

it is part of the infinite substance or God), the commands of reason and of morality based on them retain their full significance. Spinoza strikes heavy blows at those popular philosophers and their multitudes who consider that they give up a portion of their rights in so far as they are bound to live according to the commands of divine law. Piety and greatness of soul are, for such persons, burdens which they hope to be able to lay aside after death; expecting also to receive some reward for their bondage, that is, their piety and religion, and dreading punishment for the opposite. Morality accordingly consists in obeying the commands of some eternal lawgiver who is afterwards to act as judge: a Jewish conception which has underlain a great deal of Christian ethics. Such miserable creatures, as Spinoza terms them, exhausted by the burden of their piety and looking forward to an inexhaustible store of bread and water which they have been laying up for themselves by a series of unreasonably self-denying acts, might, it is said, return to ways of their own liking if they did not believe in an indefinite prolongation of life, and more particularly of punishment: "which seems to be," replied Spinoza, "as absurd as if a man, because he does not believe that he will be able to feed his body with good food to all eternity, should desire to satiate himself with poisons and deadly drugs; or as if, because he sees that the mind is not eternal, he should therefore prefer to be mad." Natural science, including psychology, must be invoked in order to teach human beings that the inevitable result of the formation of evil habits and the cultivation of trivial ideals is the destruction of personality here and now; in the absence of which no external certificate can attach dignity or value to human beings. This is a far truer and sounder practical basis of morality than the appeal to the alleged supernatural sanctions and deterrents which represent the quicksands of metaphysical and theological speculations, the lower ethics of which have been crystallized in the view of the writer of the first epistle to the Corinthians: "What advantageth it me if the dead rise not? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." In a finer spirit Charles