

Now does Mr. Le Sueur mean seriously to say that, in a professed revelation, it is no evidence of truth that it purifies or ennobles the moral life of those who receive it? Is it no reason for thinking Christ divine that He opens my eyes and ears to moral truth, and makes me, at least relatively, a good man? Can practical truth and goodness spring from systematic fraud or insane blundering and self-sufficiency? Will Mr. Le Sueur impeach the structure of the universe to such an extent as to maintain that? And, if he will, what guarantee has he in such a universe for the fixity of law, or the conditions of happiness, or indeed for anything else except what Milton calls 'confusion worse confounded.' There is either a rational congruity in the universe, or there is not. If there is not science, philosophy, and in fact human thinking, in general are a melancholy, or (as Hume calls them) 'whimsical,' folly, according to our mood; if there is, it becomes blankly incredible that a teaching which puts the crown of nobleness on man's moral nature, and that in the direct proportion in which he sincerely receives it, should be a fabrication or a dream. Among the 'contradictory inconceivables,' with which we are sometimes puzzled, this is, to some of us, the most contradictory and inconceivable of all.

Now observe, this is not an 'appeal to man's interests' at all, but only an attempt to find a clue to truth. We are told that an appeal to man's interests is 'not right,' and even 'flagrantly wrong,' from which it seems to follow that the utilitarian morality must be a very wicked thing, since it is an appeal to man's interests from first to last. I do not oppose the utilitarian scheme of morals, though I think it imperfect, and in need of certain supplementary ideas. But it seems a little strange that those who think a thing certainly *right* because it tends to the good of humanity, should find it so difficult to admit that a similar tendency is any ground at all

for believing an alleged doctrine to be *true*. Are truth and goodness, which have been commonly thought of as in close relation to each other, to be regarded after all as utterly alien, if not completely opposed? If so, the world of thought is in 'unstable equilibrium' with a meaning very serious.

Mr. Le Sueur writes as though those who fear for the future of morality, if its religious supports be taken away, were anxious to undermine the other grounds on which it rests. Not so. They only wish to show that whoever alleges these grounds for believing in morals must in consistency go further. You are lopping off certain boughs from a tree. I see that you are unconsciously hewing at the bough on which you are yourself standing, and I call out to you to stop. Whereupon you cry: 'Rascal, why can't you leave me in safety? You want me to fall and be killed.' No, I do not. What I want you to do is to consider what you are chopping at, that you may *not* fall. It is you, not I, who are destroying the conditions of stability.

Much of what Mr. Le Sueur has written is devoted to showing that there is no connection between the principles of morals and what is called 'religion.' Now, as I do not wish to argue in the dark, I must ask what is religion? It appears to me that religion is a human quality or sentiment, which may attach itself to anything, an African fetish, Comte's preparation of his dead mistress' hands, Mr. Spencer's 'Unknowable,' or 'Our Father which is in heaven.' What religion do we mean? It is pretty clear that Mr. Le Sueur would have us think of the Gospel, or, at any rate, the facts and principles revealed in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. Is there no connection between these and human goodness? How anybody can think so, when he can buy a Bible for a few cents, and read it for himself, is one of those astonishing intellectual phenomena which seem to defy all law. What is it that is done for