

The policy which imitated the captivities told of in Holy Writ, or the terrible experiments of transplantation when Babylonian, Assyrian and Egyptian Kings carried off provinces to found settlements in distant regions, failed to darken the spiritual character of the Irish people. It is in danger now from a spurious advancement, a shallow imitation of vulgar materialism. As a protest against this tendency we have spoken these words, told this tale. If we have done it well, we have spoken as we would; if not well, we have spoken as we could.

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THE SOURCE OF MORAL OBLIGATIONS.

AMONG the curious phenomena of the revival of classical learning in the fifteenth century may be reckoned the peculiar bitterness with which men of letters conducted their disputes. If a scholar detected his rival in a false quantity he deduced the conclusion that he had likewise violated each of the precepts of the decalogue and was addicted to most of the seven deadly sins. That style of controversy is a thing of the past; and yet when it is not a question of classical learning, but important principles of philosophy that are at stake, the acerbity of the dispute, though veiled, is scarcely less deep-seated than of old. The empiricist suggests that the scholastic philosopher has not altered his point of view since the days of Duns Scotus, and the scholastic hints that empiricists are the enemies of God and man. There is in fact more justification for warmth of feeling where these problems are concerned. They may appear at first sight merely matter for the study and the lecture hall; yet the character of a whole society, a whole nation, is profoundly and rapidly modified according to the doctrine which prevails. What is at first but the teaching of a few professors at the universities is ten years later the common-place of the clubs of the capital, of the daily papers, of the sermons of preachers. Nor do the principles thus adopted remain in the chrysalis condition of speculation. When men have accepted a theory they proceed for good or for evil to reduce it to "crude hard fact" with a logical consistency as relentless as that of a syllogism. Amongst these questions there is perhaps none the current doctrine on which more profoundly influences the national life than that of the authority of conscience. Where men hold that conscience has a right to coerce them their character will in the long run be formed on the principle

that duty is the first and imperative rule. Where the coercive power is explained away the claims of duty will fare but ill. That this is so may afford us sufficient justification for an attempt to answer Shylock's question and say why it is that the dictates of conscience *must* be obeyed.

Our own experience is sufficient to show us that the voice of conscience deals with us authoritatively, that when it speaks to us it claims the prerogatives of a supreme power in our regard. Nor is any profound examination required to assure us that it is no artificial creation, but a constitutive part of human nature wherever that nature is not stunted and deformed; that it cannot, as has sometimes been asserted, be explained by the pressure exerted on us by public opinion. The essential characteristic of the obligation which the law of conscience imposes on us is that it is not simply a necessity occasioned by the advisability of avoiding some disagreeable alternative. It is not a contingent, but an absolute necessity. It does not say to us: "If you do not do this it will be the worse for you," but simply and absolutely: "You ought to do this—by the moral law you *must* do it." Nor can its dictates be reduced to the formula, "Do right, or you will violate your human dignity." Were it so its authority would, we fear, have but an insecure foundation. Many a man would be disposed to say, and not without some justification, that poor human dignity had had so many shocks already that one or two more could make but little difference.

What is the explanation of this obligation? Whence comes this "categorical imperative" which deprives me of my liberty, and which if I disobey it, sets me in the position of a criminal before a judge? There is something which takes right conduct from the sphere of the æsthetically correct and the intellectually true, gives it a new complexion and transforms it into something entirely different, namely, bounden duty. The change is so complete that no sense of exag-geration is aroused when the poet personifies Duty and speaks of her as the "stern daughter of the voice of God." This question as to how we are to account for the change from right to duty has with justice been termed the central question of ethical philosophy.

