

amount of consideration we bestow upon it; and it is no dishonour to Christianity, but the very reverse, to maintain that, on account of its unspeakable practical importance to the moral life of humanity, it is not to be cast aside without a more adequate conception of that importance than seems to be possessed by those who are so ready to reject it.

In the paper entitled 'Morality and Religion,' in the February number of the CANADIAN MONTHLY, the writer thus briefly defines his own position: 'that morality is a thing of natural growth; that it consists essentially of the exercise of certain just and benevolent feelings, with their appropriate outcome in action, towards our fellow-beings, and that no system of religion, past or present, can claim to have invented it, or to be alone capable of maintaining it in vigour.' This definition leaves out of view altogether the larger idea of morality as a choice between good and evil, in obedience to self evident truth. It seems simply a statement of the 'evolution theory' of morality, and as such is a begging of the great question at issue between the 'experiential' and the 'intuitional' theories, which is not likely to be settled even by Mr. Spencer's 'Data of Ethics.' Into this question, however, it is not the purpose of the present paper to enter, especially as anyone may see it ably treated in Mr. Mallock's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, entitled 'Atheistic Methodism.' But no one on either side of the present discussion would assert that either religion, or any system of religion, 'invented morality.' To do so would be to honour neither religion nor morality, and would be as rational as to speak of sanitary systems as inventing the laws of health. Christ Himself made no such claim, when He appealed to the Jews to judge Him by His words and works. Paul made no such claim for even Moses and the Prophets when he spoke of the Gentiles as having 'the law written in

their hearts.' It is assuredly true that, as Mr. Goldwin Smith has told us, every religion worthy of the name 'has been the basis of moral life, and especially of the moral life of the community; each of them after its fashion has been the support of righteousness, and the terror of unrighteousness;' that, even though 'overlaid and disguised by fable, ceremony and priest-craft,' the 'moral element has always been present in everything that could be called a religious system.' But the connection between religion and morality must be, to every theist at least, a far closer one than that of either inventing morality or enforcing it. Morality, in its larger sense, as the choice between good and evil, must include religion, and religion, as an influence, must be the very source and well-spring of moral life.

By religion, however, let it be understood that we do not mean theology, viz., what men have believed or thought or fancied about God, though undoubtedly the truth or falsehood of this must materially affect the value of their religion; but we mean the active principle which binds the soul to God, which leads it to look up to him with love and reverence, and to draw a portion of His life into its own. Now, as to the theist, God is the source of all life, *a fortiori* must He be the source of moral and spiritual life. Unless this be true, we can have no theism which has any practical interest or bearing on human life at all. And so, through all degrees, from almost total darkness to the perfect light, we may trace

'The mystery dimly understood  
That love of God is love of good.  
And chiefly, its divinest trace,  
In Him of Nazareth's holy face:  
That to be saved is only this,  
Salvation from our selfishness;  
From more than elemental fire  
The soul's unsatisfied desire,  
From sin itself, and not the pain  
That warns us of its chafing chain.'

But the Christian theist has no need to go far to discover the connection