

enjoins a helpful care and gentleness towards "the little ones" of the human family.¹ It is not surprising, therefore, that it was among the common people particularly that Christianity made progress at first.²

The work of the great man is thus seen to be morally, as well as naturally, subordinated to the elevation of mankind at large. But this subordination of the great man's function in human life is enforced by an additional fact, which prevents us from regarding the production of his exceptional endowments as in itself the true end of human progress. Genius is unfortunately marred by a defect which painfully lowers its value as a factor in the evolution of higher types of humanity. If, at times, the exceptional individual derives from his genius an advantage over his fellows, quite as often, at least, his peculiarity unfits him for the common struggles of life. Either, therefore, he goes down early in the struggle, or he carries it on to a later age under pitiful disadvantages. So prominent has this fact been in the history of eminent men, that the theory of genius, which attracts most attention at the present day, is that which regards it as an intrinsically morbid development in human life. Without going into the merits of the theory as an explanation of genius universally, it may be taken to be an undeniable fact that, in a large proportion of cases, genius is accompanied with characteristics, physical as well as psychical, which are essentially morbid. In many men of genius these characteristics involve such a price to pay for their exceptional worth, that it is impossible to regard the production of such men as forming the ideal aim of human evolution. Evolution must tend to healthy types. If it did not, it would very soon bring itself to a stop.

These explanations have cleared the way to a firmer grasp of the question: whether mankind is really advancing. Almost universally, those who doubt or deny the reality of human progress point to the ancient Greeks generally, but more specifically to the Athenians of the fifth and fourth

1 Matthew x. 42; xviii. 6, 10, 14. Compare Luke xv.

2 1 Cor. I. 26-28.