

of all men, from the rudest savage to the most cultured philosopher. And the sentiments, conceptions, explanations and beliefs which these things gave rise to, have always had, and must always have, a powerful influence on the thoughts, the conduct and the condition of men.

This seeking after truth gave rise at first to a good deal of crude guessing and undigested thought, for man's imagination and emotions are developed earlier than his reasoning powers. This natural seeking after safety, comfort, and happiness stimulated the emotions and the imagination, but was apt to degenerate into ceremonial excesses and superstition.

Each of the prevailing systems of what is commonly called *religion*—that is, ecclesiastical religion—professes to teach a philosophy or theory of the universe and of life,—that is, how all things came into being at the first, how they are governed, and how we ought to live.

Now, it is plain that if "religion" gave a true explanation of the universe and of life there would be only one religion. But unfortunately for workers, who have to support them all, there are a great many so-called religions, all competing for the control and direction of men's thoughts and emotions, so that their priesthoods may receive and appropriate a large share of workers' earnings.

The rival religions are bitterly opposed to each other. They denounce one another in terms of bitter hatred and malice. The bloodiest wars that ever raged on earth were caused by religious rivalry and hatred, the priests stirring them up and leading them on. How often has rivalry between the Cross and the Crescent deluged Europe, Asia and Africa with blood? I am persuaded that nine-tenths of the hatreds and strifes among the nations would soon cease, were it not for the teachings of the different priesthoods.

Religion should not separate men and make them hostile to each other. True religion should unite men, and make them progressive in knowledge, comfort and happiness. Let us patiently inquire—What is true, universal, natural religion?

For mutual advantage and enjoyment men live together in communities. Two, by living together and uniting their efforts, can live more securely and procure more food and clothing than they could living and working separately.

Similar interests, similar thoughts, sentiments and beliefs are the bonds of society. And as all that we eat and drink and wear and use have to be got from mother Earth by human brain and bone and muscle, surely the working men and women—those who think and work—should have similar interests and mutual sympathies all the world over. The interchange of thought and sentiment creates and enlarges the advantages and enjoyments of social life. In fact, social intercourse and co-operation are necessary for the progress of the human race.

Those usages, customs or manners which have been found by experience to be best for the welfare of a family, tribe or nation, become the morals, rules or laws of the community. The word morality comes from the Latin *mos moris*, a custom, habit, or manner of acting. (Ethics is the science that treats of morals.)