RELATION
BETWEEN
RELIGION AND ETHICS

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THE RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND ETHICS

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T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION

Early ages seem to have given little thought to the problem of the relation between religion and ethics. This may be explained by the fact that reflective and critical thought is very rare in the early history of the human race. Whatever the causes may be, the facts are: primitive peoples knew little of religion as such, but the little that they had, permeated the whole of life and no distinction was made between the sacred and the secular. This does not mean that ethics and religion were inseparably united at this stage - that question will be discussed later. All that we wish to make clear here, is that the human race in its earliest history took its standard of morals and its religion as a matter of course and gave no thought to the connection between them.

As the human race developed ethics and religion also developed. Naturally, the early thinkers, believing that ethics and religion had developed as one, came to the conclusion that they were very closely connected and dependent on each other. The result was that for many centuries the representatives of religion were regarded as the guardians of morality. Great moral teachers did not hesitate to base all morality on religion but as they were also teachers of religion it may be naturally thought that they were biassed in their viewpoint. To contradict this impression, there is the fact that Spinoza, an outcast from the church, also taught that all duties are fulfilled in the love of God.

With the awakening of modern thought in other fields, ethical thinkers began to branch out in new directions. Writers like Thomas Hobbes advocated systems of ethics that gave no place to religion. Although not openly denouncing religion, the tendency was to set up ethics as an autonomous science with an authority other than that of God. Men like David Hume, who were sceptical of the prevailing religious ideas, developed this position. On the other hand, moralists like Paley strongly defended the religious sanction as the only sanction of ethics. The problem, therefore, became of fundamental importance in ethics.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the power of the church over the people seemed to be waning and it was apparent to many that some organization should be formed to supply the needs of the growing number who believed that ethics required an independent basis. Ethical societies, such as the New York and Cambridge societies, were formed in many cities. The International Journal of Ethics owes its origin to a similar cause. Many of the members of the ethical societies had broken completely with religion; others preferred to retain it as a useful ally to ethics.

In the meantime, those, who wished to base ethics on religion, were not idle and the dispute over the problem continued. In the early editions of the International Journal of Ethics, the question was discussed pro and con by the leading moralists. The last decade of the nineteenth century saw the dispute continued vigorously. That it is still a live question

is evidenced by the fact that as late as 1927-8, there is an article in the International Journal of Ethics entitled "Religion and Morality." There is also one in the Hibbert Journal, 1930, under the title "Religion, Morality and the Sacred."

The relation between ethics and religion that will be considered in this thesis might popularly be stated in the question: "Does ethics depend on religion?" The first two chapters will be devoted to the discussion of the position that ethics is independent of religion. The third and fourth chapters will deal with the opposite phase of the problem, the third taking a position more extreme than that of the fourth. The fifth chapter will consider the future relations between ethics and religion, and the sixth will be the conclusion.

CHAPTER I

THE GROWTH OF THE IDEA THAT ETHICS IS DISTINCT FROM RELIGION

      (a)   Academic Sceptics

      (b)   Cicero

      (c)   Thomas Hobbes

      (d)   Pierre Bayle

      (e)   David Hume

      (f)   Immanuel Kant

      (g)   John Stuart Mill

      (h)   Auguste Comte

CHAPTER I

THE GROWTH OF THE IDEA THAT ETHICS IS DISTINCT FROM RELIGION

Many things have contributed to the growth of the idea that ethics is independent of religion. As men became sceptical of the influence of religion on ethics, or as philosophers taught that ethics either rested on a political basis or was autonomous, the faith in an intimate connection between ethics and religion was slowly being undermined. In this chapter a brief account will be given of the position of a few of the representative writers who helped to bring about this change. An indication of the attitude of each in regard to the relation between ethics and religion will be given.

(a) The Academic Sceptics are at the beginning of a long tradition and they are important more for their influence on later thought than for any of their beliefs. As sceptics, they doubted religion, showing that the idea of God is an untenable one. They held that if God did exist, virtue could not be attributed to him. No belief in religion can be regarded as certain knowledge for at its strongest it is only probability. Therefore, they concluded that religion cannot determine men to any action. They held that there is no natural right for morality depends upon each individual's own personal advantage. Carneades in a speech delivered in 156 B.C. declared that all laws are devised only for the sake of safety

and advantage, and for the protection of the weak. "Virtue consists in an activity directed towards the possession of what is according to nature"[1.] and it supplies all that is necessary for happiness. In this brief account, the tendency to base ethics upon purely human needs rather than upon any certain authority may be noted.

