

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER.

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VOL. XXX (No. 9)

SEPTEMBER, 1916

NO. 724

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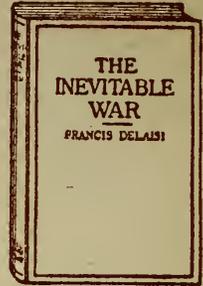
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the French government had said to the Germans  
*You shall not have our money*



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## NATURAL MORALITY.

BY BENJAMIN SMITH LYMAN.

**N**OWADAYS it will be universally admitted that the human race has gradually advanced to its present condition of comparative enlightenment from an original state of the utmost ignorance and lowest savagery. The old dream of an original golden age of complete enlightenment from which we have fallen is now wholly abandoned. The Chinese idea of an ancient innocence when man was as pure as the eye of cattle can only be admitted as the primeval age when by severe natural selection with the merciless extermination of delinquents beneficial instincts were kept pure and perfect; as we know them in wild animals.

When we consider how mysterious and still inexplicable are even now many natural facts, it is not surprising that in the early yet far denser ignorance of our race resort should have been precipitately had to easily invented supernatural explanations of them. For example, the loving veneration of parents and of the originators of one's family and race, together with occasional vivid observation of some of them in dreams, would very naturally lead to a belief in their disembodied existence in another world. There would be strong corroboration in the hallucinations (the effect of especially vivid imagination), to which the staidest of us is occasionally subject. Moreover the very existence of the whole natural world was more easily imagined to be the result of some supernatural creation than (as at the present day apparent) merely the effect of a personal existence from an infinite antiquity notwithstanding the apparent springing into existence or disappearing from it that, as far as eyesight is concerned, occasionally occur.

Accordingly the problem of the existence of natural objects

was further complicated by the supposition of a creator of them, in addition. Nothing less than almighty power could be attributed to such a being; and it was quite natural, or at least oriental, to ascribe to him complete wisdom and knowledge, even foreknowledge, though at the risk to morality of the fatalism inseparable from foreordination. We here find already some of the mischief wrought by really baseless speculations that at first sight seem to be at least harmless, if not, as often imagined, positively beneficial.

Indeed, they may be in some degree beneficial; but on the whole are far less so than the mere cold-seeming truth. Furthermore, the bodily and mental actions of man have been imagined to require explanation in the existence of a separate being within the body, a soul, or spirit; and even, among the Hindus, there have been supposed to be six or seven souls for each body. Among some Europeans there have been supposed three or four souls for each body. A more common supposition is a single soul for each body. It is often called immaterial; but invariably has the properties of matter, though somewhat ethereal.

This entirely imaginary and unnecessary superfluous spiritual being is turned to moral account by some in declaring it to be immortal, and the means of benefitting in a future life by the reward of behavior in this life, or by receiving compensation in a future life for misery suffered here. It is true that some beautiful moral effects may be deduced from such a scheme (in addition to cockering us up with the idea of a consciously persistent life), but they are far inferior to the real incentives and guidance yielded by the real natural circumstances.

The belief in these imaginary spiritual beings has given rise to various religions, devised for propitiating, or comforting, deceased progenitors in their other world, or pleasing the creator of the universe. Formerly it was thought that propitiation might be effected by the sacrifice of animals or fruits of which the corresponding spiritual beings would be the means of comfort in the spirit world, corresponding to the pleasure the real objects would give to denizens of this world. By an advance in refinement and enlightenment, it came to be believed that a yet more effective way of pleasing at least the Supreme Being would be moral behavior, that is, satisfactory conduct in the intercourse between fellow men. At the present day, therefore, religions have become reduced almost entirely to mere morality; though there is still some insistence upon love of the creator, at least in outward expression, and upon the observance of certain forms.