There is a short and easy way of explaining the mysteries presented to our consideration by Nature and by man, which has found vogue at all times and as it seems is not out of fashion yet. It consists in boldly denying the existence of the fact which we are called on to explain. Thus we have seen the mutual interaction of bodies denied by one school of philosophers, the existence of matter by another, the objectivity of space and time by a third, free will by a fourth, the permanence of individual personality by another, and so on. The explanations of moral obligation given us by philosophers

of the Hedonistic school are open to this objection. When called on to account for the coerciveness of the dictates of conscience they deny that they possess any. We may illustrate this from Mr. J. S. Mill's treatise on Utilitarianism. The internal sanction of duty lies, he tells us, in "a feeling in our own mind, a pain more or less intense attendant on the violation of duty, which in properly cultivated moral natures rises in the more serious cases into shrinking from it as an impossibility." The origin of this feeling he explains as follows: "Society between equals can only exist on the understanding that the interests of all are to be consulted equally. . . . In this way people grow up unable to conceive as possible a state of total disregard of other people's interests. . . . Not only does all strengthening of social ties and all healthy growth of society give to each individual a stronger personal interest in practically consulting the welfare of others; it also leads him to identify his *feelings* more and more with their good, or at least with an ever-growing practical consideration for it." Such an explanation, though not lacking in ingenuity, is surely only one more illustration of the play of "Hamlet" with the part of the Prince of Denmark omitted. Where, we ask, in all this is there any room for *obligation*, for the factor of coerciveness? Pleasure and pain are one thing; bounden duty is another. Those who confuse them are simply throwing dust in our eyes. Yet here we are taught that the stern voice of duty may be reduced to the prudential dictates of an enlightened self-interest which arise in a "properly cultivated moral nature," and that the imperative commands of the moral law grow out of pleasurable and painful feelings. "Why not then," says a modern critic¹ with justifiable impatience, "sunbeams from cucumbers, or the sense of ethical justice from the varieties of the triangle?"

Not only is there no room for obligation in such a theory, but whereas the law of conscience is a law of right, that of Hedonism, if logically interpreted and consistently followed out, is a principle of the purest selfishness; and this is true even if we concede for a moment that the norm of right action is the greatest happiness of the greatest number. For if the *summum bonum* for each individual is his own greatest happiness no reason can be assigned why conscience should bid him seek the greatest happiness, not of himself, but of others. It is needless to point out that it is a mere sophism to say that because every individual seeks his own greatest happiness, therefore each severally is bound to seek the greatest happiness of all. On the contrary, each on that hypothesis would remain consulting his own interests and putting those of others outside his calculations. So far, then, as a counsel which lacks all obligatory

¹Mr. W. S. Lilly: "Right and Wrong," page 88.

force can be termed a law, the law which Hedonism gives us is merely

"The good old rule the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can."

At the present time, however, it is Mr. Herbert Spencer who, of all the thinkers who place the foundation of morals in utility, exerts the widest influence among English-speaking people. It cannot be said that his writings lie open to the charge of containing this fallacy. He does not tell us that because we each desire our own happiness we are therefore bound to desire something which differs from it so entirely as the greatest happiness of all. The theory of development which holds so large a place in every part of his system supplies him with a convenient solution for the difficulty which is raised by the fact that conscience often bids us act in a way which seems contrary to the principle of expediency. The experience of past time has, he tells us, shown what course of action usually conduces to the welfare of the tribe, and the results of the experience thus accumulated is stored up in our brain tissue, so that we feel disposed to act in a way which would not naturally appear to be the most advantageous in the particular case; to this registered experience is due our innate dislike of lying, stealing and other breaches of the decalogue. We are not concerned here to enquire whether the testimony of facts lends any support to this view, or whether it be mere guesswork, unsupported by adequate evidence. It is sufficient for our purpose that here, too, righteousness, as understood by Mr. Spencer, is merely that which most conduces to the happiness of the tribe, and that, as we have already seen, this leaves the main characteristic of conscience unaccounted for. Moral obligation will not grow out of any number of experiences of the advantageous consequences resulting from an action.

