

## RELIGION AND MORALITY

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You asked me: (1) what I understand by the word " religion," and (2) whether I consider morality possible apart from religion, as I understand it.

I will try to the best of my ability to answer these extremely important and beautifully put questions.

Among the majority of the men of modern culture it is considered a settled question that the essence of every religion consists in the personification and deification of the forces of Nature, resulting from superstitious fear before the incomprehensible phenomena of Nature, and in the worship of these forces.

This opinion is accepted without criticism, upon faith, by the cultured crowd of our time, and not only does not meet with any opposition from the men of science, but for the most part finds among them the most definite confirmations. Though now and then voices, like those of Max Muller and of others, who ascribe to religion a different origin and meaning, are raised, they are not heard or noticed amidst the universal, unanimous recognition of religion as a manifestation of superstition in general. Even recently, in the beginning of the present century, the most advanced men, who rejected Catholicism and Protestantism, as did the Encyclopaedists at the end of the last century, did not deny that religion in general was

a necessary condition of the life of every man. To say nothing of the Deists, such as Bernardin de St. Pierre, Diderot, and Rousseau, Voltaire erected a monument to God, and Robespierre established the holiday of the supreme being. But in our time, thanks to the frivolous and superficial teaching of Auguste Comte, who, like the majority of the French, sincerely believed that Christianity was nothing but Catholicism, and who, therefore, saw in Catholicism a full realization of Christianity, it has been decided and recognized by the cultured crowd, which is always prone to accept the basest representations, that religion is nothing but a certain outlived phase of the evolution of humanity. It is assumed that humanity has already passed through two periods, the religious and the metaphysical, and that it has now entered on the third, the highest, the scientific period, and that all the religious phenomena among men are only the functions of some unnecessary spiritual organ of humanity, which has long ago lost its meaning and significance, like the nail of a horse's fifth toe. It is assumed that the essence of religion consists in the recognition of imaginary beings, evoked by

fear in the presence of the incomprehensible forces of Nature, and in the worship of them, an opinion which even in antiquity was held by Democritus, and is now reiterated by the most modern philosophers and historians of religion.

But, to say nothing of the fact that the recognition of invisible supernatural beings, or of one such being, has not always originated in the fear of the unknown forces of Nature, as is witnessed by hundreds of the most advanced and highly cultured men of the past, such as Socrates, Descartes, Newton, and by similar men of our time, who certainly do not recognize a higher supernatural being out of fear of the unknown forces of Nature, the assertion that religion originated in the superstitious fear of the incomprehensible forces of Nature in reality gives no answer to the main question as to whence men have taken the conception of the invisible supernatural beings.

If men were afraid of thunder and lightning, they would still be afraid of thunder and lightning, but why did they invent a certain invisible, supernatural being, Jupiter, who is somewhere, and at times casts his arrows down upon men ?

If men were startled by the sight of death, they would continue to be afraid of death, but why did they "invent" the souls of the dead, with whom they entered into imaginary relations ? From thunder people could conceal themselves, from the terror of death they could run away, but they invented an eternal and powerful being, on which they consider themselves to be dependent, and the living souls of the dead, not through fear alone, but for some other reason. It is in these reasons that, obviously, the essence of what is called religion is contained. Besides, every man who at any time, be it only in childhood, has experienced the religious feeling, knows from his personal experience that this feeling has always been evoked in him, not by external, terrible material phenomena, but by an internal consciousness of his insignificance, solitude, and sinfulness, which has nothing in common with the fear of the incomprehensible forces of Nature. And so a man may know from external observation and from personal experience that religion is not a worship of divinities, provoked by a superstitious fear of the unknown forces of Nature, which is proper to men only in a certain period of their evolution, but something quite independent of fear and the degree of a man's culture, and something which cannot be destroyed by any evolution of enlightenment, because man's recognition of his finiteness amidst an infinite world, and of his sinfulness, that is, of the non-fulfilment of everything he could and should do, but has not done, has always existed, and will always exist so long as man remains man.

Indeed, as soon as a man leaves his animal condition of babyhood and first childhood, during which time he lives only by being guided by those demands which present themselves to his animal nature, and as soon as he awakens to a rational consciousness, he cannot help but notice that everything about him lives, renewing itself, without dying, and unswervingly submitting to one definite, eternal law, and

that only he alone, in recognizing himself as a distinct being from the rest of the world, is doomed to death, to disappearance in unlimited space and infinite time, and to the agonizing consciousness of responsibility for his acts, that is, to the consciousness that, having acted badly, he might have acted better. Having come to see this, every rational man cannot help but reflect and ask himself what this momentary, indefinite, and wavering existence of his is doing amidst this eternal, firmly established, and infinite world. Upon entering into the true human life, a man cannot avoid this question.