There are now four principal religions in the world, all Asiatic, each with its own system of morality. The oldest, the Confucian, acknowledges with high respect the existence of spiritual beings, especially ancestors and others also, but does not profess to know much about the spiritual world, and holds it wise while respecting them to keep aloof from them as too little known to us and too little concerning us so far as we can understand. Nevertheless morality is considered to be enjoined by the spirit-world. The next oldest of the four religions, and nearly contemporary, is the Buddhist. It professes to have a much fuller knowledge of the spirit world and has elaborated a very complete, but of course thoroughly imaginary, scheme. Morality is enforced by promotion or retardation in the progress of the soul after death toward the final attainment of perfect bliss. No other propitiation of the divine beings is required. The next religion in age, some five hundred years later, is the Christian, in which, beyond a declaration of love for the Creator and Father of all, the main feature is morality, to be rewarded by a happy life in the spirit-world after death, with (as many believe) a revival of the body. The fourth, and latest by some 600 years, of the now extant great religions is the Mohammedan; in which morality again is encouraged by the promise of a happy future life, not merely an ethereal spirit life but an actual bodily life, yet without any real freedom of the will, because everything is believed to be foreordained. The systems of morality with their practical details are set forth in the books of those religions, and those books and rules are highly revered, and even, in the case of the Christians, are regarded as the word of God himself.

Those religious books were, of course, composed by men, notwithstanding the extremely high reverence now accorded to them; and they express the opinion of sages (but men) in regard to the proper conduct of men in their intercourse with fellow men, and so cannot be regarded as literally God-given commands, or rules.

The morality of all these ancient books is not set forth in any connected systematized form, but is mainly to be gathered from highly discursive, chiefly narrative, accounts of events or discourses. An attempt has been made herewith to give something approaching a systematic statement of the morality of Confucius and of Jesus, without changing the words in which they have been recorded but merely arranging the subjects in a somewhat clear logical order.

Although those ancient books set forth the principles of moral-

ity as the sayings and under the authority of certain sages, or almost (or wholly) deified men! yet the more fundamental principles are doubtless much more ancient and were floating through the old world long before they were put into any book; and they were evidently by no means confined to any one country. It has for thousands of years been customary, as it still is, for merchants, peddlers, and the like, to travel all through Central Asia. They are intelligent keen-witted men, and are not averse (as I myself have seen) to discussing theological and moral questions; and it must for many hundreds of years have been so. Consequently, ideas of radical importance have been talked about all through Asia, and doubtless were canvassed thoroughly by the people long before they were put into any book. The Christian Golden Rule, for example, is set forth in the poetical form, in a Chinese classical poem of about 3000 years ago. Confucius 500 years later, emphatically pointed out its meaning; and Jesus 500 years still later reiterated the same idea. Doubtless the principle had been propounded in private talk hundreds of times by the contemporaries of Confucius and Jesus; and probably long before the classical poem was composed. A more extreme, perhaps mystical, idea was given out as approved by Lao Tze, a sage fifty years older than Confucius; namely, that injury should be recompensed with kindness. But when Confucius, the thoroughly practical, unmythical philosopher, was asked about it, he said, "Recompense kindness with kindness, and injury with justice." The subject was evidently a matter of discussion throughout the whole community.

There is therefore no occasion for surprise that the injunctions of the different systems are in the main very similar; they are the results of the observations and reflections of thoughtful, well-meaning men in general. Confucius and Jesus both insist as the fundamental primary guide to human conduct upon consideration, upon considering the wishes of others, doing to others what you would wish them to do to you, and avoiding to do to them what you do not wish them to do to you. Both agree fully too on the importance of humility and on the need of abstaining from judging others. As to meekness, submission to the will of others, Jesus goes to the extreme, completely to a mush of concession; and if he did not intentionally exaggerate, his injunctions would hardly be accepted by men, or their results approved of in other men, however agreeable might be such yielding in women. In the practical details of human behavior, Jesus strictly forbids divorce but Confucius is even said to have divorced his own wife; Jesus stren-

uously forbids the swearing of oaths, a subject not noticed by Confucius; both Jesus and Confucius indulged to some degree in alcohol. Jesus advocated self-mutilation under certain circumstances; but Confucianism requires the careful conservation of the body, for the perpetuation of the honor of the family. Confucius gives much attention to politics and governmental rule, a subject carefully avoided by Jesus. Confucius lived to the maturity of seventy years while Jesus lived to be only thirty-three, and was still doubtless much influenced by the enthusiasm of youth.