(b)   The Academic Sceptics influenced Cicero and he, by his dialogues "On the Nature of the Gods" influenced later thinkers. Hence a brief summary of these dialogues:

The debate is between an Academic Sceptic, an Epicurean and a Stoic philosopher. Cicero is a listener. The Epicurean thinks of God as the "Infinite Being, mighty, self-sufficient, happy, immortal." Men may be happy too for there is no need to fear that God will find his happiness in working their weal or woe. The Sceptic doubts the reality of the Gods and does not know whether to believe in a self-ordered world or in a universe with a creative Being behind it who maintains and safeguards everything in it - especially those things that men value. The Stoic believes in a God who is the life-principle diffused through nature - a universal and infinite Life and Mind. There is also a universal law of Nature which works towards the maintenance of good in the world. The Sceptic in reply points out the uncertainity of the co-existence of anthropomorphism and naturalism in the system of the Stoic. He regards any other system as just as capable of proof.

(c)   Thomas Hobbes was one of the first of the modern
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[1.]
     Zeller's Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics, p. 561.

philosophers to break away from the old ethical traditions. His greatest work, "Leviathan," published in 1651, influenced all subsequent thought in ethics. It begins with a description of man in his natural condition - a state of war - "of every man against every man." Man desires power and there is an equality of hope among men of attaining it. No law or co-operation exists among men at this stage; nor is there morality: The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place."[1.] There is only a universal war of appetites and man's life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short." Hobbes believes that such often existed. England, during the Civil War was a good example.

So unsatisfactory is this State of Nature that man wishing to preserve his life and to live better brings to a close this anarchy by entering into a contract. A contract is defined as "a mutual transference of Right." This transference is made unto a common power which is either one man or an assembly of men. Hobbes gives the covenant in these words, "I authorize and give up my Right of Governing myself, to this man, or to this assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy right to him, and authorize all his actions in like manner."[2.] When this is done, the state so formed is called a commonwealth.

In this commonwealth, that which the absolute ruler sanctions is right and that which he condemns is wrong. In this state, the concepts of ethics - right, duty and obligation -

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[1.] Leviathan, p. 66 (Everyman Edition)

[2.] Ibid. p. 89

have a meaning.   Outside such a society they have none and barbarism, cruelty, and ignorance reign supreme.   Before society existed morality was impossible; and morality disappears when the commonwealth dissolves for the commonwealth is mortal in that it may be so weakened as to lead to its dissolution.   If the sovereign power fails to enforce the laws of the state and to protect the people, then they may give up the contract and return to the original state of nature.

The important thing to note in Hobbes' ethics is that he makes morality dependent on the state; he gives it a political basis.   His state of nature is just man without any government and without government there is no morality.   Until there is a power that all men in the state acknowledge and agree to obey, right and wrong are impossible.   Hobbes, then, regarded the origin and development of ethics as absolutely independent of religion.   Not only this, he believed that religion had an evil influence on the morals of men; he even hints that the Civil War in England was caused by disagreement among "the dissenters about the liberty of religion."   In all fairness to religion, it must be added that Hobbes condemns the traditional religion but erects another in its place.   He has a God, which he worships; it is a God on earth, the Commonwealth, the Leviathan or "Mortall God."

(d)   Pierre Bayle (1647-1706) was one of those who were profoundly influenced by the dialogues of Cicero and he continued the tradition of thought which has led up to our problem.   His views are best stated in his General Dictionary, Vol. X, in an

article entitled, "An Illustration upon the Atheists."

