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'Living truth,' says Schweitzer, 'is that alone which has its origin in thinking. Just as a tree bears year after year the same fruit and yet fruit which is each year new, so must all permanently valuable ideas be continually born again in thought. But our age is bent on trying to make the barren tree of scepticism fruitful by tying fruits of truth on its branches. . . . Not less strong than the will to truth must be the will to sincerity. Only an age which can show the courage of sincerity can possess truth which works as a spiritual force within it. Sincerity is the foundation of the spiritual life.'¹

¹ *My Life and Thought*, 259.

In conclusion, then, the true man is he who bows to no authority save the God who witnesses within him; whose mind is open to all light whencesoever it may come; whose creed rests not on mere tradition, but on the strength of personal conviction; till at last he attains, so far as possible in this world, *truth in word, truth in deed, and truth in oneness with God in Christ*, and so, finally, in the power of the divine life, he overcomes the bondage of the senses, the world, and self, loves goodness and God for their own sake, and becomes in very deed a true disciple of Christ.²

² R. H. Charles, *Courage, Truth, Purity*, 10.

Morality without God.

BY THE REVEREND FREDERIC C. SPURR, BIRMINGHAM.

THROUGHOUT the ages there have been many forms of opposition to Christianity; the opposition of the ruling powers, of persecution, of patronage, of philosophy, of popular hatred, and of scientists, experts in their own domain, who have thought that their findings must be fatal to Christian doctrine, and to the supposed historical facts upon which the gospel is builded. The Church has profited, in more than one way, as the result of the polemic directed against her life. She has developed at once a power of resistance, and a power of absorption—two expressions of vitality: resistance to what has been inspired by malice; absorption of what has proved itself to be true by whomsoever discovered. To-day she has little to fear from Philosophy or Science, both of which have become her allies.

In our time a new attack has been launched, or, to be correct, an ancient attack has assumed a novel aspect. Humanism, never wholly absent from the world, has invaded Christian territory and declared itself to be the possessor of a terrain which is claimed by the Church to be its own. The new attack has its war cry, 'Morality without God, or Christ or Christianity.' There is no plea for immorality on the ground that each man may do exactly as he pleases. The plea is rather, that everything truly ethical in Christianity can be gained and preserved far better without God than with Him. The new humanism offers itself as something superior, being able to function without any such handicap as that which it is supposed

the gospel applies. The leaders of the movement speak thus: 'We begin by assuming that the Universe has no interest in man. Of God we know nothing; of man we know much. There is a good life to be lived, and we can live it without reference to any Divinity. It is for man to decide what is that good life. The ancient *gloria in excelsis* must be replaced by a new one, of which Swinburne is the author, "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things." We are wholly unmoved by any ideas of rewards or punishments. The fear of hell, which once urged men to external morality, has now gone for ever. We know only one world, and we devote ourselves to it, seeking to promote duty, truth, beauty, and human interests alone.'

It must not be supposed that the neo-humanists are kin with those prodigals who company with swine, and who mock at all morality. Many of them appear to be earnest men who really think that they can live the good life apart from the Eternal goodness. Their attitude is intellectual. For the first time, *on scale*, they have offered an intellectual *apologia*, for what in others is already a settled but unexpressed opinion.

Yet the new Apologists, ere their warm breath cools, speak again, and unconsciously retract what they have just affirmed. The late President of the Ethical Society was compelled to admit that 'the hunger and thirst for something beyond the sphere of sense, which is left totally unsatisfied, produces at length a restless, tormented feeling

which turns the very joy of existence to sadness and dims the light of life.'

Mr. C. E. M. Joad pleads passionately for a 'mystical experience' to satisfy the heart, while Professor Julian Huxley, while arguing for 'religion without revelation' and a personal God, still desires to retain prayer as a means of tranquillizing the soul. Thus the demand for practical Atheism returns upon itself. The spirits of these advocates are haunted by a mysticism which will not release them, and which needs the living God to satisfy it. This fact is highly significant. . . .

Everybody admits the need of morality. 'The last word of education,' said Mr. T. H. Huxley, 'is to favour morality.' But morality must be 'for its own sake' without reference to religious sanctions or to God. Now it is just here that this non-religious philosophy betrays its first weakness, for to advocate a thing for its own sake is philosophically and ethically absurd. It is equal to the formula 'art for art's sake,' which, when examined, means nothing at all. As well might one speak of 'green for green's sake,' or a 'tree for a tree's sake.' In creation no separate thing exists for its own sake, it exists for something else. Does the sun exist for the sun, or the river for the river? When, then, it is claimed that right and goodness and truth must be sought for their own sake, the answer must be Why? The first question should be, What is right and good and true? These things cannot exist without some absolute standard. Where is that standard to be found? When a man speaks of an honest measure, or weight, he is thinking relatively; in his mind there is an image of some standard to which his own particular measures or weights must conform. And so must it be with morality. Man must seek the highest good, it is said. Granted! but who shall decide what is that highest good? Is it absolute or relative? If absolute, where is it? Certainly it is not found within humanity, which prescribes morality according to its geographical position, or the conventions of its various groups. The ideas of right and goodness differ seriously within and without civilization. What seems perfectly right to a Fijian is repellent to an Englishman. One tribe will kill off its older people as being an encumbrance upon the community; another will carefully tend them to the end. Which is right? It will not do to say that the civilized way is the better; the question is, why is it the better? And the answer to that cuts clean across the claims advanced by our neo-humanists. If, on the contrary, moral ideas are relative, then we must ask