It is positively laughable to see the learned and worthy, but somewhat narrowly prejudiced, Dr. Legge patronizingly declare Confucius not to be a great man. His greatness did not consist in the novelty of his views. He himself disclaimed anything of that kind. But he was great in his intelligent and critically just appreciation of the high need of certain already existing moral views, in setting them clearly before his disciples, and in humbly exemplifying them in his life. His 3000 disciples were extremely critical and emulous, and in the main very intelligent, and he was found by them to stand head and shoulders above them in the largeness of his powers and the strictness of his life. It is absurd to declare him not to be a great man who has for two milleniums and a half been the undisputed master of hundreds of millions of intelligent men eager for rivalry.

A striking difference in the teachings of Jesus and Confucius is, that Jesus lays great stress upon the importance of penitence, and consequent forgiveness; an idea entirely foreign to Confucius though he insists upon the importance of reform, the result of real penitence, and the only result of it that is of any value.

Let us now look for a moment at the incentives to virtue that are offered by the two philosophers. Under Confucius, the encouragement or incentive to virtue is merely the satisfaction felt at having done one's duty and the belief that such behavior is what the spirits and Heaven require, who might effect mischief or discomfort in case of obedience. The belief, too, is firmly fixed that one's comfort in the future world is much affected by the care accorded by one's surviving children and other descendants and that this comfort is also required by his predecessors. The highest object of a Confucian is the suitable worship of his parents and ancestors; and the reward most desired is the faithful worship by children and later descendants. Even a superior man dislikes to think it possible that his name may not be mentioned after his

death. An easy comfortable conscience, however, seems to be the main reward.

Under Jesus, the reward of virtue is a future age-long life (translated, by occidental, not oriental, exaggeration as "everlasting" life), with, for special merit, a seat there upon a splendid throne. Compensation even for mere misery and wretchedness in this life may be found in a place in Abraham's bosom in the other world. Neither marriage nor giving in marriage exist there; it is a place of many mansions. Clearly, however, the reward of virtue and incentive to it are supposed to be purely personal, belonging solely to the individual, and so in some sort, a fostering of his selfishness; he is working for himself alone, even when he is apparently benefitting others.

Theoretically, in the other world one is forever occupied with regretful reflection on the misdeeds of his, in comparison, infinitesimally short life, or with joyful recollection of his good deeds if he was a rarely exceptional character; that is, he is eternally in hell or in heaven. In modern practice, however, nearly everybody expects to look back upon his own past life with leniency, or downright approval; and it is only others, especially those who disagree with him as to belief in certain theological dogmas, who are doomed to everlasting torment. If there be not at death a radical change in human nature, it is hard to conceive how a very few hundred years of such a second life, even of a favorable kind, could fail to become intolerably dull and irksome. As there would be no question of life and death, no occasion for struggling to keep alive by earning a living, or by any gainful pursuit, or by a prudent husbanding of resources, or by skilful intercourse with others, life would no longer have any zest at all and would become in the highest degree "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

Let us now consider the requirements, purpose and incentives of natural morality. We must also bear in mind that the appropriate natural instinct has invincibly tended in some respects to lead away from the requirements of religious injunctions.

The most radical and important difference of natural morality from the morality of those ancient great sages is the very fundamental aim and purpose of morality, about which we have begun to learn so much in the last sixty years. It has now become clear that the main object of morality, and the chief end of man, is not, as religiously inculcated, the pursuit of the happiness, comfort or benefit of the individual in this world or the next, but the solid

welfare and substantial progress of the race, and only incidentally its thereby insured happiness.

The individual, however, is identified with the race through the fact that every child is but the forward growth of his parents, their physical, literal perpetuation; just as the seedling oak is in reality the outgrowth of its parent tree through the acorn, a part of that tree which had its whole character concentrated within its small space. Every individual, therefore, is fully identified with his parents and all his ancestors and is merely an outgrowth from them; he has equal identity with his brethren and with all his contemporaries, all but parts of one stock. Plainly it is the benefit of the race, not of any individual that is the object aimed at by morality originally inspired by the parental and filial affections occasioned by the otherwise helpless condition of the human young, affections so essential to the protection and perpetuation of the race that without such instincts it would quickly become extinct. Quite apart from the fact of the identity pervading the whole race, and occasioning its united efforts toward advancement, it is obvious that the parental and filial instincts so completely essential to the perpetuation of the race are ample foundation for the fullest system of morality, a natural morality superior to any sage-devised morality.