In this article, Bayle as a historian and a critic defends the position that persons who profess no religion may excel in moral goodness. He argues that the fear and love of God are not the sole springs of human action. "The love and fear of the Deity are not always a more active principle than all the rest. A thirst after glory, the fear of infamy, of death, of torments, the hope of a post act more forcibly on some people than the desire of pleasing God, and the fear of violating his commandments."[1] He states that men may be impelled "towards virtue and good morals by the spring of natural disposition." It is not surprising that even the followers of false religions have often committed good deeds. Bayle, however, is anxious to defend his own religion and he says "not only is more virtue in true Religion than can be found in any other, but there cannot be any true virtue, nor any fruits of righteousness, out of that Religion."[2] He does not explain the difference between this "true virtue" and the virtues of the atheists. In fairness to the other side he admits that the great majority of criminals are persons who believe in the Diety, while atheists such as "Diagoras, Vanini, Spinoza, etc." are seldom found guilty of crimes. He explains this as being due to the wisdom of the Diety who prevents these atheists from being the leaders in iniquity and perhaps turning the whole world to wickedness. Throughout the article, Bayle's purpose

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1.
    Dictionary, Vol. X, p.390

2.
    Ibid   p.391

is to assert the fact of the good morals of atheists and yet reconcile the statement with religious beliefs.

(e)   The teachings of the Academic Sceptics and of Cicero reached David Hume through Bayle's Dictionary and profoundly influenced him.   He, in turn, by his frank discussion of the problem influenced all later thinkers.

Hume was born in 1711 and began his study in philosophy at a time when the philosophers were actively discussing the nature of morals and religion.   Although he was primarily interested in philosophy, he read with great interest the works of those who were criticizing Hobbes' ethical system.   In philosophy, Hume's chief distinction is that of an empiricist who clears away many illogical beliefs but has nothing to replace them.   His enquiring mind made him a master in the art of raising question and he proved very stimulating to later philosophers. The art of raising questions without answering them made him a sceptic - one of the greatest sceptics of the world.

Although such a great sceptic, he never lost faith in the reality of morality.   He thought one could be sceptical about everything else but not about morals.   His own theory of ethics supports the moral sense theory, basing morality upon the principle of sympathy and leaving reason entirely out of the system.   Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of;   the impression arising from virtue is agreeable, that arising from vice is uneasy.   Thus in general it is pain or pleasure that distinguishes good and evil.

As one would naturally expect from his scepticism in

philosophy, he is even more sceptical of religion. He says,
"Generally speaking, the errors of religion are dangerous;
those of philosophy are only ridiculous." His views on ethics
and religion are best stated in the chapter, "Of a Particular
Providence and of a Future State" in his essay "Concerning
Human Understanding." Here he discusses the question, "Does
the denial of a Providence and a future state loosen the ties
of morality?" He argues that, although he denies a supreme
governor who guides events, punishes the wicked, and rewards
the virtuous, he does not deny the course of events. He
acknowledges the virtuous life and asks, "What more can be done?"
All conduct arises from reflections on common life; no new
duty can be inferred from the religious hypothesis. Therefore,
morality should not suffer when the latter is denied.

In another essay he goes still further and points
out the bad influence of popular religions on morality. Many
of the greatest crimes have been found compatible with super-
stitious piety and devotion. From this, he deduces, that it
is "unsafe to draw any certain inference in favour of a man's
morals from the fervour or strictness of his religious exercises."
He further blames religion for expiating offences and thereby
removing the remorse and horror which would have deterred further
evil. Thus we find the great sceptic of modern philosophy -
a man who himself lived an eminently moral life - holding the
view that ethics is not only independent of but hindered by
religion.

(f)   In 1724, the greatest of modern philosophers was born -

Immanuel Kant, a man, who did nore than any other, to assert the autonomy of ethics.

He began his theory of ethics by the significant statement that "nothing can possibly........be called good without qualification except a Good Will." Morality is essentially internal. To have moral worth an action must be done from duty. "Duty is the necessity of acting from respect for the law." Man, by his rational nature, is able to form this moral law for himself and to keep it consistently before him. One formulation of the moral law is: "Act as if the maxim of thy action were to become by thy will a universal law of nature." Kant believed that a knowledge of what is right and wrong is within the reach of all men. Each individual has to apply the universal formula to his own specific problem.

To overcome difficulties that arise in his system, Kant was led to make his three great postulates of morality, freedom, immortality, and God. If man is to give himself the moral law he must be free from all compulsion. Hence, the concept of freedom is really the key that explains the autonomy of the will. To justify morality, Kant was led to a religious faith in the immortality of the soul and the existence of God. As his exposition of these postulates will be more fully developed in the fourth chapter, they will not be discussed here.

The important thing to note is that Kant makes morality dependent upon man's will. He will not allow it to have any reference to an outside basis or an external end.