This question always confronts every man, and every man always answers it in one way or another. Now the answer to this question is that which forms the essence of every religion. The essence of every religion consists in nothing but an answer to the question why I live and what my relation is to the infinite world which surrounds me.

And the whole metaphysics of religion, all the doctrines about the divinities, about the origin of the world, are only different symptoms of religion, accompanying it according to the different geographical, ethnographical, and historical conditions. There is not a single religion, from the most exalted to the crudest, which has not for its base this establishment of man's relation to the world around him or to its prime cause. There is not a crude religious rite or a refined cult, which has not the same for its base. Every religious teaching is an expression by the founder of the religion of that relation which he recognizes as existing between himself, as a man, and consequently between all other men, and the world, or its beginning and prime cause.

The expressions of these relations are very varied, in accordance with the ethnographic and historical conditions in which the founder of the religion and the nation adopting it find themselves; besides, these expressions are always differently interpreted and distorted by the followers of the teacher, who anticipates the comprehension of the masses generally for hundreds, and sometimes even for thousands of years; and so there seem to be very many such relations of man to the world, that is, religions, but in reality there are but three fundamental relations of man to the world or to its beginning: (1) the primitive personal, (2) the pagan social, and (3) the Christian, or divine relation.

Strictly speaking, there are but two fundamental relations which man bears toward the world, – the personal one, which consists in the recognition of the meaning of life as being in the good of personality, which may be attained separately or in conjunction with other personalities, and the Christian, which recognizes the meaning of life to consist in serving Him who sent man into the world. Man's second relation to the world – the social one – is in reality nothing but an expansion of the first.

The first of these relations, the most ancient one, which is now found among men standing on the lowest stage of development,

consists in this, that man recognizes himself to be a self-sufficient being, which lives in the world for the purpose of acquiring in it the greatest possible personal good, independently of how much the good of other beings may suffer from it.

From this very first relation to the world, in which every child entering into the world finds himself, and in which humanity lived in its first, the pagan stage of its evolution, and in which now live many separate morally very coarse people and savage nations, result all the ancient pagan religions, as also the lower forms of the later religions in their corrupted form, – Buddhism,<sup>1</sup> Taoism, Mohammedanism, and others. From this same relation results also the modern spiritualism, which has for its base the preservation of personality and of its good. All the pagan cults of deification of beings which enjoy themselves like man, all the sacrifices and prayers for the acquisition of worldly goods, result from this relation to life.

The second pagan relation of man to the world, the social one, which establishes itself at the next stage of evolution, a relation which is more especially characteristic of full-grown men, consists in this, that the significance of life is not recognized in the good of one separate personality, but in the good of a certain aggregate of personalities, – the family, the race, the nation, even humanity (the positivists' attempt at religion).

The meaning of life with this relation of man to the world is transferred from the personality to the family, the race, to a certain aggregate of personalities, whose good is considered by it to be the purpose of existence. From this relation result all the patriarchal and public religions, which are all of one character, – the Chinese and the Japanese religions, the religion of the chosen nation, the Jewish, the state religion of the Romans, the presumptive religion of humanity of the positivists. All the rites of ancestral worship in China and in Japan,

<sup>1</sup> Though Buddhism demands from its followers the renunciation of all the good of the world and of life itself, it is based on the same relation of the self-sufficient personality, which is intended for the good, to the world surrounding it, but with this difference, that simple paganism recognizes man's right to enjoy himself, while Buddhism recognizes the right to avoid suffering. Paganism thinks that the world must serve the good of the individual; while Buddhism thinks that the world must disappear, since it produces the sufferings of personality. Buddhism is only negative paganism. – Author's Note. of the worship of the emperors in Rome, are based on this relation of man to the world.

Man's third relation to the world, the Christian, the one in which involuntarily every old man feels himself to be, and winch, in my opinion, is now being entered upon by humanity, consists in this, that the significance of life is no longer cognized by man as consisting in the attainment of his personal purpose or of the purpose of any aggregate of men, but only in the service of that

Will which has produced him and the whole world, not for the attainment of his purposes, but of the purposes of this Will.