It seems quite obvious that the morality most favorable to the progress of the race would be the strictest, most even-handed justice, giving equal opportunity to every individual to advance according to his ability. The obstacles raised against such advance by the selfishness evinced in the intercourse between men is to be restrained from exaggeration by the friendly affection that is inspired by the kindly instincts that are essential to human nature.

Selfishness, the strongest instinct and the one essential to the preservation, protection and continuation of the individual and thereby of the race, is nevertheless tempered by the affection equally essential among the instincts of human nature. Through this kindly instinct the individual is led to consider what he would desire if he were in the place of his adversary and what he should accordingly do. It is not incumbent on him to yield everything, to descend to a mush of concession; yet it is wise to be careful to avoid the exaggeration of one's claims, but rather to yield some portion of them. In fact it might be called enlightened selfishness, not total unselfishness, but consideration for others.

The strongest human instinct after selfishness is the sexual passion; so important is it, indeed, that its regulation has absorbed

to itself the whole meaning of the word morals. It is, of course, altogether essential to the perpetuation of the race, and it is by no means to be eradicated, though it is to be regulated and kept in proper restraint.

Marriage and divorce are subjects intimately connected with morality; though scarcely touched upon in the Confucian teachings. Natural laws clearly indicate the importance to children of permanence in parental care and consequently strongly favor the indissolubility of the marriage tie. Of course, as propagation is the main purpose its impossibility may be a sufficient cause for dissolving the tie.

It is evident that under natural laws man is monogamous, as the nearest allied lower animals are, and as the welfare of the children plainly requires. The permanence of the marriage tie is of such importance that it is not surprising that instinctively men have everywhere adopted methods to ensure the lasting inviolability of the marriage undertaking, using every means of adding solemnity to the engagement, and even strengthening it by whatever religious or superstitious influence may have power over the wedding couple, making it a sacrament. When such influences are less effective, the state takes measures to insure the permanence of the marriage tie, carrying out the plainly indicated natural principles of morality. Practical indissolubility of the tie, as among certain religious sects, tends to make married couples accommodate themselves to each other, and by long living together become fond of each other, even if there should be some temperamental reasons for dislike; just as brothers and sisters merely by the fact of early and long association, though with temperaments not especially congenial, invariably become strongly attached to each other. Under more lax civil laws, where divorce is permitted for comparatively trivial reasons, the tendency to separate is much increased by the inclination to make the most of differences in view of the possibility of a separation. But the best safeguard against a desire to separate is thoroughly warm affection with really intimate acquaintance at the outset. Such intimacy is, of course, impossible for lovers at first sight, or indeed for most lovers who first meet after growing up. It is customary to laugh at early love, calf love, or puppy love, it is sometimes called; but it is seldom that intimate acquaintance and close affection can be acquired except in the very early years in childhood. We look with horror upon the early marriages of India, marriages even in early childhood, though living together does not begin until maturity. But the system has the

great advantage and charm that the married couple become as fond of each other as brothers and sisters. A wise instinct sometimes leads to a similar marriage in our wayward country. My eldest aunt was of such surprising beauty, and at the same time of such wonderfully amiable character, that when she entered a roomful of gay young company there was a momentary hush throughout the assemblage. She was the cynosure sought by promising suitors. But when she was seventy years old, about sixty years ago, she said (in my presence) to her husband, "I remember the first pair of trousers you ever wore." "What was their color?" said he. "Pepper and salt." "You are right!" In such a case of early intimacy, there can never occur the faintest shadow of the dream of divorce. The intimacy is the result of the thousand and one small interchanges of social intercourse. Tennyson may have builded better than even he knew, when, in his exquisite bugle song, he said,

"Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
And grow forever and forever."

Children should be encouraged to make permanent the ties of early intimate friendship, rather than to take it for granted that ties of that kind are sure to be outgrown. At the same time parents, who of course have a lively interest in the propagation of their family, should be judicious in the encouragement and selection of the intimacies of their children, with whom naturally they have especial influence in their children's early years. The two sets of parents should, if it appear advisable, agree upon the match and encourage its permanence. It may be objected that at so early an age the later mature character and position of the young couple cannot be foreseen. But for that reason greater preponderance must be given to their family extraction, a feature of the utmost importance and of itself generally an ample guide. The high character and honorable traditions of the family are of great importance. The family wealth is of less importance in this country, where a vigorous young man can be expected to earn his own wealth. Yet family condition may advisedly be taken into consideration, without being sordid. The education of the young people is a matter of great importance.