To pass from those writers who base the moral law on considerations of pleasure and pain, and to turn to the theory of Kant is like emerging from the heavy vapors of a marsh into a purer air. That great thinker recognized the authoritative character of the voice of conscience, and made no effort to explain it away. He allowed that it could never be accounted for on any Hedonistic theory, and turned to find its origin in the rational nature of man. Further than this, as it seemed to him, we need not go, for the tendency to prescribe this law is essential to our rational nature. We find the law within us. The categorical imperative of the practical reason which is native to us and is not received as an imposed command from an external source belongs to our dignity as men. In virtue of our free-will, of our power of determining our own conduct, we are capable of obey-

ing these commands or disobeying them, of consulting our human dignity or of treading it underfoot. Hence he taught that morality consists in obedience to these dictates of reason, and that only when we act in accordance with this law, and purely because such is the law, is our action moral.

Yet of the philosophy of Kant no less than of that of the Hedonists we can only say that the obligation it provides us with is a figment. He tells us that we are obliged to obey the commands of reason. But no man can in any true sense impose commands on himself or lie under an obligation to his own higher faculties. We can, in fact, only employ these terms in virtue of a metaphor in which we represent man as divided into two parts, and endow each with some shadow of personality. All the support which the Kantian theory can lend to the law of conscience is to say that if we do not obey it we shall cease to be living as men, and shall become degraded and corrupt. But the individual may answer that after all he is not bound to live the life of an ideal man, and that he entirely declines to be forced to do so against his will. Nor can we make any reply demonstrating that he is under any necessity to do so. This philosophy can, in fact, only give to the moral law a contingent necessity which, as we have seen, differs completely from the absolute necessity that belongs to the dictates of conscience. An absolute necessity admits of no alternative. All material beings save man are guided to their end by the necessity of physical law. Man is guided not by physical law, but by the moral law as revealed in conscience; and since the execution of the moral law is dependent on a free agent we often think of it as possessed of a less absolute necessity than belongs to physical law. We should remember that the moral law never consents to our adopting the alternative of disobedience, whatever be the consequences of obedience to ourselves or others. *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum!* The necessity of the moral law is absolute, only it rules not in the physical, but the moral order. In contrast to this the moral law as set forth by Kant can claim no higher degree of coerciveness than is possessed by a contingent obligation. We must obey it *if* we desire to live as men, *if* we would avoid handing ourselves over as slaves to the cravings of our lower nature. But in all this there is no vestige of real authority, of that categorical imperative which, as he truly tells us, is manifested in the dictates of our practical reason.

The problem, then, which we are called on to solve is to explain how this absolute necessity can arise. And the imposition of an absolute moral necessity as distinguished from one that is purely contingent is not so unknown a circumstance in our ordinary experience that it should be hard for us to find examples and hence to ar-

rive at some conclusions as to the nature of conscience. Let us, for instance, take the case of a child who has been told by his father not to touch some china that lies within his reach. No one, we may presume, will call this a merely contingent necessity and say that all that the command amounts to is that the child must either obey or take the punishment which follows disobedience. On the contrary, all liberty of choice is taken from him. He is under an absolute moral obligation of doing what he has been told, and if he neglects to do so he will have grievously offended against the moral law of childhood. For by virtue of his nature as a child he is totally dependent on his father, the protector and guide, without whose care he would perish. As yet he depends for his existence on the family of which he is a member, and hence he is subject to the head of that family, and may not act contrary to his expressed command. Being in this very real sense one with his parent, he has no more right to disobey him than a member of the body has to disobey the will. If *per impossibile* we suppose the hand to be endowed with sufficient liberty of choice to be able at its own discretion to obey the will or not, it would still be bound to obey it, since it is a part of the same being, and a part which by its very nature is subordinate and dependent. In an analogous way the child is dependent on and bound to obey his father. If he does not do so, he may suffer punishment and so have erred against the Hedonistic code, or he may escape scot free; but most assuredly he is morally blameworthy.

The conclusion to be drawn will now be clear. It is that a moral obligation is found wherever a will to which we are rightfully subject imposes a certain choice on us as a duty. When this is the case our free-will can be bound in the moral order as truly as the processes of growth in a plant are bound and determined in the physical order. Moreover, this relation of dependence on the will of another is very frequent. The members of a corporate body owe this obedience to their head wherever the body is no purely artificial creation, but one whose members are linked together by the operation of the natural law.