Apart from the religious postulates, Kant gave very little
heed to religion. His attitude towards evangelical religion
was one of suspicion and dislike but this was no doubt due to
unpleasant memories of his youthful years spent in the Pietist
Academy at Königsberg.

(g)　　　　The empiricism of Hume was continued by English
thinkers in the ethics of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill,
who was born in 1806, became its greatest exponent and one of
the most important thinkers of modern times. He advocated
a form of hedonistic ethics holding that there is some one
end for the sake of which everything is done. Judging by
the actions of the great majority of men, this end is pleasure
or happiness. Some theories of hedonism have favoured an
egoistic pleasure but the utilitarian school of Mill supported
the theory that the greatest object in life is the "greatest
happiness of the greatest number." Mill believed that conduct
was good or bad according to its effects upon the masses of
human beings. Hope for the advancement of morality, therefore,
lies in the improvement of the general condition of the masses.
This system of ethics received the name utilitarian because it
inculcated the pursuit of the useful.

　　　　In this outline of Mill's ethics, it will be noticed
that no place is given to religion. The nearest approach is
when he calls the moral sentiments religion because he feels
that to use the term morality would be claiming too little for
them. Mill had received his early education from his father,
James Mill, who very carefully avoided all religious teaching.

Unlike Hume, then, John Stuart Mill did not have any religious faith to lose but his views on religion and morality agree in many instances with the results reached by Hume.

His essay on the "Utility of Religion" is the best statement of his position. He believes that religion has hindered morality in that mankind has always been doing evil in the name of religion; he adds, however, that these facts only concern certain religions. He admits that mankind needs to be taught the principles of justice, veracity, etc. These have largely been taught in the name of religion and as a result, religion has received the credit for all the influence in human life which belongs to any accepted system of rules. From arguments similar to these, Mill concludes that "early religion has owed its power over mankind rather to its being early than to its being religious."[1] The effect on human conduct which is ascribed to religious motives really derives its power from the influence of public opinion. The religious obligation, when not enforced by public opinion, produces very little effect on conduct. Like Hume, he believes that the unavoidable uncertainity of punishment taught by religion tends to weaken its deterrent effect.

He thinks that the belief in morals as revelations from superior powers has often been of value in inducing primitive peoples to accept them but he also condemns their supernatural origin for making morals stereotyped. Religion has been of value in satisfying unfulfilled aspirations and in

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[1] Three Essays on Religion, p.83

consoling the sufferings of this world but this same good could have been received from other sources, e.g., poetry, without the help of religion. As to the belief in another world, it may be useful to many but the time will come when the need for an hereafter will disappear. He disliked the traditional religion because it seemed to divert attention from the practical problems of life to a fruitless interest in the supernatural.

In Mill's Autobiography, there are a few words which admirably express his views on morality and religion. In the account of his father's death, he says, "Nor did the approach of death cause the smallest wavering in his convictions on the subject of religion. His principal satisfaction......seemed to be the thought of what he had done to make the world better than he found it; and his chief regret in not living longer, that he might do more.[1]"

(h)   Auguste Comte was born eight years earlier than Mill so as contemporary writers they influenced each other to a considerable extent. Comte is included in this chapter because his philosophy led him to a position similar to that of the ethical societies to-day in regard to the relation of religion and ethics.

Comte's contribution to philosophy is the law of human development - the law of the three stages - theological, metaphysical and positive. Man, at first, is a being divided by weak social tendencies and strong selfish instincts. When

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[1] P. 172 (Oxford Edition)

the social tendencies gain the ascendency, civilization begins.
The first explanation of the universe is anthropomorphic and
hence this state is the theological one. Man believes in an
infinite Personality who governs the world by his will and
intervenes by supernatural means. At first, this religion
is a form of fetichism, then a form of polytheism, and lastly
monotheism. Then comes the downfall of the first state.

The intellect has been developing and soon the spirit
of reflection turns the symbols, myths and illusions of theology
into metaphysical abstractions. These abstractions are the
negations of the gods, which they displaced. The metaphysical
state extends its destructive power until it is superseded by
the philosophy of experience - the third and positive state.