But, it may be asked, what becomes, in such a quiet humdrum system, of the often admired romantic love, the single glance that enslaves the bold warrior for life, the dazzling radiance of a beauty that brought to life a soul that otherwise would have been dull and barren, the sweet voice and sparkling wit that would have brought

the dead to life again? These charms must be sought and appreciatively found in one's legitimate spouse, and must go blindly unobserved in all other quarters as mere temptations to illicit love. Indeed, there is much reason to believe that the idea of romantic love was first brought to Europe from the East along with chivalry at the time of the crusades; and that it was but the lawless breaking loose from the quiet decorum of the oriental harem. The charms of such irregular violations of propriety are no more to be admired than the fine features of courageous highway robbery, or other crimes. The oriental high appreciation of the real merit of their peaceful domestic life may be inferred from the thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of dollars they sometimes expend upon marriages.

Riches are condemned by Jesus in wholesale fashion; though he esteemed several rich friends, and he admits that a rich man may enter the kingdom of heaven by practically a miracle. Our veriest beggars, however, would have been considered rich men in his country; for "our poorest beggars are in the meanest things superfluous." Confucius on the other hand says that riches and honors are what men desire, though not to be held except in the proper way; poverty and meanness are what men dislike, but are not to be avoided except in the proper way. Yet he distinctly points out that riches are of far less importance than righteousness and good government; and he declares that a scholar who cherishes a love of comfort is not worthy to be called a scholar. It has long been insisted that the love of money is the root of all evil; but it might be just as true that the readiness to earn or honorably acquire money was the root of all industry and good. Money is merely the concrete measure of a man's ability to maintain the struggle for existence, which is the problem for all human beings in their intercourse with one another. Confucius, reckoning pride as the besetting failing of wealth, points out that it is easier to be rich without pride than to be poor without murmuring.

Real and personal property are but certain forms of acquisition gained by intercourse with men; but even if they be wholly eschewed, the struggle of competition or of selfishness with other men is not avoided. For even any accumulation of reputation or of the honors Confucius speaks of (sometimes steps toward the acquirement of money), is equally liable to disparagement by the selfish efforts of others. It is just as necessary to be on one's guard in this respect as in regard to money, lest injustice should be done.

Riches cannot but be regarded with respect and even be thought desirable when we consider what they may accomplish. They not only make possible the maintenance of life with necessary food and clothing and shelter, but also educational improvement, intellectual and esthetic cultivation and improvement of enlightenment through intercourse by travel and correspondence, and above all do they make possible the increase of the population and the enlarged participation in the benefits of existence, the very object and aim of all enlightenment. It seems desirable, then, that wealth should be accumulated to an indefinitely great amount, but of course in an honorable way, by industry and prudent methods. Some men by temperament and training are especially capable of so dealing with other men with energy, intelligence, correct appreciation of others' capacity and fidelity to agreements, as to be peculiarly successful in amassing wealth. Other men no less energetic and industrious are so absorbed in the interest of their studies as in some sort to despise wealth, and are happy if merely able to live and continue their work, directly promoting enlightenment—like Confucius who said, "As the search for wealth may not be successful, I will follow after that which I love."

The accumulators of wealth subject themselves thereby to great dangers. The temptation is to lessen one's bodily exercise and to indulge the appetite to a very harmful extent, injuring the health and shortening life. Spacious dwellings and costly apparel, though not deleterious to health but even beneficial, yet make living more costly and directly or indirectly discourage the increase of population.

Since the ultimate object is the diffusion of life, existence, through a larger number, thereby increasing the chances of the occurrence of great benefactors of the race, and an equal object is the highest cultivation of the race, making possible its utilizing natural resources for the benefit of man, it is desirable that as little as may be shall be wasted in mere luxuries and that life should be kept frugal. It is especially fortunate for children to be brought up in frugality, as happens when the parents are poor. A child so brought up is better fitted to contend with the difficulties he meets in the world, and is spurred on to greater efforts than if he should be amply or lavishly supplied from his parents.