All the various forms of dependence which we find thus obtaining between one man and another are only partial. Their sphere may be a wide one, or may be very circumscribed; but in each case there are definite limits which we can assign. There is, however, one relation of dependence which is absolutely unrestricted and of which all these are but reflections. This is the complete dependence by which man is bound to his Creator. Not only do we owe our existence to God, but without His active conservation we should fall back into the nothingness out of which He drew us. He has created us to obey His law, and to that end has put the fundamental principles

of the natural law within the knowledge of every rational being. The authority of a father over his son, of a King over his subjects, of a master over his servants are but faint reflections of this primal fountain of authority, the sovereignty of God. Here, then, is the source of moral obligation—in the will of God.

It may, however, be urged, and not without some show of justification, that if obligation is constituted by the expressed will of God, this should be clearly recognizable in the voice of conscience. Yet it is evident that in the greater number of occasions when we act in obedience to duty, we do so without express advertence to a Divine command. But an authority which does not manifest itself in the individual cases of obligation cannot constitute the obligation. Whatever the constituting factor may be we should be able to recognize it in every call of duty.

To this we would reply that though we may not explicitly advert to the fact that the command proceeds from God, yet we cannot but be conscious, and that, too, in each individual case, that the law of duty commands our obedience as something superior to us which is our rightful master and whose claim may not be denied. But a law which is invested with such a supremacy as this, and which can thus demand the obedience of free agents must proceed from a personal lawgiver, and that lawgiver can be no other than our Creator. In other words, it is patent on reflection to all who have the use of reason that to obey conscience is to obey not a mere abstraction—an impersonal rule of conduct—but a personal God. If this conclusion be rejected, it seems scarcely possible to conceive of any other hypothesis on which the facts before us could be adequately explained.

In thus deriving duty from the command of God we do not intend to suggest that the moral law is made known to us in some supernatural way; that conscience is, as it were, something extrinsic—a pressure of the Divine will upon ours, not necessarily belonging to man in his natural state. Such a view would rightly be held to imply that human nature was created imperfect and only able to attain its final end by a special intervention of the Creator. It will be seen on consideration that a creature endowed like man with intelligence and free-will must in the natural order of things be subject to such a law, and be conscious that it is the design of the Creator that he should obey it. The light of reason suffices to show man what actions befit a being such as he is. By its aid he knows that if he is to attain to the highest state of which his human nature is capable the lower appetites must be held in subjection, that they must be checked and controlled by the will; that his faculties must not be allowed to become inert through idleness, but must be de-

veloped and cultivated ; that as a man amongst other he must be true and just in his dealings ; that as a son he stands in a certain relation to his parents, as a citizen to his country, as a father to his children, and that to each of these relations correspond certain actions which befit him. He knows, in fact, the natural law. But he realizes further that he is a creature owing implicit obedience to the will of his Creator, and this shows him that the natural law is imposed on him as a duty. For it would be repugnant to common sense to suppose that the Creator of such a race of beings does not actively desire that their life should be such as befits their nature ; to suppose, either, that He is indifferent to their actions, or that He wishes them to be in violation of the nature He has given. True, He has made man's will free. But this cannot obscure the fact that it must be His desire that man should obey those dictates of the natural law which reason makes clear to him ; that they come to him as commands and not merely as a course which he may adopt or not as he pleases. There is, then, no need to suppose the existence of some extrinsic monition in order to account for conscience. It is simply reason recognizing the moral law as obligatory on us, and speaking to us of our responsibility in its regard.

From what has been said it is plain in what consists the true malice of the violation of the law of duty. It does not lie in any diminution of the happiness of the greatest number, nor in the retribution which may await the wrongdoer in a future life, nor yet in the confusion and disorder which he introduces into the designs of Providence, but purely in his disobedience. When a child disobeys his parent, or a subordinate defies the orders of a legitimate superior, the two personalities are brought into direct antagonism. Where there was harmony and concord, there is now aversion, and this aversion continues as long as the will of the subject remains in rebellion. The case is similar between God and man ; by disobedience to the voice of conscience man averts himself from God, and this alone, apart from all consideration of punishment, renders his act essentially evil.