From this relation to the world results the highest known religious teaching, the germs of which may be found among the Pythagoreans, Therapeutic, Essenes, among the Egyptians, Persians, Brahmins, Buddhists, and Taoists in their highest representatives, but which received its full and final expression only in Christianity in its true and uncorrupted significance.

All possible religions, whatever they may be, inevitably classify themselves among these three relations of men to the world.

Every man who has left the animal condition inevitably recognizes one of these three relations, and in this recognition does the true religion of every man consist, in spite of the profession to which he nominally counts himself as belonging.

Every man has inevitably some idea about his relation to the world, because a rational being cannot live in the world which surrounds him, without having some relation to it. And since so far only three such relations to the world have been worked out by humanity and are known to us, every man inevitably holds to one of the three existing relations, and, whether he wants or not, belongs to one of these three fundamental religions, among which the whole human race is distributed.

And so the very common assertion of the men of the cultured crowd of the Christian world, that they have risen to such a height of evolution that they no longer are in need of any religion and do not possess it, in reality means this, that these men, in not recognizing the Christian religion, the only one which is proper for our time, are holding to a lower, the public or the primitive pagan religion, without being conscious of the fact. A man without religion, that is, without any relation to the world, is as impossible as a man without a heart. He may not know that he has a religion, just as a man may not know that he has a heart; but a man cannot live without religion, just as he cannot live without a heart.

Religion is that relation which a man recognizes as existing between himself and the infinite world surrounding him, or to its beginning and prime cause, and a rational man cannot help but be in some relation to it.

But you will, perhaps, say that the establishment of man's relation to the world is not the business of religion, but of philosophy, or in general of science, if philosophy is to be considered a part of it. I do not think so. I think, on the contrary, that the assumption that science in general, including philosophy in it, is able to establish man's relation to the world is quite faulty and serves as the chief cause of that confusion of ideas concerning religion, science, and morality, which exists in the cultured strata of our society.

Science, with the inclusion of philosophy, cannot establish any relation of man to the infinite world or to its beginning, for the simple reason that before any philosophy or science could have originated, there had already to exist that without which no activity of the mind and no relation whatsoever of man to the world are possible.

Just as no man can by means of any movement find the direction in which he is to move, while every motion inevitably takes place in some direction, so it is impossible by means of the mental labour of philosophy or science to find the direction in which this labour is to be performed, whereas every mental labour lies inevitably to be performed in some one given direction. Such a direction is for every mental work always pointed out by religion. All philosophies known to us, beginning with Plato and ending with Schopenhauer, have inevitably always followed the direction given to them by religion. The philosophy of Plato and of his followers was a pagan philosophy, which investigated the means for the attainment of the highest good for the separate personality, as also for the aggregate of personalities in the state. The medieval philosophy, which resulted from the same pagan conception of life, investigated the means for the salvation of the personality, that is, for the attainment of the highest good of the personality in the future life, and only in its theocratic endeavours did it treat about the structure of societies.

Modern philosophy, both Hegel's and Comte's, has for its basis the social religious concept of life. Schopenhauer's and Hartmann's philosophy of pessimism, which wanted to free itself from the Jewish religious world-conception, involuntarily fell a prey to the religious foundations of Buddhism. Philosophy has always been and will always be an investigation of what results from man's relation to the world as established by religion, because previous to the establishment of this relation there does not exist any material for the philosophic investigation.

Even so it is with positive science in the narrower sense of this word. Such a science has always been and always will be nothing but an investigation and study of all those subjects and phenomena which present themselves as subject to investigation, in consequence of a certain relation of man to the world, as established by religion.

Science has always been and always will be, not the study of "everything," as men of science naively think now (that, indeed, is impossible, since there are an infinite number of subjects for investigation), but only of that which religion in regular order and according to the degree of its importance segregates from the infinite number of subjects, phenomena, and conditions that are subject to investigation. And so there is not merely one science, but there are as many sciences as there are degrees of the development of religion. Every religion segregates a certain circle of subjects of investigation, and so the science of every separate time and nation inevitably bears the character of the religion from the standpoint from which it views the subject.