The vague entities of metaphysics are succeeded by
the facts and laws of science. Comte believed positive science
to be the real cause of all intellectual progress. The search
for first principles seemed useless to him. Thus, Comte, held
that it is vain for man to trust to philosophy or attempt to
find a solution to the problems of life in religion.

The important thing to note, is that, after Comte has
abolished religion in this way, he still finds a need for it
and invents a new religion - the religion of Humanity. It is
a religion of adoration of the great and good men of the past.
The "individual man is an abstraction and there is nothing real
but Humanity." The absolute God of the old religion has dis-
appeared but his place has been taken by a more abstract diety -
a Humanity which sustains and controls all individuals. It

seems quite possible that this love of Humanity, when culti-
vated to the fullest degree, may provide motives for morality
almost as strong as those arising from the love of a personal
God.   The weakness of Comte's system is the great difficulty
of cultivating such a strong love for Humanity in all persons.

The importance of Comte's contribution to our problem
will be better realized later when it is shown that there are
many people, to-day, who believe that ethics needed religion
at one time but with the development of mankind, the need is
gradually disappearing.   They expect Comte's third stage to
be reached when ethics is entirely independent of religion.

CHAPTER II

ETHICS AS INDEPENDENT OF RELIGION

(a) Origin of ethics is social and not religious.

(b) Morality does not depend on religious beliefs:

    (1) moral man is not always religious
    (2) religious man is not always moral
    (3) religious practices are the cause of much immorality

(c) Scepticism in religion does not necessarily lead to immorality.

(d) Lack of validity of future rewards and punishments as motives of action.

(e) Lack of validity and instability of a morality based on the will of God

(f) Religious obligation has had little influence.

(g) Religion has hindered the development of ethics.

(h) Ethical churches.

CHAPTER II

ETHICS AS INDEPENDENT OF RELIGION

For many centuries, it was believed that ethics and religion were inseparably connected in their origin and development. In the early seventeenth century, however, historic study as to the evolution and development of man caused doubt about their connection. This doubt led men to study the evolution of morals and of religion. As a result of this study some men were convinced that early religions had no relation to early morality while others concluded that there was a very intimate relation between the two. In recent years, the origin of ethics has been a subject of controversy which is still unsolved. In this chapter the arguments for an independent origin of ethics will be developed; the other side of the problem will be discussed later.

Let us begin with a genetic account of the origin and development of ethics. The beginnings of all morality are said to be in the social customs of the primitive races. It will serve our purpose to begin with primitive man in the early family stage. In this stage, conditions must have been somewhat as follows: for mutual protection, families grew into clans, the clans into tribes, and the tribes into nations. At the very beginning of this development, rules or laws were required to control the members of these groups in their relation to each other. Punishment had to be given by the head of the group when

any action proved detrimental to the general safety of the tribe; murder, theft, and other offences could not be allowed to go unchecked and punishment of crime soon became the custom. Man's natural desire to live within the tribe caused him to co-operate with his fellow-men and gave him to feel that he must respect their social customs.

As a child in the primitive family, man acquired the habit of obedience and respect to those who were wiser and strpnger than he. When he became a man, these habits continued in the feelings of awe and respect to the head of the clan and later to the chief of the tribe. A primitive type of brotherly feeling arose between individuals who were on an equal standing in the group; as did also a feeling of pity towards more unfortunate members. At this stage, immoral conduct would be that which was a disobedience of the orders of the chief or an offence against the customs of the tribe. From this account, it will be seen that early morality was largely external in character.

However, the beginnings of internal morality would soon appear. The members of the group led by instinctive feelings and impulses to act contrary to the rules and customs of the clan would reflect upon the conflict between their own inner feelings and the external rules forced upon them. In this reflection upon the conflict between inner desires and external rules we may find the beginnings of conscience. Reflective thought about conduct would be further developed when a man saw others made miserable by his actions. Pity for the offended one

would lead to self-condemnation. As society became more complex,
the need for ethical thought increased. When one man had the
several offices of father, judge, captain in the army, etc., he
found it more difficult to choose and act rightly. This situation is depicted by Shakespeare when Desdemona after her marriage
to Othello says,

> 'My noble father   1
> I do perceive here a divided duty.'