A rich man, then, is in bodily danger from inactivity and from over-indulgence of the appetite; but he is benefited by cleaner and ampler clothing and by more spacious and better drained dwelling quarters. Pride seems to Confucius to be the rich man's principal

failing; yet not by any means unavoidable. Though the tendency may easily be in that direction it seems quite possible to guard against such a result, and indeed we often see it avoided. Although we cannot insist that every rich man shall sell all his property and give it to the poor, we incline to require him to conform to the universal rule of yielding something handsome to the needs of others, especially if he be very indulgent toward himself. If he be frugal toward himself and liberal toward others we are satisfied; but frugality toward oneself and niggardliness toward others is despised as miserliness. Yet even a miser may have fondly been with commendable self-denial saving up wealth for some worthy charitable or educational project that he has hoped to found at his death.

One valuable advantage possessed by the rich man is freedom from anxiety as to the maintenance of life, whence results great benefit to his bodily health. Men who enjoy a secure and sufficient annuity are found to have a longer average life than others, owing to this freedom from anxiety. The same result may tend to make one somewhat less inclined to sympathize with others who are subject to such anxiety, that is, in some sort to seem proud.

Poverty, like wealth has its besetting sins. Perhaps the most striking of its failings is an ungenerous envy or jealousy of the prosperity of the rich, leading to indiscriminate fault-finding and accusations based in fact merely upon the possession of wealth. With unreasoning selfishness the rich man is required to forego all the economic advantages of his wealth and to sell his whole property and freely give away the proceeds to the poor in a mad endeavor to do his utmost toward reducing, at least momentarily, all men to the same level (and obviously, of necessity, a very low level) of struggling poverty. The poor man is, furthermore, very liable in other respects to what Confucius calls murmuring; often not considering circumstances really due to his own character, or habits, or tastes, that occasion the poverty he so bitterly complains of. Not realizing his own deficiency or idiosyncrasies, he strenuously, though vainly, opposes the great and inexorable law of nature, which maintains the high character of the universe by encouraging the capable and strong and judicious and discouraging or annihilating the inefficient and foolish and weakling. "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath;" a law in reality not cynical but just, that in the long run is clearly beneficial, however painful its workings may sometimes seem to those immediately concerned. Of course a

poor man, free from envy and murmuring, may be an extremely worthy member of the community, and though lacking in money may be admirably rich in good qualities, in social virtues, pecuniary liberality, or universal generosity, or in learning, or wisdom (like Confucius for example). Poverty by no means surely indicates lack of ability, but may result rather from disinclination to follow money-making pursuits instead of, perhaps, interesting studies or other attractive occupations; and this consideration may often prevent a poor man from becoming dispirited and inclined to complain.

Gambling is a practice that seems not to have existed in the times of Confucius and Jesus and was therefore not considered by them from a moral point of view. In modern times it has become a crying failing, and cannot be too strongly reprehended. It is the venturing of one's means for the mere chance of a profitable return without any substantial reason for expecting it. It is highly blameworthy waste. Some insufficient pretext is found for it in the more or less pleasurable excitement occasioned by the hopes momentarily entertained during the venture—to be fully balanced, of course, by the disappointment of those hopes in the majority of cases.

The use of alcoholic beverages was not avoided by Confucius, and he set himself no limit in regard to them though he was careful not to let himself become confused. The indulgence in alcohol had in Jesus's time already been a burning question, and there were religious sects that made a point of totally abstaining from alcohol. John the Baptist was from birth an abstainer, and Samson was of a total-abstinence sect. But Jesus is represented even as considered to be a winebibber, and is said to have made particularly excellent wine at a wedding feast. Though total abstinence does not seem to be required by morality it is a safe course, and at most only a very moderate and infrequent indulgence in such beverages is to be considered advisable and harmless. One of the benefits of a vegetarian diet is the fact now well established that it entirely does away with all craving for alcohol.

Jesus strongly discouraged the use of oaths and is even reported to have said, "Swear not at all," but the injunction has not generally been regarded as to be literally followed. It may have been intended to apply to the exaggerated strengthening of ordinary discourse. At any rate, it seems reasonable that formal testimony in a law court shall be made as certain to be true as it possibly can be made by means, if need be, of any religious or superstitious belief. The appeal for such a purpose cannot justly be considered

disrespectful or degrading to a Supreme Being. As some proof that the sweeping prohibition of oaths by Jesus was not taken in his lifetime as intended to be literal, it may be considered that it is said that even one of his most esteemed apostles did not scruple to corroborate with oaths his denial of acquaintance with his Master before the cock crew.

