

illustration. The history of the lives of the saints, martyrs and reformers of all times supplies indubitable proof of the truth of this maxim. But, of course, it must be said, too, that these men were also supremely happy, that is, felt the joy which comes from the consciousness of having done their duty and fulfilled the ideal law.

On the other hand, it would be easy to show by instances—or "cases"—that the maxim "Be wicked (morally remiss) and you'll be happy" (enjoy life) has its specious truth. We have only to think of the innumerable lawyers, bankers, speculators, and get-rich-quick gentlemen whom good luck follows till the day of their death, to be compelled to acknowledge that there is considerable practical truth in this latter maxim. In short, the way of the transgressor is hard—sometimes; but the way of the saint and the reformer is hard—always. Our maxim, then, "Be good and you'll be happy" is the most inane of platitudes and fit pabulum only for babes in intellect and moral ideals.

"Never do evil that good may come," is another of those popular practical maxims which are half-truths. As "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" has the authority of Christ, so this maxim carries the authority of St. Paul. The authority of Christ and St. Paul is not in dispute or impugned. For, as I shall show in the conclusion of this essay, there is only one absolute truth; all other truths are relative; that is, the validity of a proposition or maxim is dependent on the time, place, circumstance, and reference of the one who utters it.

Our own maxim is a case in point, but as it stands it is too abstract and generalised. Let us particularise it thus: "Never, under any circumstances, tell a lie; a lie is always wrong before men and in the sight of God." Now, there is such thing as

a falsehood in the abstract. A real lie has a particular reference to some time, place, circumstance, condition, cause and moral economy. Observe how this works out in the following illustrative example. Suppose a theatre has caught fire behind the scenes and that some over-nervous auditor smelling the smoke cries, "Fire." Suppose that the stage-manager has heard the fool cry; he is at once in a moral dilemma. He knows that if he rushes to the footlights and, saying to himself, "I must not tell a lie, for that is wrong," asserts outright that the theatre is on fire, the consequences will be a panic amongst the audience, which will result in the maiming of some and the death of others. On the other hand, he knows that if he assures the audience that the theatre is not on fire, thus breaking the moral law by telling a downright lie, there will be no pain, no maiming of limbs and no deaths.

I said the stage-manager thus faced a moral dilemma:—Should he tell the truth (facts) and save his own soul, but cause the death of others? Or should he tell a lie and lose his own soul, but thus preserve the lives of others? But after all there was really no moral dilemma. Every sane and righteous man, in like predicament, would not hesitate to do anything else than tell a falsehood. Casuists, of course, would sanction such a course by applying the old Jesuit ethical formula: "The end justifies the means." That is a nonsense formula: what else could justify means except ends? The explanation lies deeper than any abstract maxim: namely in this, that as the greater contains the less, or as the whole contains the part, so Love which fulfills the whole moral law, is higher than the law of Truth-telling. For has Christ not said "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake (*i.e.* for Love), the same shall save it,"