The distinction between obligation as we have explained it and the sanctions of the moral law should be clearly borne in mind. This is all the more needful since some philosophers appear to hold that the sanctions of the law constitute its obligation. The sanctions of a law are the reward and punishment which follow on our obedience and disobedience to it, respectively. Obligation, as we have seen, is a necessity in the moral order by which a free agent is bound to obey the law ; it has nothing to do with the consequences of the action. Those, therefore, who tell us that our every act is caused by a consideration of its results are endeavoring to persuade us that it

is invariably the sanctions and not the obligations which form the motives of our action. It is, of course, sufficiently evident that even in this life sanctions are attached to the observance and non-observance of the moral law. These sanctions are, it must be owned, imperfect; and long ago the apparent success which sometimes attends those who set that law at defiance led to the complaint that the wicked "come in no misfortune like other folk." Yet on the whole and in the long run honesty is the best policy, even here. But what we do deny most emphatically is that we must needs act from policy, that there is no such thing as acting purely because we ought, and that the very idea of such action is a mere chimera.

Is there not, however, a sense in which it may be said that our doctrine of obligation only provides us with a new sanction as our motive—a sanction of a more refined kind than pleasure or pain, but nevertheless a mere sanction; and that we have thus only established more firmly the doctrine that there is no obligation which does not spring from this source. It may be said that it is admitted on all hands that no man can act unless with a motive. Some end-in-view there must needs be in every action. Now this end-in-view must be some good to be obtained by the agent; it is not necessary that it should be any mere pleasure; it may consist in the continuance of the due relation between the agent and the Author of the moral law; but some individual good there must be. Analyze, it will be urged, any act said to be done purely from obligation, and you will find that even on your own hypothesis it comes to this: "I obey the law because if I do so I shall be at peace with God, while if I do wrong there will be antagonism between His will and mine. What is this after all but a sanction—an old friend with a new face? You are at bottom acting to obtain a personal reward, nor would it be possible to find any act which in its final resolution is not self-regarding."

Here we have the last word of those who would see selfishness at the root of all human action. It is, so to speak, their last line of defense; but though specious it is not really tenable. For the ultimate end-in-view which man in virtue of his nature tends to aim at is not, as is here suggested, self-advantage. He may, of course, deprave his nature and become entirely self-centred, but in so far as he does so his character is deteriorated and distorted. For in man there is an innate tendency to seek the interests of good for its own sake, and apart from all reference to self. Just as a patriot may forego his own private ends and labor solely for the good of his country, so man tends to forget the advantages which accrue to him from well-doing, and to do right for right's sake. There is a true sense in which each individual is not an independent unit, but a part

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of a greater whole; for men are not made for solitary, but for social life. And the well-established principle that the parts of an organism tend primarily to promote the good of the whole, and only secondarily to their own good, is no less true of men as members of a body corporate than of the parts of a material body. But man is not only a part of a whole as regards his country, but also as regards the *civitas Dei*. As a created being possessed of the faculty of reason he recognizes himself as a constituent part of that great polity whose head is God and whose other members are his fellow-men, who, like him, are children of God. Hence just as it is natural to a citizen to put his country's interests before his own, so it is natural for man to see in the victory of good over evil—in other words, in the success of God's cause—the great end-in-view of life.

