

final tragedy of his base selfish life. Gwendolen's tone of despair pierces the heart, as she cries out in the misery that has come upon her, "I have been cruel: I am forsaken."

This stern doctrine, unrelieved by any recognition of divine intervention, gives a gloomy tone to George Eliot's works, and makes them in no small degree depressing. She teaches truth, grand truth, and the purest Christian ethics, but she does not teach the whole truth. This lack springs from what one has called "the vacuum at the centre of her faith." She had not the heavenly vision. With no hope in a future life, no belief in the strength given by God to help mankind in its struggles toward the highest, her books fail in one of the noblest ends of literature, that of quickening and inspiring the reader. The endings of almost all of them are sorrowful; instead of conquering the adverse forces of heredity and environment, her heroes and heroines are almost always conquered. Her gospel of altruism, of self-renunciation, is not sufficient to redeem the hopelessness of her philosophy. Incomparably great as her work is, it would have been greater if her faith had been truer.

George Eliot, though herself an agnostic, had the power of portraying religious life with an intensely sympathetic touch, here again differing from all the other novelists of her time, and never does she oppose Christianity, but it is only one side that she gives us—the side of unselfishness and human compassion, not the side of the spiritual connection with the all-embracing God. It may be that her love of humanity was so intense and passionate just because it was all she had, being without the knowledge of the love of God.

Her work in literature will be immortal. It is the grand work of a great genius, honestly devoted to noble ends. Splendid beyond what we can conceive, would it have been, if, when she so bravely faced the doubts of a questioning age, she had seen Him who came to solve all the dark problems of humanity—the Man of Nazareth, who took upon Himself the sin and sorrow of the world, thus bearing "the true Cross of the Redeemer."

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