

character has passed this stage of childishness—and the world, released from nursery trammels, is, as it were, bidden to rule itself, to govern its own passions, to pursue its great ends, guided only by a consciousness that every deviation from truth is, to the same extent, a deviation from happiness—that there is no sin without its punishment, be that punishment ever so remote—and no virtue without its appropriate reward.

With a system thus free, thus elevated and spiritual, a compulsory maintenance of its institutions cannot, by any possibility, be made to harmonise. They who contend for securing a competent provision for the ministers of truth by means of legal enactments, and who, to a scheme of moral government of the highest order, would adapt an apparatus of physical force—seem to us to be seeking the amalgamation of elements which cannot mingle. They would have the structure of the butterfly united with the habits of the grub. They appear to be utterly ignorant of the use of wings. They wish to confine to earth what was meant to fly in air—to feed on dirt what is designed to sip nectar from flowers—to localise what is capacitated to range abroad in joyous freedom. Their ideas of Christianity cannot get beyond the mark of burrowing. They would have it still a chrysalis which they can watch and tend, and fancy dependent upon their officious intermeddling. They cannot trust it out of sight. They can frame to themselves no notion of Christianity getting its own sustenance. Like school-boys they construct a box for it, and fetch it leaves, and do all but force them down its throat—and then wonder that it pines. Ignorantly, and, in many cases, with the kindest intentions, they nurse it into sickness. To trust it abroad they regard as the acme of insanity. They would not leave it to its own instincts for the world. Under their management it is a gorgeous and many-coloured butterfly, living the life of a grub—doomed to crawl in the dust—to forego every natural tendency—to soil its own splendour—and to come under subjection to laws which suited only the earliest stages of its being.

The fact is, that nothing has so completely jarred with the designs of revealed truth, as the effort of rulers to further them by temporal rewards and punishments. The compulsory principle, which, if we take their word for it, is alone worthy of our confidence, introduces into a system of moral government an order of pains and penalties, which to have discarded as gross and beggarly was one of the main distinctions of its constitution. It is now, in consequence, altogether misunderstood. Its glory is not recognised—nor its spirituality discerned. Men who altogether mistake its sphere overlook, of course, the exquisite suitableness of its structure to move in that sphere. It is a beautiful object out of place—a polished mirror in a dark lumber room—a sceptre, grasped by a pedagogue, and employed as a rod. Far humbler materials would better have answered such mean uses.

It speaks well for the principle of voluntaryism, that it does not, in this respect, more than others, jar with the general tone of that scheme of