

being, the important question at once arises: Shall moral instruction, by recognizing as thinkably separate what is in fact vitally united, contemplate man as only a moral being, and so limit itself to the consideration of those duties, or grounds of duty, which concern man simply as man? Or, shall it, by recognizing the vital union of morals and religion, be grounded on a religious basis, and thence regard man as the child of one God and father of all, and, accordingly, contemplate all men as brethren, as well as competing fellow creatures? In other words: Shall moral instruction be purely secular, that is,—shall it recognize no other foundation or higher authority than human opinion and custom? Or, shall it have some kind of religious basis, some reference to a wisdom and goodness and authority superior to man's, whether apprehended through nature and life, or known by revelation?

To aid in answering this fundamental question, let us briefly define morality and religion. By morality we mean, conduct determined by the thought of, and regard for, the nature and consequent claims of man. So far, and in such things, as he is really sufficient unto himself, man is an independent sovereign, who only asks a fair chance. But so far as subject to common limitations and liable to common misfortunes, all men are mutually dependent, and each is his brother's keeper. Complete morality, then, contemplates man as in part self-sufficient, and in part as mutually dependent.

By religion is meant conduct governed by thought of and regard for the being, character, relation to us, and consequent claims upon us, of God. But though morality and religion are thus thinkably separate, they are, as said before, vitally united in normal life, as can now easily be demonstrated. For, first, one of the

foremost of the relations of God to us is that of the common Father of all; from which it follows, that one of His foremost claims upon us is that of right treatment of our fellow creatures as His. I have no right to abuse or injuriously neglect what belongs to another in a higher sense than it does to me, but which is associated with me and for my benefit. Again, since every possible act is in some way either beneficial or injurious to man, and also loyal or disloyal to God, moral acts and religious acts are not necessarily, and, indeed, never ought to be, totally distinct and separate acts, but are the same acts done on different grounds. If I aid my suffering neighbor simply as being a creature of like kind with myself, I perform a moral act. If I add the further motive that he is a child of God, and care for him as such, my moral act takes on also a religious character,—becomes an act of piety as well as of morality, by being done with a thought of God as well as of man. Or, if I can trace a connection between reverent and sincere worship, and honesty and fidelity in daily business, my worship, so far as done as an aid to right conduct toward man in daily life, becomes a moral as well as a religious act.

We are now ready to answer the question as to the basis of moral instruction, and that reasonably, or without a shade of partizanship—from which may Heaven defend all discussion of such a question.

First, then, the fundamental objection to purely secular moral instruction—though it may be better than none, and may be given, and have its characteristic fashion of text-books—is, that it puts asunder what is divinely joined together. Thence, as might be expected, other disadvantages flow. Individualism only too easily learns to say that one man