relative to what? Is the final standard to be discovered within humanity as a whole, or in a part of it, or beyond it? The plea for a morality wholly determined by human considerations will not bear examination. It is too narrow, too inadequate, too delusive.

When we speak of human morality, it is humanity as a whole of which we should be thinking. For humanity is essentially one, despite all the differences of race and language and social habit. A worthy morality must embrace all men, as men. Its standards must command the whole, and not only a portion. It must be a law grounded in the nature of things, and not simply the ruling of a group of persons, who make their own laws for their own convenience. It must command life, with authority; the life within as well as the life without; motive as well as conduct. And to command, it must be above us. In a word, it must correspond completely to man's essential nature.

As Dr. Raven has recently reminded us, the primary question to be settled is not that of man's conduct, but of his nature: what he *is*. And it is precisely this radical question which the new humanists studiously avoid, or, if they do not avoid it, they treat it with incredible lightness. It is idle to speak of conduct until we know by what and *to* what we are 'conducted,' and what there is in us to 'duct'—to lead out and develop. There can therefore be no true human morality worthy of the name which fails to recognize what man is and what he is for.

For Christianity, man is a personal, spiritual being. He possesses that plus of the 'mystic' for which Mr. Joad pleads. He has that within him which urges Mr. Julian Huxley and all others to pray. The materialistic account of man, popular a short time since, which reduced him to a combination of chemical elements held together by a vital force, which, when released, fall back into the original dust, no longer holds the minds of the leaders of thought. The 'language of the spirit' permeates our modern scientific and philosophical literature. Men disillusioned by the failure of the laboratory to explain man, and disillusioned also by the breakdown of practical materialism in the social and industrial life of the world, are slowly turning to the Christian conception of man, although as yet they scarcely know it. The spirit of man, half suffocated during recent decades, is beginning to awaken and to assert itself. A great religious revival is undoubtedly on the way.

Man is a related being; he has a relation to

himself and to his neighbour. He must fulfil the whole of these relations or he is not moral. He has an obligation to be the best himself and to seek the best for others. A negative attitude towards himself and others falls infinitely short of what the nature of things demands of him. It is not sufficient that he abstain from cruelty, murder, and falsehood. Something positive is demanded of him as a being related. The fact of obligation is imperative. There is an eternal 'ought' which commands. But what obliges me? What is the extent of my obligation? An 'ought' goes far beyond any capricious selection of duty. Indeed, it is not left to our choice at all. For duty is not a choice, it is a compulsion. It binds us from without. Duty is what is due from us. It is a debt to be paid, not a subscription of whim. But why is there anything due from us, and to whom is it due? Our neo-humanists conveniently forget all this; and restrict their notion of duty within almost capricious limits. Mr. Robert Blatchford in pre-war days, when he also was a pure humanist with no belief in man's spiritual nature or in God, announced his religion as 'to do the best I can for humanity, for morality concerns itself wholly with man.' It sounds brave until we inquire what is the 'best' demanded of you. Even Mr. Blatchford admitted that the canon of Jesus 'thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself' is true. Can there be anything better than a real love of our neighbour? If this be agreed, then we can ask of the new morality, is it equal to that?

But it is not possible to limit our relations to ourselves and to humanity. We must go far beyond that. To confine ourselves to humanity is to put a ring around our small world and to segregate it from the Universe of which it is a vital part. Man is related to the Universe as well as to a planet. And he is obliged by the law of things to effect an adequate correspondence with the Universe as well as with his own small world. It is his obligation. 'To sustain man's ethical interests it is necessary to connect love of righteousness with eternity.' So wrote Professor Seeley five decades ago. And is it not true, always true? The 'ought' which binds us cannot depend on the vision of any one individual, or on the agreement of any group of people. It must depend upon the eternal laws which govern, not our own world alone, but the Universe itself.

Man belongs to an eternal order. He is vitally related to it, and to its soul—God. He has a Master who has the right to command him. He

is a steward of whom a reckoning is required. The God to whom he is related and bound is not a creation of his own fancy. He has been revealed in a thousand ways and chiefly in Jesus Christ, who reveals Him as being essentially love. Then there can be no worthy morality which is not inspired by the eternal love, and which does not act as does that love, to the extent of sacrifice. Can the new morality without God do that? The moralist may dispense much benevolence, and speak kind words, but will he give himself?

