

is the worst news the world has had to hear." Such ideas are founded upon a total misapprehension of the whole problem. How can one "cease to do evil, learn to do well," unless he has knowledge to point out what is evil and what good? Will each ignoramus instinctively find out what is right without learning? How, then, can teaching in Sunday-school and church be justified?

I do not by any means wish to ignore the difficulties of this question. Accepting "religion" as synonymous with "morality," there is still an immense task before us to make the mass of men amenable to the dictates of a high morality. Whatever may be the ultimate object of human life, it will be admitted that the object of religion, as commonly understood, is to make men better. The question is, what is to be our *point d'appui*? On what ground shall we urge the wicked man to flee from the wickedness he finds so pleasant? What is to be the fulcrum that will enable us to elevate the moral tone of the masses? Radically, the difference between dogmatic religion,—based on "knowledge of God,"—and scientific ethics,—based on knowledge of man and his surroundings,—is this: Ethics teaches men their duty to themselves and to their fellows, based upon knowledge of their constitution and relations; whereas religion endeavors to enforce what it teaches in the same direction by the supposed promises or threats of some superior—some almighty Being.

Now, I submit that correct conduct depends essentially upon intelligence and knowledge. The corner-stone of morality is justice. To be able to judge of given circumstances and to choose the right course, involves the necessity of knowledge and reason. A person who acts in what may be termed a correct moral or religious way merely from habits acquired through inherited capacities or through compliance with the will-power of those in authority, is little better than a slave. To know the right from the wrong, and to consciously choose to do the right, is of the very essence of true morality. An ignorant person can only be moral in the sense that ants and bees, beavers and monkeys, may be said to be moral when they do what conduces to their common good. As the editor says, this may possibly be the lot of the masses under a scientific religion; but, let us ask, what different condition obtains among the followers of the church? The masses are simply the innocent believers of what they have been taught by those who are supposed to have to some extent penetrated the mysteries. And, perhaps, this must to some extent ever be so. Where would the Protestant Reformation have been had not a few enlightened and determined men led the way? Would the ignorant masses themselves have brought it about? An ignorant man who simply believes what religion he has been taught without inquiry, abnegates his rights of manhood, and installs the priest as keeper of his conscience.

It is childish in the extreme for the editor of the *Mail* to settle the matter out of hand, as he does when he says, "There is not the smallest possibility that