

times and circumstances pass away; yet, while they last, are often naturally and almost necessarily esteemed above those virtues which are most real and universal. These factitious virtues are the offspring for the most part of early states of society, and the attendant narrowness of moral vision. Such was headlong valour among the Northmen. Such was, and is, punctilious hospitality among the tribes of the Desert. Such was the fanatical patriotism of the ancients, which remained a virtue, while the nation remained the largest sphere of moral sympathy known to man—his vision not having yet embraced his kind. The taint of one of these factitious and temporary virtues would, in the eye of historical philosophy, have been as fatal to the perfection and universality of a type of character as the taint of a positive vice. Not only the fellow-countrymen, but the companions and Apostles of Christ were, by the account of the Gospels, imbued with that Jewish patriotism, the fanatical intensity of which disgusted even the ancient world. They desired to convert their Master into a patriot chief, and to turn His universal mission into one for the peculiar benefit of His own race. Had they succeeded in doing so, even in the slightest degree, the time would have arrived when, the vision of man being enlarged, and his affection for his country becoming subordinate to his affection for his kind, the Christian type would have grown antiquated, and would have been left behind in the progress of history toward a higher and ampler ideal. But such is not the case. A just affection for country may indeed find its prototype in Him who wept over the impending destruction of Jerusalem, and who offered the Gospel first to the Jew: but His character stands clear of the narrow partiality which it is the tendency of advancing civilization to discard. From exaggerated patriotism and from exaggerated cosmopolitanism the Christian example is equally free.

Asceticism, again, if it has never been a virtue, even under exceptional circumstances, is very easily mistaken for one, and has been almost universally mistaken for one in the East. There are certain states of society—such, for example, as that which the Western monks were called upon to evangelize and civilize by their exertions—in which it is difficult to deny the usefulness and merit of an ascetic life. But had the type of character set before us in the Gospel been ascetic, our social experience must have discarded it in the long run; as our moral experience would have discarded it in the long run had it been connected with those