

phase. In the earlier stages of moral development the authority of the right rested on a basis of sullen dread, or, at best, a peddling calculation that honesty was the best policy. Low as this standpoint may seem, no other was then possible. It would be idle to preach the beauty of holiness to a savage who was still learning the first lessons of duty under the stern discipline of evil. But from this compulsory observance of duty there gradually springs up a sense of approval of the right, independently of the penalties which avenge its violation; and in the goodness to which we have been driven by the wholesome chastisement of evil, we now recognise a treasure to be prized for its own sake. Shepherded by these influences into the right path, man finds it grow easier beneath his feet, till at length the moment comes when he begins to perceive whither it is leading him. And in the light of this new dawn he can discern the outlines of the Divine purpose which is working to its end in creation, and that he too, as God's agent, may minister to its achievement. Morality, in its deepest and broadest sense, is now seen to lie in the furtherance of this purpose, and as conduct grows ever more conformable to it, duty will melt into love, and evil, its weary task accomplished, will fade away into the mists of the past. It may be said that egoism is the incentive to all progress, and cannot be eliminated from human society without laying the whole fabric in ruins. But this threat need not dismay us, for when altruism in its perfection shall be attained, mankind will have transcended their humanity, and will be ready to pass onwards into conditions of existence where egoism is needed no more.

When we recognise frankly, what all the facts point to, namely, that the Deity in His relation to man works under conditions—self-imposed it may be—but still conditions, which preclude the exercise of omnipotence, then, and not till then, can we dispel the doubts which cluster round the conception of a Divine author of evil. By this means only can we escape the conclusion that creation must be tainted with a Divine malignance, or frame any explanation of evil which does not