Let us ask boldly for the name of one man who ever gave himself to men, who was not inspired by a love greater than his own. Do they, who in the midst of Christendom claim that a purely human morality suffices for the fulfilment of all obligations, remember the atmosphere they breathe? Nineteen centuries of Christianity have permeated their world with a new spirit, to which they owe the best they have. Is it quite candid and moral to erase this fact from their minds and to pretend that their moral enthusiasms have been generated *in vacuo* without reference to the spirit which, all the time, has pressed upon them and saturated them? What is this but unblushing plagiarism, which steals its fruit from the Christian orchard, and then disowns the orchard?

The men who humanly represent the top peaks of our race—the Moffatts, the Livingstones, the Damiens, the Slessors, the Franciscans—and a thousand more—the highest moralists who loved men and sacrificed themselves for them owed their inspiration to the love of Jesus and not to themselves. Such men dwarf the rest of us, the moralists to whom correctness of life and benevolence of action are all. They say in the greatest of their lives, 'This is complete morality.' Bring the new morality to the test of theirs, and then ask if it is good enough, great enough.

The conclusion, then, is evident. We cannot be what we should be until we are vitally related to the Universe and to God. Being is greater than acting. The good action may pass muster, but what of the personality that is behind it? What of the inner motive? The motive is the main thing, after all, which gives value to or reduces the value of the action. Then morality cannot be considered apart from the character of the inner life. It is there that we are good or bad, generous or mean, pure or unclean. But who is to judge that inner life and proclaim it moral or otherwise? Shall we ourselves be the judge of our own actions? Then why speak of morality at all, since the affair becomes one of personal caprice which is the

very antithesis of morality. Shall our fellow-men judge us? But how can they, since they know nothing of the inner secrets of other lives, and they themselves are imperfect? If morality is to have any meaning at all it must involve a judgment by a perfect standard, which is at once authentically human and Divine. And who other than Jesus Christ can be that standard? All save a handful of degenerates salute in Him the Highest. Then by that admission He must be their judge. We are back at the soul of Christianity, which we can never escape when we are true to the nature of things.

Life, then, is 'being,' and true being: the total response of our nature to the claim of the Universe upon us. And it is God's Universe, existing for His ends. There can be no morality which does not recognize these ends and pursue them. To speak of utility and the giving of pleasure to others as morality is a begging of the entire question, and a limitation of great things to mean preserves. Morality, then, is either each man his own law—(a thing socially unthinkable), or one group enforcing their ideas upon others (which is tyranny), or it is eternally based in the order of the Universe and wholly above man in its demands. It is quite false to say, with Saleeby, that 'ethics is purely an individual matter,' since this is the negation of all social ideas. It is fallacious to say that morality is only a human evolution established at last because of its social utility, since the highest morality the world has known contradicts the idea of utility when it sacrifices itself, unless by utility is meant what Christianity means by sacrificial love offering itself at cost to the giver in the higher interests of others. In this case utility is an inadequate and even misleading word to employ.

Before the deepest needs of life and its greatest demands, conventional morality is helpless. It cannot rise to love. And before self-interest, whether of individuals or of peoples, conventional morality falls to pieces. When selfishness asserts itself, the word of honour is held lightly, and the animal gets the better of the man. The world is not likely to forget that a solemn pledge made by a moral nation became a mere 'scrap of paper' at the bidding of self-interest: 'dire necessity' it was called.

There is only one secure foundation for a complete human morality. It is the eternal law of love, revealed by and in Jesus Christ. In the presence of Him, each man can only cry—*Peccavi!*

And the only force for promoting morality is the Spirit of that Christ at work in our own spirits. That spirit becomes ours, not by an external imitation of His acts, but an interior surrender to His Lordship.

I have named the late Professor Huxley. He who pleaded so powerfully on behalf of morality, had to confess that his own inner life was an arena of bitter conflict, and he uttered the famous sentence of which Professor Henry Drummond made such great use: 'I protest that if some great power would agree to make me always think what is true and do what is right, on condition of being turned into a sort of clock and wound up every morning before I got out of bed, I should instantly close with the offer.' And Huxley spoke for every man and woman who, paying full homage to morality, knows well that the power to accomplish it in a high and worthy way, lies not within themselves but elsewhere. And the Christian gospel affirms that the gospel is the power (*δύναμις*) of God unto Salvation—the health of the whole life.

Recent Foreign Theology.

Early Greek Commentators.

DESPITE the rich apparatus for the understanding of the Pauline Epistles that has been put in our hands by our increasing knowledge of the Græco-Roman world and of contemporary Rabbinism, we cannot afford to neglect the contributions to their exegesis furnished by the early Greek commentators. For these men knew more or less intimately the

economic, social, political, and religious conditions of the world for and within which Paul wrote, and they knew the language he wrote as we can never know it, for it was their own. It is therefore a service of first-rate importance that Professor Karl Staab has rendered to the interpretation of Paul and the exegesis of the Epistles by his publication of the carefully collected remains of some of his Greek-speaking com-