Thus the pagan science which was resuscitated during the Renaissance, and which even now flourishes in our society, has always been and continues to be nothing but an investigation of all those conditions under which a man receives the highest good, and of all those phenomena of the world which can furnish it. The Brahmin and the Buddhistic philosophic sciences have always been nothing but an investigation of those conditions under which a man is freed from the sufferings which crush him. The Jewish science (Talmud) has always been nothing but the study and elucidation of those conditions which must be observed by a man, in order to fulfil his compact with God and keep the chosen people on the height of its calling. The true Christian science, the one which is just germinating, is the investigation of those conditions under which man can know the demands of the higher Will which sent him, and apply them to life.

Neither philosophy nor science can establish man's relations to the world, because such a relation must be established before any philosophy or science can begin. They cannot yet do so, for this other reason also, because science, with the inclusion of philosophy, investigates phenomena intellectually and independently of the position of the investigator and of the sensations experienced by him. But man's relation to the world is not defined by reason alone, but also by feeling, by the whole aggregate of man's spiritual forces. No matter how much people may try to make it clear to a man that everything in existence is only ideas, that everything consists of atoms, or that the essence of life is substance or will, or that heat, light, motion, electricity are different manifestations of one and the same energy, all that will not explain to him, a feeling, suffering, rejoicing, fearing, and hoping being, his place in the universe. Such a place, and so his relation to the world, is pointed out to him only by religion, which says to him : " The universe exists for you, and so take from this life everything you can take from it; " or: " You are a member of the nation which is beloved by God, so serve this nation, do everything prescribed by God, and you will, together with your nation, receive the highest possible good;" or: "You are a tool of the highest Will, which sent you into the world for the purpose of doing the work laid out for you, so get acquainted with this Will and do it, and you will do for yourself the best you can do."

For the comprehension of the data of philosophy and of science, preparation and study are necessary; for the religious comprehension this is not necessary: it is given to every man, even though he be most limited in comprehension and most ignorant.

For a man to know his relation to the surrounding world or to its beginning, he does not need any philosophical or scientific knowledge, – a mass of knowledge, by clogging consciousness, is often only in its way, – but only a renunciation of the vanity of the world, even though but for a time, the consciousness of his material insignificance, and righteousness, which is most frequently found, as it says in the Gospel, among children and the simplest,

least informed men. For this reason we see that frequently the simplest, most uncultured, and uneducated people quite clearly, consciously, and easily accept the highest Christian life-conception, while the most learned and cultured of people continue to persist in the crudest paganism. Thus, for example, we see the most refined and highly cultured people assume the meaning of life to consist in personal enjoyment or in the liberation of self from sufferings, as was assumed by the very clever and highly cultured Schopenhauer, while a half-educated Russian peasant sectarian, without the slightest effort, takes the meaning of life to consist in the same that the greatest sages of the world, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Seneca, took it to consist in, – in the recognition of oneself as the tool of God's will, as the son of God.

But you will ask me: In what does the essence of this unscientific and unphilosophical method of cognition consist? If this cognition is not philosophical and not scientific, what is it? By what is it defined? To these questions I can reply only this, that, since the religious cognition is that on which every other is based, and that which precedes every other cognition, we cannot define it, since we have for it no instrument of definition. In theological parlance this cognition is called revelation. And this appellation, if we do not ascribe to the word "revelation" any false meaning, is quite exact, because this cognition is acquired, not through study, nor through the efforts of an individual person or of individual persons, but only through the comprehension by an individual man or by individual men of the manifestation of infinite reason, which gradually reveals itself to men.

Why could not men ten thousand years ago comprehend that the meaning of their lives is not exhausted by the good of the personality, and why did there then come a time when the higher conception of life, the social, national, political, was revealed to men? Why has the Christian life-conception been revealed to men within our historical memory? Why was it revealed to such a man or men, in such and such a time, in such and such a place, in such and such a form? To try to answer these questions, by finding the causes of this life-conception in the historical conditions of the time, life, and character of those people who were the first to make it their own and to express it, – in the peculiar properties of these men, – is the same as trying to answer the question as to why the rising sun first lighted up such objects and no other. The sun of truth, rising higher and higher above the world, illuminates it more and more, and is reflected on those objects which first come under the illumination of the sun's rays and which are most capable of reflecting them. But the qualities which make certain men more capable of receiving this rising truth are not any special active properties of the mind, but, on the contrary, passive qualities of the heart, which rarely coincide with a great and curious mind, – renunciation of the vanity of the world, the recognition of his material insignificance, righteousness, as we see it in the case of all the founders of religion, who never were distinguished for any philosophic or scientific attainments.

