

indeed have to modify to some extent our traditional notions of morality; but I believe that when thus modified, they will be more in accordance with our every-day experience, and with the laws of psychology. First, then, it seems evident that the importance of freedom as an ethical postulate has grown out of the conception of morality as moral law. "It is through the jurial conception of ethics that the controversy of free will chiefly becomes important. A plain man does not naturally inquire whether he is free or not to seek his own good, provided only that he knows what it is, and that it is attainable by voluntary action. But when his conduct is compared with a code, to the violation of which punishments are attached, the question whether he really could obey the rule by which he is judged is obvious and inevitable; since if he could not, it seems contrary to our sense of justice to punish him."¹ But in modern times we seem to have reverted to Aristotle's conception of morality as action according to an end. It seems quite possible, then, that morality will remain just what it is, whether we are free or determined. Ethics, like logic, is a normative science. Just as logic prescribes certain laws or standards for thought, so ethics attempts to discover the norms of right conduct. These norms may be prescribed by society, yet the individual in virtue of his moral nature, must adopt them as his own. The feeling of obligation is simply the immediate consciousness of the individual that these ends have a right to him. They carry with them, as Kant remarked, a certain dignity and majesty before which our moral nature bows down. A feeling of obligation is simply the recognition of the authority and universality of certain norms of conduct. What then is the truth in the argument that the 'ought' implies the 'can'? Not that we could have acted otherwise

¹Sidgwick, *History of Ethics*, p. 10. Compare Paulsen's description of the problem as one "which arose under certain conditions and has disappeared with the disappearance of these conditions, a problem which exists only for a theological or scholastic philosophy." *Ethik*, p. 357.