As regards truthfulness, Jesus nowhere explicitly requires it, though Confucius distinctly enjoins it and lays the utmost stress upon the importance of sincerity. Of course the harm of lying consists in the deceit for a selfish purpose, and a lie without that culpable character is often altogether harmless and is so reckoned in law. It happens, for example, every day that papers of serious importance are really signed on a different day from the one distinctly specified as the day of signing; but that departure from the exact truth is wholly harmless, and the document is not thereby in the least invalidated. It may in some cases be well to use kindly deception toward individuals suffering from bodily or mental ill health. In jocular language, obviously not to be taken as solemn unexaggerated truth, expressions are harmlessly used that are not strictly truthful. For example, Jesus himself with witty brevity intimated truthfully a keenly observed fact when he said, "A prophet is not without honor, save in his own country," though strictly it might be said not to be the exact literal truth. Confucius praises the modesty of the brave warrior who declared it was only the slowness of his horse that occasioned his bringing up the rear in a difficult retreat. Dr. Legge repeatedly finds great fault with Confucius for saying nothing against the warrior's untruthfulness, harmless and free from selfish deception as it was.

The observance of a weekly day of rest, or Sabbath, is a Jewish custom maintained as a means of propitiating the deity; but it was repeatedly and boldly violated by Jesus, who declared that the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. The early Christians broke away entirely from the Jewish observance of the Sabbath, but adopted the first day of the week as a holiday. It is only in recent times and in British and American countries that there has been a recurrence to the old Jewish method of observance with strict abstinence of bodily labor, enforced by religious injunctions, though with the substitution of the first for the seventh day of the week. A weekly day of rest can hardly be considered to have any natural moral obligation. It may have some physiological advantage; but it would perhaps be still better for

the health to avoid overwork throughout the week, so as to have no need of the recuperative holiday.

When it was remarked that Jesus's disciples violated the customary requirement of washing the hands before eating, he is almost incredibly reported to have made the wholly irrelevant repartee that only the character of what is uttered by the mouth is important, no matter what physically may enter it. Of course it is obvious that the merit of the utterance has no bearing whatever upon the healthfulness or decency of washing the hands before eating, a practice which natural morality cannot but commend. At the same time, what kind of food is taken into the mouth cannot be considered to be unimportant.

Those who have for years accustomed themselves to the idea that some Supreme Being outside of the external world has been its Creator and constant maintainer may for the moment feel that they would be quite lost and lonesome if deprived of such a belief. But while the humble dependence upon a great being is undiminished, there is, if rightly considered, reason for pleasurable satisfaction in the consciousness of being oneself a part of the great Supreme Being, as the natural world, the universe, may with its unity fairly be considered. As we have seen, a man is but the outgrowth, the growing forward of his parents and ancestors, and all men therefore are but the outgrowth of the first pair. The same is true, indeed, of the antecedent lower races from which we have descended (without, so far as we know or have reason to believe, any beginning). All present life then is the outgrowth of the original (so to speak) living creatures, and may claim identity with them, and must admit equal identity with them for all other living things. There is, then, complete unity for the whole world of life, and the inorganic world may likewise be considered the progenitor of the organic, and with it part of one whole.

This universe, so completely a unit, with its organic part so distinctly a unit, may surely be with justice considered a Supreme Being, and is one, the only one that we can see and feel. Though it is in many parts still mysterious and little understood, it has far more than some thousands of years ago become clear that there is no need whatever of any external ethereal being to guide and actuate its every part. When I crumble my breadcrust into my plate of soup, immediately the moisture enters the pores of the bread, and it is as easy for me to consider that the action is the result of the nature of the liquid and the solid and must immediately follow upon their juxtaposition, as it is to imagine that

some inconceivably watchful omnipresent external being should be there to cause by express volition every movement of the particles of liquid and solid which are themselves but a part of God. Nothing whatever seems to be gained by such a supernumerary being, an ethereal God, in addition to the substantial visible one. When we regard the operations of the natural world, even on a small scale, we cannot but feel ourselves to be, in the words of Emerson, "a jubilant soul in the presence of God his creator;" that is, of the universe, his creator and at the same time his own self.