In my opinion, the chief error, which more than any other interferes with the true progress of our Christian humanity, consists in this, that the men of science in our time, who are sitting in the seat of Moses, are guided by the pagan world-conception, which was regenerated during the Renaissance, and have decided that Christianity is a condition which people have outlived, and that, on the contrary, that pagan, social, antique conception of life, which humanity has actually outlived, and to which they hold, is the highest conception of life, and one which humanity ought unswervingly to profess. With this they not only do not understand the true Christianity, which forms that higher life-conception toward which all humanity moves, but even do not try to understand it.

The chief source of this misunderstanding consists in this, that the men of science, differing from Christianity and seeing the lack of correspondence between their science and Christianity, have found guilty of it, not their science, but Christianity ; that is, they have considered not what is the fact, namely, that their science is eighteen hundred years behind Christianity, which has already taken possession of a great part of modern society, but that Christianity has fallen behind science for eighteen hundred years.

From this exchange of roles arises that striking phenomenon that no people have more confused conceptions about the essence of the true significance of religions, about religion, about morality, about life, than the men of science; and a still more striking phenomenon is this, that the science of our time, which in its field of the investigation of the conditions of the material world has indeed accomplished great results, has appeared as quite useless in the life of men, and sometimes even produces harmful results.

And so I think that it is not philosophy and not science, but religion that establishes man's relation to the world.

And so, in response to your first question, as to what I understand by the word " religion," I will say : religion is a certain relation which is established by man between himself and the eternal, infinite world, or its beginning and prime cause.

From this answer to the first question naturally results the answer to the second:

If religion is an established relation between man and the world, which determines the meaning of his life, morality is the indication and elucidation of that activity of man which naturally results from this or that relation of man to the world. But since we know only two such fundamental relations to the world or to its beginning, if we consider the pagan social relation as an expansion of the personal, or three, if we consider the pagan social relation separately, there exist but three moral teachings : the primitive savage moral teaching, the pagan personal, or social, moral teaching, and the Christian moral teaching, that is, the service of God, or the divine teaching.

From man's first relation to the world arise the moral teaching common to all the pagan religions, which have for their basis the striving after the good of the separate personality, and which, therefore, define all the conditions which give the highest good to the personality and point out the means for the attainment of this good. From this relation to the world result the Epicurean moral teaching in its lowest manifestation, the Mohammedan teaching or morality, which promises a gross good to the personality in this world and in the world to come, and the teaching of the worldly utilitarian morality, which has for its aim only the good of the personality in this world.

From the same teaching, which regards as the aim of life the good of the individual person, and so liberation from the sufferings of the personality, arises the moral teaching of Buddhism in its gross form, and the worldly teaching of pessimism.

From the second, the pagan relation of man to the world, which sets as the aim of life the good of a certain aggregate of personalities, there result the moral teachings which demand of man the service to this aggregate, whose good is recognized to be the aim of life. According to this teaching the enjoyment of the personal good is admitted only to the extent to which it is acquired by the whole aggregate which forms the religious foundation of life. From this relation to the world arise the familiar moral teachings of the ancient Roman and Greek worlds, where the personality always sacrificed itself for society, and such is also the Chinese morality; from this same relation arises the Jewish morality, – the subordination of one's good to the good of the chosen nation, and the morality of our time, which demands the sacrifices of the personality for the conventional good of the majority. From the same relation to the universe arises the morality of the majority of women, who sacrifice their personalities for the good of the family, and chiefly of their children.

All ancient history, and partly mediaeval and modern history, is full of descriptions of the exploits of this domestic-social morality. And in our time the majority of men, who imagine that, by professing Christianity, they are practising Christian morality, in reality follow nothing but the pagan morality, and this morality they take as the ideal of the education of the younger generation.

From the third, the Christian relation to the world, which consists in man's recognition of himself as a tool of the higher will for the fulfilment of its purposes, there result the moral teachings corresponding to this comprehension of life, which elucidate man's dependence on the higher will, and which determine the demands of this will. From this relation of man to the world result all the higher moral teachings known to humanity, – the Pythagorean, Stoic, Buddhist, Brahmin, Taoist, in their highest manifestations, and the Christian in its true meaning, which demands the renunciation of the personal will, and not only of the personal, but also of the domestic and the social good, for the sake of doing the will of Him

who sent us into this life, as revealed to us in our consciousness. From this second or third relation to the infinite world or its beginning arises^ the true, unhyprocritical morality of every man, independently of what he nominally professes or preaches as morality, or what he wants to seem.

