

investigation, the ignorant or partially educated man, wrapped up in wordly affairs, or tied to a routine of duties engrossing all his time, must remain ignorant, or, at best, can only learn to shake off old ideas without comprehending new principles. Hence it is evident that the masses of mankind must learn from some source, which they must admit to be trustworthy, if not infallible, and by the most simple method, the results of certain actions and courses of conduct. The oracles, the divinations of the priests and sooth-sayers, and, in a few instances, written religious codes, avowedly procured from supernatural sources, partially supplied this want, and, to some extent, restrained humanity from commission of crime and indulgence in vice, and assisted governments in preserving social order. That even the teachings of Socrates and Plato would have had an ill effect upon the morals of the multitude seems very clear, as the tendency of their teaching, although contrary to their intentions, was to encourage disbelief in the religion upheld, if not established, in the State. To suggest a motive for living well, and to prove the certainty of reward after death for a well spent life, were the great difficulties which presented themselves to both pagans and philosophers; for few, even of the former, believed that the life of man was limited to this earth, and, at least some of the latter, maintained the complete immortality of the soul.

Men, according to the great philosopher, were as though in a vast cave, where, in miserable darkness, they attempted to discharge their duties and provide for their wants. At length, he says, a few wise men groped their way towards the light at the mouth of the cavern and emerged into perfect day. After gazing at the wonders exposed before them, they returned to the darkness within, and attempted to persuade their comrades to seek the sunshine and the beautiful world outside. But their companions would not hear them, and called them fools and blind, because the sunlight had so dazed their eyes that they could not pick their way or see the different objects in the gloom.* Yet even Socrates, whose sight was clearer, and who saw in brighter light than his companions, was conscious that there was a greater luminary than he had seen, by means of which the uncertain paths would be made plain to the seekers of wisdom. Thus, after uttering the grandest moral precepts ever heard in the times of almost universal

* Plato's Republic.