

that to be wicked was to be miserable, that in the indulgence of immoderate passions they would find less happiness than in adhering to the rules of justice, or yielding to the impulses of more generous emotions? And for the rest, why could they not let fools be fools, and leave opinion free about matters of which neither they nor others could know any thing certain at all?

I reply that it is not true that goodness is synonymous with happiness. The most perfect being who ever trod the soil of this planet was called the Man of Sorrows. If happiness means absence of care and inexperience of painful emotion, the best securities for it are a hard heart and a good digestion. If morality has no better foundation than a tendency to promote happiness, its sanction is but a feeble uncertainty. If it be recognised as part of the constitution of the world, it carries with it its right to command; and those who see clearly what it is will insist on submission to it, and derive authority from the distinctness of their recognition to enforce submission where their power extends. Philosophy goes no further than probabilities, and in every assertion keeps a doubt in reserve. Compare the remonstrance of the casual passer-by if a mob of ruffians are misbehaving themselves in the street with the downright energy of the policeman who strikes in fearlessly, one against a dozen, as a minister of the law. There is the same difference through life between the man who has a sure conviction and him whose thoughts never rise beyond "perhaps."

Any fanatic may say as much, it is again answered, for the wildest madness. But the elementary principles of morality are not forms of madness. No one pretends that it is uncertain whether truth is better than falsehood, or justice than injustice. Speculation can eat away the sanction, superstition can erect rival duties; but neither one nor the other pretends to touch the fact that these principles exist, and the very essence and life of all great religious movements is the recognition of them as of authority and as part of the eternal framework of things.