Thus in the case of a man who recognizes the essence of his relation to the world to be the acquisition of the highest good for himself, no matter how much he may say about considering it moral to live for the family, for society, for the state, for humanity, or for the fulfilment of God's will, may artfully dissemble before people, deceiving them, the real motive of his activity will always be only the good of his personality, so that, when the necessity of the choice presents itself, he will not sacrifice his personality for the family, for the state, for the fulfilment of God's will, but will sacrifice everything for himself, because, seeing the meaning of his life only in the good of his personality, he cannot act differently, so long as he does not change his relation to the world.

Similarly, no matter how much a man, whose relation to the world consists in serving his family (women are preeminently such), or his race, his nation (such are the men of the oppressed nationalities or politicians in the time of struggle), may say that he is a Christian, his morality will always be either domestic or national, but not Christian, and when the necessity comes of choosing between the domestic, the social, and the personal good, or between the social good and the fulfilment of God's will, he will inevitably choose the service of the good of that aggregate of men for which he exists, according to his world-conception, because only in this service does he see the meaning of his life. And similarly, no matter how much a man who takes his relation to the world to consist in the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent him, may be impressed with the idea that he should, in conformity with the demands of personality, family, the nation, humanity, commit acts that are contrary to this higher will, which is cognized by him in the name of the qualities of reason and love implanted in him, he will always sacrifice all his human ties only not to transgress the will of Him who sent him, because only in the fulfilment of this will does he see the meaning of his life.

Morality cannot be independent of religion, because it is not only the consequence of religion, that is, of the relation which a man recognizes himself to have to the world, but is already included, implied, in religion. Every religion is an answer to the question as to what constitutes the meaning of one's life. And the religious answer includes a certain moral demand which at times may arise after the explanation of the meaning of life, and at times before it. In response to the question as to the meaning of life we may say : the meaning of life is in the good of personality, and so enjoy all the goods that are accessible to you ; or : the meaning of life is in the good of a certain group of men, and so serve this group with all your strength ; or: the meaning of life is in the doing of the will of Him who sent you, and so try with all your

strength to know this will and to do it. The same question may also be answered as follows: the meaning of your life is in your personal enjoyment, because in this does man's destiny lie; or: the meaning of your life is in the service of that aggregate of which you consider yourself to be a member, because in this does your destiny lie ; or : the meaning of your life is in the service of God, because in this does your destiny lie.

Morality is contained in the explanation of life as given by religion, and so it can in no way be separated from religion. This truth is particularly evident in the attempts of the non-Christian philosophers to deduce the teaching of the highest morality from their philosophy. These philosophers see that the Christian philosophy is indispensable, that it is impossible to live without it; more than that: they see that it exists, and they want in some way to connect it with their non-Christian philosophy and even to represent matters in such a form as though the Christian philosophy resulted from their pagan or social philosophy. This they try to do, but it is these very attempts that more obviously than anything else show, not only the independence of the Christian morality, but even the complete contradiction between it and the pagan philosophy.

The Christian ethics, the one which we recognize in consequence of our religious world-conception, not only demands the sacrifice of the personality for the aggregate of personalities, but also the renunciation of one's own personality and of the aggregate of personalities for the purpose of serving God; but the pagan philosophy investigates only the means for attaining the greatest good of the personality or of the aggregate of personalities, and so the contradiction is inevitable. In order to conceal this contradiction, there is but one means, – and that is, to heap abstract conventional concepts upon one another. Thus preeminently have acted the philosophers since the time of the Renaissance, and to this circumstance – to the impossibility of harmonizing the demands of the Christian morality, which is assumed in advance as given, with philosophy, which starts from pagan foundations–has to be ascribed that terrible abstraction, obscurity, incomprehensibility, and estrangement from life, which are displayed by the modern philosophy. With the exception of Spinoza, who in his philosophy, in spite of his not being a Christian, starts from truly Christian foundations, and of ingenious Kant, who established his ethics independently of his metaphysics, all the other philosophers, even brilliant Schopenhauer, apparently invent an artificial connection between their ethics and their metaphysics.

It is felt that the Christian ethics is something given in advance, which stands quite firmly and independently of philosophy and is in no need of the fictitious supports which are put under it, and that philosophy only invents such propositions that the given ethics may not contradict it, but may combine with it and, as it were, result from it. But all these propositions seem to justify the Christian ethics only so long as they are viewed in the abstract. The moment they are applied to questions of practical life, not only the disagreement, but even the obvious contradiction, between the

philosophic bases with what we consider to be morality comes out in full force.

