

fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name" (Mal. i. 6).

I. A question concerning the influence of a false philosophy may be tried historically. Here are the facts. The national philosophy of China is that of Confucius, which, we are told, is simply modern agnosticism. The civil administration of China, and the domestic morals, are rotten with corruption. Lying, opium drunkenness, cruelty, bribery, cheating, infanticide are current. India has a great and ancient philosophy—pantheism. Her religions, Brahmanism and Buddhism, are pantheistic. When the British went there, despotism, bribery, polygamy, the suttee, infanticide, official plunderings, lying, and cheating were prevalent institutions. Oaths in courts counted for nothing at all in administering justice. Thuggism was a religion. In Greece, the sounder philosophy was supplanted by that of the Epicureans, Sophists, Sceptics, and the New Academy. Then the glory departed, and Greece became vile enough for her slavery. Then Roman virtue also died, and a vast moral rotteness brought on the "decline and fall" of the empire. In the eighteenth century, France adopted the sensualist philosophy of Voltaire, and the selfish ethics of Helvetius. The fruit was the Reign of Terror. In Russia, the Nihilism of Bakunin is a philosophy, that, namely, of materialism and agnosticism; its products are anarchy, prostitution, and assassination. The same philosophy has shown us the same fruits in Paris, New York, and Chicago. Lastly, everybody sorrowfully admits the decadence of political, commercial, and domestic virtue in this country. We need not detail the melancholy instances, or paint the contrast between the Americans of to-day and the America of Monroe and J. Q. Adams. Since the latter epoch, the philosophy of Comte, Stuart Mill, and Darwin has been rapidly gaining ground.

Shall I be told that these are only chance coincidences and not causal sequences? According to the inductive logic, sequences so regularly recurring raise a strong probability, if not a certainty, of a true causal relation. Again, could instances be adduced of the reverse order, where the incoming of a true philosophy resulted in a decay of morals, our opponents might have some offset to our facts: but there are no such cases.

II. And I now proceed to show that the sequences are causal, by disclosing in these false philosophies obvious causes of corruption.

Here an important fact should be brought forward. Man's moral nature is diseased. Some perversion of will is inherited by every man. Hence, farther moral decay is natural and easy; while the ascent back toward a higher virtue is arduous. Human souls are like a loaded train upon a down grade, whose slight inclination, below the horizontal, increases as it advances. The natural tendency of the train is to descend slowly at first, then with accelerated speed toward the final crash. A good brake (a true philosophy) is quite efficient to