The theory which would make selfishness our motive is further objectionable because it practically denies that actions can have any inherent goodness capable of becoming a motive to our will except such as is derived from their utility to the agent. It tells us that when we imagine we are acting from a sense of obligation we are not obeying the law because obedience itself is intrinsically good, but because it is useful to us. Hence it makes the only true good a subjective state to be attained by the individual. All else it deprives of substantial goodness, only allowing to it such excellence as may belong to it as a means to this. It is, of course, plain that there are many acts which only have a value derived from the result they effect; as, for example, study, which may be pursued for the most worthy or for the most unworthy ends. But there are many actions which are in themselves substantially good; we may instance the internal acts of patience, charity, forgiveness of injuries, divine worship and the like. Anything which is substantially good, of whatever kind its goodness be, is capable of attracting the will and acting on it as a motive, altogether apart from any result to which it may contribute. Were it not so, indeed, the perception of a beautiful scene could never move our will to acts of admiration and love unless it were such as to confer on us some personal advantage. Among acts which thus possess a goodness of their own we may reckon the act of obedience to legitimate authority. It is plain, then, that the moral excellence of acting from a sense of obligation may be a genuine motive, and that we may perform such an act without any reference to our self-interest.

Yet, although it is possible for us to do our duty from no other motive than the cause of right and the service of God, experience tells us that in a vast number of cases it is the reward and the punishment which influence us. To children and to those who are deaf to the voice of virtue as long as her hands are empty, it is the only

method of appeal. Indeed, there is no one who does not on many occasions require the props which sanctions afford. The saints, both by example and precept, recommend us to meditate on heaven and hell, and warn us that our perseverance in the way of justice will be very brief unless we do so. Nor is there anything to cause surprise in the fact that much of our right action flows from this source. The task before us is to obey a law which irks and galls our lower inclinations. We are bidden follow the dictates of reason and keep a firm grip on the "demos" of our passions, which are always seething in suppressed revolt. Towards this end we are provided with two great helps. We are able to form habits of self-government which become a second nature to us and tide us over those points where either reason or will is not on the alert; and we are further able to keep our minds fixed on the certain truth that obedience will eventually be rewarded and disobedience sternly punished. Unprovided with these aids our own consciences will tell us how incompetent we should be to support the strain involved in being faithful to the voice of duty.

A moment's consideration will show us how entirely the legitimate self-regard of which we are here speaking—that "calm and reasonable self-love" on which so much stress is laid by Butler in his "Analogy of Religion"—differs from selfishness. An action is positively selfish when we seek some private good, consciously setting aside all consideration as to whether it is right or not, when even though conscience forbid it we determine to pursue our end. Here we explicitly yield to our lower tendencies. There is no resemblance between this and the case where we obey conscience and follow the higher impulses of our nature, but are led to do so by the sanctions attached to the observance of the law. We are not here speaking of the action of a man who is honest simply through fear of the police-constable. In that case it is the external act alone which conforms to the law of right; as far as desire can carry him the man is simply dishonest. We are supposing a case where the man is genuinely honest, not only externally, but internally, but where it is the consideration of heaven and hell that has made him so. It is an absurdity to call this positive selfishness. We have seen that to constitute a positively selfish action a man must determine to pursue his end irrespective of the law of conscience. But no man can say without absurdity: "I am determined to escape hell, and shall continue trying to do so, even if conscience and the law of God forbid me." All that can be said of actions thus motived is that though not positively unselfish, they are self-regarding in such a way as not to interfere with our duty to God, but to aid it. Thus they are legitimate, and even laudable; for when our sense of the inherent goodness and at-

tractiveness of the service of God becomes dulled it is right that we should pursue the blessings which that service brings with it.

We have doubtless against us here the Kantian theory, which will allow the title of moral to no action unless it is not only in accordance with the moral law, but is also done purely for the sake of that law. A right action done for the sake of obedience is, according to this school, simply non-moral. Their point of view is tersely summed up by von Hartmann when he says that it is as absurd to hope to become moral by means of laws prescribed by the reason of another and not our own, as it would be to hope to become fat on meals taken by another person. The root of this doctrine is to be found in their view of man as entirely independent; they do not consider him as a being who by his very nature is dependent on and subject to God. Hence, as we have already explained, they have no satisfactory account to give of obligation which necessarily involves a lawgiver. They are driven to find the lawgiver and the subject in the same person, failing to see that only by a metaphor can a man be said to owe a duty to his higher self. And, further, having lost the clue to the true character of moral action, they have substituted a definition which while it is insufficient on the side of obligation is too strict in regard to the motives which it requires. Their theory, taking no account of the author of the moral law, does not allow them to recognize the provision by which He has assigned sanctions to its observance in order that we may be assisted to neglect the solicitations of our lower nature, and act from motives which though not the highest are nevertheless legitimate. All such actions are placed by them on the same level with those done at the instance of the lower appetites. Such an estimate is evidently erroneous; for if we recognize the call as that of duty, our obedience to it cannot lose its character as a moral act because we are moved to obey by the knowledge that our obedience will be recompensed.