Unfortunate Nietzsche, who has of late become so famous, is precious in so far as he points out this contradiction. He is incontrovertible, when he says that all the rules of morality, from the standpoint of the existing non-Christian philosophy, are nothing but lying and hypocrisy, and that it is more advantageous, more agreeable, and more rational for people to form a society of Uebermenschen and be such, than to be that crowd which must serve only as a scaffolding for these Uebertnenschcn. No structures of philosophy, which starts from the pagan philosophical world-conception, can prove to man that it is more advantageous and rational for him to live, not for his desirable, comprehensible, and possible good, or for the good of his family, his society, but for a foreign, undesirable, and incomprehensible good, which is inaccessible by any human insignificant means. A philosophy which is based on the comprehension of life as to be contained in the good of man will never be able to prove to a rational man, who knows that he may die any moment, that it is good and proper for him to renounce his desirable, comprehensible, and undoubted good, not even for the good of others, because he can never know what the consequences from his sacrifice will be, but only because it is proper and good, because it is a categorical imperative.

It is impossible to prove this from the standpoint of pagan philosophy. To prove that all men are equal, that it is better for a man to give his life in the service of others than to make other men serve him, by treading on their lives, it is necessary differently to define one's relation to the world: it is necessary to prove that man's position is such that he has nothing else to do, because the meaning of his life is only in the fulfilment of the will of Him who sent him; but the will of Him who sent him is that he should give his life for the service of men. It is only religion which makes this change in man's relation to the world.

The same is true of the attempts to deduce Christian morality from the fundamental positions of pagan science, and to harmonize the two. No sophisms and no sinuosities of thought will destroy the simple and obvious position that the law of evolution, which lies at the foundation of the whole science of our time, is based on a general, eternal, and unchangeable law, on the law of the struggle for existence and of the survival of the fittest, and that, therefore, every man, for the attainment of his good or of the good of his society, must be this fittest and must make his society such, in order that not he and not his society, but some other, less fitted one, may perish.

No matter how much certain naturalists, who have become frightened at the logical conclusions from this law, and from their application to human life, may try to bury this law under words and circumvent it, all their attempts only show more obviously the ineradicability of this law, which guides the life of the whole organic world, and so also of man viewed as an animal.

Just as I was writing this, there appeared a Russian translation of Mr. Huxley's article, composed from a late lecture of his on evolution and ethics, which he delivered before some English society.

In this article the learned professor, like our well-known Professor Bekdtov and many others who have written on the same subject with the same lack of success as their predecessors, tries to prove that the struggle for existence does not impair morality, and that with the recognition of the law of the struggle for existence as the fundamental law of life, morality can not only exist, but even be perfected. Mr. Huxley's article is full of all kinds of jests, verses, and general considerations of the religion and the philosophy of the ancients, and in consequence of this is so full of flourishes, and so confused, that it is only with great difficulty that one can get at its fundamental idea. This idea is as follows: the law of evolution is contrary to the law of morality,— this was known to the ancients, both of the Greek and of the Indian world. The philosophy and the religion of the two nations brought them to the teaching of self-renunciation. This teaching, according to the author's view, is incorrect, and this is what is correct: there exists a law, which the author calls the cosmic law, according to which all beings fight among themselves, and only the fittest survives. Man, too, is subject to this law, and only thanks to this law has man developed into what he now is. But this law is contrary to morality. How is this law to be harmonized with morality? Like this: there exists a social progress, which strives to retard the cosmic and to substitute for it another process, the ethical, whose purpose is no longer the survival of the fittest, but of the best in the ethical sense. Mr. Huxley does not explain whence comes this ethical process, but in the nineteenth note he says that the basis of this progress consists in this, that on the one hand men, like the animals, themselves like to be in society, and repress in themselves the property which is detrimental for society, and on the other, the members of society forcibly suppress the acts which are contrary to the good of society. It appears to Mr. Huxley that this process, which causes people to bridle their passions for the preservation of the aggregate of which they are members, and the fear of being punished for the violation of the orders of the aggregate, are the same ethical law, the existence of which he has to prove.