An additional being for the mere purpose of a conscious volition for every smallest movement of the physical world seems to be altogether superfluous and of no use whatever, except principally to bear out consistently in keeping the whole imaginary scheme of ethereal (yet grossly material) beings. It may be claimed that there is immense benefit from the very idea of a fatherly ruler of the universe, to whose leniency confident and confidential application may be made for aid in direct contravention of our natural laws. But such confidence is but part of a fool's paradise, and we may be sure that no natural laws are in the slightest degree really contravened. To do it would even be a violation of the theory of an all-wise Father, upon whom petitions and advice would be worse than thrown away. A little reflection will convince any one that beautiful as may seem the idea of a loving, kindly, lenient, forgiving Father, such a Father, if at the same time he were all-wise and all-powerful, would be as inexorable and unyielding, as fixed in his wise ways, as we see the laws of nature to be; as unforgiving, except in the case of genuine, thorough reform. Indeed the greatest severity and strictness in adherence to his wise methods would be the greatest kindness. The resulting impression of kindness too has not been lacking, in happy cases of success; as well as unfeeling severity in cases of harmful loss. Nature steadfastly moves on, unmoved, unswerving from its well-determined course.

There is a mischievous confusion of ideas in regard to certain words. It is imagined that a materialist must necessarily know nothing of spiritual things; and that spiritualists are particularly spiritual. On the contrary spiritualists have grossly material ideas of the spirits that they falsely call immaterial. Materialists may have the highest appreciation of spiritual things; which are indeed things of the mind and not of material character, and would not for a moment be confounded with matter by any materialist. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that the workings of the brain, mental operations, are purely physical and material.

It is clearly to be seen, then, that mere nature and pure logic establish a moral system as elevated as any set forth by the ancient sages, with incentives even stronger than theirs, and a yet more distinct guidance. Those who still fondly cling to the old systems must also admit that the natural method is a strong corroboration, while not in the least whit lessening the force of the old injunctions.

Questions of morality either more or less general, like those we have instanced, or pertaining to particular cases are, under natural laws, subjects to be investigated and passed upon by legislators or courts of law where "the perfection of human reason" operates, aided by the discussion of the public and particularly of societies organized for the study of such subjects. Such work has for hundreds of years been going on, alongside of the ecclesiastical opinions and, to some extent, sway; sometimes in agreement therewith, sometimes overriding them.

"Faith is believing what you know is not true," said the schoolgirl; and that indeed seems to be a very common impression in respect to the meaning of the word faith. That kind of faith, unreasoning and regardless of the proper grounds for belief, is of the most pernicious character and pervasive of the sincerity so highly and so justly extolled by Confucius. The first approach of that false kind of faith, that declaration of a fixed belief in what is known not to be true or is even thought to be in reality doubtful, should be guarded against as a deadly ensnarement and as threatening an irretrievable loss of sincerity and truthfulness. Such an attack once successfully begun upon one's honesty leads to the result that

....."having, unto truth, by telling of it,  
Made such a sinner of his memory,  
To credit his own lie,"

he comes, indeed, by the repetition, eventually to believe what is false, or at least to believe that he sincerely believes it; so that he persists in the repetition, and even in trying to persuade others to assent. Such false belief, or belief in falsehood, may thereby be spread abroad as much as true belief (and even more because influenced by improper motives), just as "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" by continuous growth.

A firmly fixed faith, whether in origin a reasoning or unreasoning one, is a source of psychological power, impelling one with all his mental strength along some certain line. This power Jesus (according to report) with picturesque oriental exaggeration

(and, you may say, wit), evidently with no intention of literal truth, says is enough by mere command to remove a mountain from its place. A mountain of doubt may really be so removed from an interlocutor. The stolid and solid physical mountain would, of course, quietly remain unmoved by any such display of self-confidence, however sincere.

Confucius has little to say bearing upon faith; but he does say that knowledge is, "when you know a thing to hold that you know it, and when you do not know a thing to allow that you do not know it;—this is knowledge." Such a prudent course conscientiously pursued would help to restrain one from falling into faith in harmful errors. Faith of that erroneous kind is just as powerful as any other; as witness the Mohammedans' implicit faith in fatalism, which inspires them with the utmost valor in battle, in the belief that their life or death is anyhow foreordained and that it is useless to make any opposition.