The question to which we have here attempted to provide a satisfactory answer is no matter of merely speculative interest with which the student alone is concerned. We have already called the attention of our readers to the momentous issues with which men's beliefs on this matter are fraught. Who shall estimate the number of those who consciously or unconsciously have taken the doctrines of Mill and Spencer as the principles by which they regulate their lives? Whither such doctrines must infallibly lead we have endeavored to indicate; and the testimony of facts may be invoked to show that what we have said is no more than the truth. Where these views have become popular society is to a large extent frankly pagan, the race for wealth or pleasure absorbs all energies and the authority of conscience is openly denied. It is a prospect well calculated to fill us with apprehension for the future. We all know how clear is the

witness of history that the decay of moral principle is the near harbinger of social disruption and national degradation. With the rejection of the authority of conscience is inseparably united the neglect of private duties and a contempt for all obligations towards the nation and its rulers. We are apt to smile at the exaggerated deference paid in old days by subjects to the governing power; perhaps we blame it as servile and inconsistent with the dignity of the individual. A more careful reflection would lead us to recognize that the almost contemptuous disregard which has taken its place is a symptom of far graver import than that extravagant obedience. A firm belief in the authority of conscience, if it could be restored, would be the true cure for these evils. That would not be one of those nostrums on which, under the name of "Morrison's pills," Carlyle has heaped such merited ridicule; but a medicine which would heal society in the only way in which it can be healed, by altering the character of the individuals of whom it is composed.

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THE PRINCIPLE OF COLLECTIVISM.

"Labor is the source of all wealth and all culture. and as useful work in general is possible only through society, so to society—that is to all its members—belongs the entire product of labor by an equal right, to each one according to his reasonable wants—all being bound to work.

"In the existing society the instruments of labor are a monopoly of the capitalist class; the subjection of the working class thus arising is the cause of misery and servitude in every form.

"The emancipation of the working class demands the transformation of the instruments of labor into the common property of society and the coöperative control of the total labor, with application of the product of labor to the common good, and just distribution of the same." (*Opening words of the programme of the united socialistic bodies of Germany, laid down in the congress of Gotha, May, 1875—where the collective principle assumed political importance in the formation of the "Socialistic workingmen's party of Germany."*)

"The economic development of civil society necessarily leads to the destruction of small industries, the basis of which is private ownership of the laborer in the means of production. It divests the laborer of all means of production and transforms him into a penniless proletarian, while the means of production become the sole property of a comparatively small number of capitalists and real estate owners.

"Private property in the means of production, which formerly was a means of securing to the producer the ownership of his produce, has nowadays become a means of dispossessing farmers, laborers and small merchants, and of making the non-laborers—capitalists and landlords—the possessors of the produce of labor. Only the transformation of private capitalistic property in the means of production—i. e., land, mines and mining, raw material, tools, machinery and means of communication—into common property, and the change of private production into socialistic—i. e., production for and through society—can effect that the extensive industry and the ever-increasing productiveness of social labor shall become for the downtrodden classes, instead of a fountain of misery and oppression, a source of the highest prosperity and of universal and harmonious perfection.

"The struggle of labor against capitalistic oppression is necessarily a political one. The laboring class cannot carry on its industrial struggles and develop its economic organization without political rights. It cannot effect the transfer of the means of production into the possession of the body social without possessing