Morality is something constantly developing and growing, and so the non-violation of the established rules of a certain society, their retention by any external means, of which Mr. Huxley speaks as of tools of morality, will not only fail to be a confirmation, but will even be a violation of morality. Every cannibal who stops eating his like, and acts in conformity with this, will violate the order of his society. And it is unquestionable that every truly moral act, which advances morality, will always be a violation of the habits of society. And so, if in society there has appeared a law according to which men sacrifice then-advantages for the preservation of the integrity of their society, this law is not an ethical law, but, on

the contrary, generally a law which is opposed to every ethics, the same law of the struggle for existence, only in a latent condition. It is the same struggle for existence, only that it is transferred from the units to their aggregate. It is not the cessation of fighting, but the swinging of the hand in order to strike more powerfully.

If the law of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest is an eternal law of everything living (and it cannot be viewed otherwise in the case of man considered as an animal), no confused reflections concerning the social progress and the ethical law, which, like the *deus ex machina*, leaping out no one knows whence, is supposed to result from it, can impair this law.

If social progress, as Mr. Huxley asserts, collects people into groups, the same struggle and the same survival will take place among families, tribes, nations, and this struggle will not only not be more moral, but will be much more cruel and immoral, than the struggle of individuals, as we see to be the case in reality.

If we assume the impossible, namely, that all humanity will in a thousand years, through the one social progress, be united into one whole, will form one nation and one state, even then, to say nothing of the fact that the struggle, made void between the nations, will pass into the struggle between humanity and the world of animals, struggle will always remain struggle, that is, an activity which radically excludes the possibility of the Christian morality as recognized by us. To say nothing of this, even then the struggle between the individuals forming aggregates, and between the aggregates of families, tribes, nationalities, will not in the least be diminished, but will only take place in another form, as we see in all the combinations of men into social groups. Members of a family quarrel and struggle among themselves as much as outsiders, and frequently more savagely and more furiously.

Similarly in the state: among the men who live in the state there is continued the same struggle as among the men living outside the state, only under different forms. If the feeble are saved in the family and in the state, this does not happen at all in consequence of their social union, but because among the men united into families and states there is self-sacrifice and love. If outside the family only the fittest of two children survives, while in the family, with a good mother, both will remain alive, this is not at all due to the combination of men into families, but because mothers have love and self-sacrifice. But neither self-sacrifice nor love can in any way result from social progress.

To assert that social progress produces morality is the same as to assert that the construction of stoves produces heat.

Heat is produced by the sun, and stoves produce heat only when wood, that is, sun's work, is put into them. Similarly morality results from religion, while the special forms of life produce morality only when into these forms of life have been put the consequences of the

religious influence upon people, – morality.

Fires may be made in stoves, and then they will give heat, or no fires may be made in them, and then they will remain cold; similarly the social forms may include morality and then morally affect society, or not include morality and then remain without any effect upon society.

Christian morality cannot be based on the pagan comprehension of life, and cannot be deduced from philosophy, nor from non-Christian science; it not only cannot be deduced from them, but cannot even be harmonized with them.

Thus every serious, severe, consistent philosophy and science have always understood the matter. "If our propositions do not agree with morality, so much the worse for it," quite correctly say such philosophy and science, and they continue to carry on their investigations.

Ethical treatises, which are not based on religion, and even lay catechisms are written and taught, and people may imagine that humanity is guided by them, but that only seems so, because in reality men are not guided by these treatises and catechisms, but by religion, which they have always had, while the treatises and catechisms only imitate what naturally results from religion.

The prescriptions of the lay morality that are not based on the religious teaching are very much like what a man would do if, not knowing music, he should take the director's place and swing his arms in front of the musicians doing their usual work. The music, thanks to inertia and to what the musicians have learned from previous directors, would last a little while longer; but it is evident that the swaying of the baton by him who does not know music would not only not be useful, but would in time certainly confuse the musicians and break up the orchestra. A similar confusion is beginning to take place in the minds of the men of our time, in consequence of the attempts of the leaders to teach a morality which is not based on that higher religion which is being adopted and partly is already adopted by the Christian morality. The attempts at founding a morality outside of religion are like what children do, when, wishing to transplant a plant to which they have taken a fancy, they tear off the root, which they do not like and which seems super-

fluous, and without the root stick the plant into the ground. Without a religious foundation there can be no real, sincere morality, just as without a root there can be no real plant.

And so, replying to your two questions, I say : " Religion is a certain relation, established by man, of his separate personality to the infinite world or to its beginning; but morality is a constant guide of life, resulting from this relation."

THE END.

