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MORALITY AND THE GOSPEL.

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THE remarks of Mr. Le Sueur on the relation of Morality to the current religious beliefs are the utterance of a man obviously in earnest, and, I believe, anxious to be just and truthful. It may seem strange to say, in the same breath, that they seem to me singularly unfair; but they do seem so. A man may be just when his arguments are unjust; a writer may be impartial, though his point of view be most one-sided and partial.

It has been held that 'the Apostolic Doctrine of the Cross alone can keep the world from becoming altogether corrupt.' There is, I think, very much to be said for this position. This, at least, is true, that the doctrine came to a very corrupt world, and acted, as we say, 'like a charm' in changing it. Look into Juvenal's satires,—untranslatable as they are for our purer modern ears,—and then look at the Church which grew up in the world of which they afford a sketch; and, although the Church was undoubtedly sufficiently imperfect, the contrast is suggestive.

But, we are told, this has nothing to do with the question, and it is strangely added that it is not, and cannot be, relevant to any practical issue. It may not be relevant to theoretical issues; but I should have thought it practical enough. What is the question with which the moral tendency of the Gospel has nothing to do? We are told what men in general have to consider is not what a doctrine will do for them if they believe it, but whether it is 'believable.' Let me try to simplify this question still further, for I get confused among the knowables and unknowables, thinkable things and things which cannot be construed in thought, of a certain school of philosophy. It appears to me that the question which concerns 'men in general' is the very ordinary one whether a given doctrine is true or untrue. If it is true, it does not much matter who finds it 'unbelievable;' if it is not true, it may be both 'believable,' and actually believed by millions of men,—but what then? The possibilities of belief are shifting, the conditions of truth are fixed.