

and indeed denies the true nature of the Christian morality.

This is too common and persistent a heresy to be traced to a particular contemporary source, but it has probably gained some countenance in our time from the ethics of evolutionism. The doctrine of gradual development implies that moral obligations are to be determined by the general moral capacity of a people at that particular stage of the upward ascent at which they may at a particular moment have arrived. Within certain broad limits this view is doubtless sound; and if human freedom were not a fact, it would be the whole truth of the matter. But we know that men are capable both of rising above and of falling below the general moral average of their age; and the moral obligation of an individual is not to be measured by the capacity of his neighbour, but by his own vision of moral good. And by what test is the moral capacity of a people at any point to be determined? Is it to be the customary planes of social correctness, or the requirements of the state? Or what? "The only possible test of reasonableness" (in the determination of conduct), said a British Member of Parliament the other day, "is what is accepted by the consensus of opinion or conviction among contemporary men of the same stage of civilization." In which case what becomes of the prophet, of that remarkable succession of rebels and outlaws who were without honour in their own age, but whom popular romance has so consistently canonized, with the consent of the moral judgment of their posterity? And what becomes of Jesus? The