virtues, that the most important influence of Christianity on the particulars of civilized morality is to be found; although the exact amount of this influence is here somewhat difficult to ascertain, since it merely carries further a development distinctly traceable in the history of pagan morality considered by itself. This development clearly appears when we compare the different post-Socratic systems of ethics. In Plato's exposition of the different virtues there is no mention whatever of benevolence, although his writings show a keen sense of the importance of friendship as an element of philosophic life, especially of the intense personal affection naturally arising between master and disciple. Aristotle goes somewhat further in recognizing the moral value of friendship (*φιλία*); and though he considers that in its highest form it can only be realized by the fellowship of the wise and good, he yet extends the notion so as to include the domestic affections, and takes notice of the importance of mutual kindness in binding together all human societies. Still in his formal statement of the different virtues, positive beneficence is only discernible under the notion of "liberality;" in which form its excellence is hardly distinguished from that of graceful profusion in self-regarding expenditure. Cicero,

¹ E.g., Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, Cyprian.

² *Citra sanguinis effusionem.*

on the other hand, in his well-known paraphrase of a Stoic treatise on external duties (*officia*), ranks the rendering of positive services to other men as a chief department of social duty; and the Stoics generally recognized the universal fellowship and natural mutual claims of human beings as such. Indeed, this recognition in later Stoicism is sometimes expressed with so much warmth of feeling as to be hardly distinguishable from Christian philanthropy. Nor was this regard for humanity merely a doctrine of the school. Partly through the influence of Stoic and other Greek philosophy, partly from the natural expansion of human sympathies, the legislation of the empire, during the first three centuries, shows a steady development in the direction of natural justice and humanity; and some similar progress may be traced in the general tone of moral opinion. Still the utmost point that this development reached fell considerably short of the standard of Christian charity. Without dwelling on the immense impetus given to the practice of social duty generally by the religion that made beneficence a form of divine service, and identified "piety" with "pity," we have to put down as definite changes introduced by Christianity into the current moral view—(1) the severe condemnation and final suppression of the practice of exposing infants; (2) effective abhorrence of the barbarism of gladiatorial combats; (3) immediate moral mitigation of slavery, and a strong encouragement of emancipation; (4) great extension of the eleemosynary provision made for the sick and the poor. As regards almsgiving, however—the importance of which has caused it to usurp, in modern languages, the general name of "charity"—it ought to be observed that Christianity merely universalized a duty which has always been inculcated and maintained in conspicuous fulness by Judaism, within the limits of the chosen people. The same may be said of the stricter regulation which Christianity enforced on the relations of the sexes; except so far as the prohibition of divorce is concerned, and the stress laid on "purity of heart" as contrasted with merely outward chastity. Even the peculiarly Christian virtue of humility, which presents so striking a contrast to the Greek "high-mindedness," was to some extent anticipated in the Rabbinic teaching. Its far greater prominence under the new dispensation may be partly referred to the express teaching and example of Christ; partly, in so far as the virtue is manifested in the renunciation of external rank and dignity, or the glory of merely secular gifts and acquirements, it is one aspect of the unworldliness which we have already noticed; while the deeper humility that represses the claim of personal merit even in the saint belongs to the strict self-examination, the continual sense of imperfection, the utter reliance on strength not his own, which characterize the inner moral life of the Christian. Humility in this latter sense, "before God," is an essential condition of all truly Christian goodness.

Obedience, patience, benevolence, purity, humility, alienation from the "world" and the "flesh," are the chief novel or striking features which the Christian ideal of practice suggests, so far as it can be placed side by side with that commonly accepted in Græco-Roman society. But we have yet to notice the enlargement of the sphere of ethics due to its close connexion with theology; for while this added religious force and sanction to ordinary moral obligations, it equally tended to impart a moral aspect to religious belief and worship. "Duty to God"—as distinct from duty to man—had not been altogether unrecognized by pagan moralists, though the rather dubious relations of even the more orthodox philosophy to the established polytheism had generally prevented them from laying much stress upon it. But in the views of many Christians, religious worship and contemplation as far surpassed

all other modes of human existence as pure philosophic speculation did in the view of Plato, Aristotle, and the Neo-platonists; indeed, the more learned of the eastern monks spoke of themselves as withdrawing from the world to the "pursuit of wisdom" (*φιλοσοφία*). Again, just as the Stoics held wisdom to be indispensable to real rectitude of conduct, while at the same time they included under the notion of wisdom a grasp of physical as well as ethical truth; so the similar emphasis laid on inwardness in Christian ethics caused orthodoxy or correctness of religious belief to be regarded as essential to goodness, and heresy as the most fatal of vices, corrupting as it did the very springs of Christian life. To the philosophers, however, convinced as they were that the multitude must necessarily miss true wellbeing through their folly and ignorance, it could never occur to guard against these evils by any other method than that of providing philosophic instruction for the few; whereas the Christian clergy, whose function it was to offer truth and eternal life to all mankind, naturally regarded theological misbelief as insidious preventable contagion. Indeed, their sense of its deadliness was so keen that, when they were at length able to control the secular administration, they rapidly overcame their aversion to bloodshed, and initiated that long series of religious persecutions to which we find no parallel in the pre-Christian civilization of Europe. It was not that Christian writers did not feel the difficulty of attributing criminality to sincere ignorance or error. But the difficulty is not really peculiar to theology; and the theologians usually got over it (as some philosophers had surmounted a similar perplexity in the region of ethics proper) by supposing some latent or antecedent voluntary sin, of which the apparently involuntary heresy was the fearful fruit.

Lastly, we must observe that in proportion as the legal conception of morality as a code of which the violation deserves supernatural punishment predominated over the philosophic view of ethics as the method for attaining natural felicity, the question of man's freedom of will to obey the law necessarily became prominent. At the same time it cannot be broadly said that Christianity took a decisive side in the metaphysical controversy on free-will and necessity; since, just as in Greek philosophy the need of maintaining freedom as the ground of responsibility clashes with the conviction that no one deliberately chooses his own harm, so in Christian ethics it clashes with the attribution of all true human virtue to supernatural grace, as well as with the belief in divine foreknowledge. All we can say is that in the development of Christian thought the conflict of conceptions was far more profoundly felt, and far more serious efforts were made to evade or transcend it.

In the preceding account of Christian morality, it has been already indicated that the characteristics delineated did not all exhibit themselves simultaneously to the same extent, or with perfect uniformity throughout the church. Partly the changes in the external condition of Christianity, and the different degrees of civilization in the societies of which it was the dominant religion, partly the natural process of internal development, continually brought different features into prominence; while again, the important antagonisms of opinion that from time to time expressed themselves in sharp controversies within Christendom frequently involved ethical issues—even in the Eastern church until the great labour of a dogmatic construction began in the 4th century, and in the Western church always. Thus, for example, the anti-secular tendencies of the new creed, to which Tertullian (160-220) gave violent and rigid expression, were exaggerated in the Montanist heresy which he ultimately joined; on the other hand, Clemens of Alexandria, in opposition to the general tone of his age, maintained the value of pagan philosophy for