Then, too, new laws often conflicted with traditional standards.
To give the laws more power the chiefs sometimes said that
customs, which had been handed down from generation to generation,
were of supernatural origin. Thus many laws were believed to
have been made by the gods. "What was to be the right conduct
when these traditional laws conflicted with the wish of the
present ruler?" was a question that often arose. Should man-
made laws take precedence over those authorized by the deity?
The 'Antigone' of Sophocles is the classical example of such a
conflict. King Creon ordered that under the penalty of death
no one should bury the traitor Polynices. Antigone believed
that there were laws respecting the burial of dead kinsmen - laws
of the gods which no mortal could alter - and she did not hesi-
tate to bury the body of her brother.

As different tribes of the one nation, and also differ-
ent nations, quarreled, another side of the moral consciousness
would be developed. National ethics would tend to become uni-
versalized. All these events would cause reflection and a

1.
  Othello, Act. I. Scene III.

continual search for a deeper standard of judgment. As social
relations grew wider and more complex, the moral consciousness
developed in many different ways. This, it is believed, ac-
counts for the great variety of moral ideals in different peoples
and ages.

It is further pointed out that religion has had nothing
to do with this development. The moral ideas that developed in
the social life of man were only later attributed to the gods.
At first, the latter were thought to maintain an attitude of
indifference towards the moral side of human conduct and no one
thought of them as having moral qualities. It was not until the
moral feeling was well developed in man that he thought of his
gods as possessing all the moral virtues. At first, it was im-
possible to set the gods up as models of moral conduct for they
possessed many vices as well as virtues. Sometimes, they even
stood on a lower moral level than the best men of the time.
The Greek poets, although they had a high sense of morality, did
not hesitate to tell dreadful and shameful things about their
gods; tales of deceit, violence, envy, and drunkenness did not
seem incompatible with their position as gods. Other peoples
recognized the incongruity of such attributes but experienced
great difficulty in improving the morals of those gods which
they had inherited from their forefathers. The big contribution
of the prophets to the Hebrew conception of God was the improve-
ment of His moral attributes. Isaiah begins his prophecy by
telling the Israelites that God has revealed it to him in a
vision that He does not delight in burnt offerings of rams or in

the blood of lambs.[1]

Another argument for the independent origin of ethics and religion, is the fact, that often the more religious a people seemed to be, the more immoral they were. A fervent piety in early times apparently had no restraint on lying, theft, or murder. It has been shown also that great differences of morality and immorality have existed among peoples having the same religion; and that an equal standard of morality has often flourished among different and even hostile religions. A low degree of morality in the masses of the people may co-exist with comparatively pure conceptions of God and a high degree of morality with an imperfect knowledge of the Divine. All this has led many to believe that ethics and religion are independent of each other in their origin.

An explanation of the origin of ethics as social has been given; this account favoured an ethics independent of religion. The reasons why ethics should be independent of religion will be given in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

It is said that morality does not depend on religious beliefs. There are three arguments to support this statement. First, the moral man is not always religious. The moral consciousness contains no reference to religion and it does not seem impossible that the deepest sense of the authority and sacredness of the moral law may be found in those who worship truth, honour, and right, rather than any superhuman deity.

1.
    Isaiah 1: 10-15.

Augustine once described the virtues of the heathen as "splendid vices" but no fair person to-day would condemn them because of the lack of religious beliefs. On the contrary, it sometimes seems true that a man is most moral when he thinks least about religious beliefs. One illustration that has been used to prove this is that of the surgeon skilfully engaged at the operating table. He does not fill his mind with thoughts of God and other religious ideas for that would probably have disastrous results. No, it is far more likely that he banishes such thoughts and gives his whole attention to the situation before him. The same is true in the other departments of life. The artist, the musician, the school-teacher, and the manual worker, all do their best work when their mind is on their work. In every community, there are many who have little time for religious thoughts because they are so busy with the temporal necessities of life. Yet, neither their character nor their service to mankind is in the least impaired thereby. To this argument, it may rightly be objected that the best religions teach that it is in the common duties of life, in the common joys that consecrate the home, and in the common burdens that all must bear - it is in being faithful to these temporal necessities that man serves God best. Hence, to be moral is to be religious.

Secondly, it is said that it is no uncommon thing to find that religious people are not always moral. The daily newspapers constantly publish accounts of religious officials, who fail in their duties towards man. Just as man is most moral without religious thoughts so the converse also seems true that

when man is most religious, the moral duties are most often
neglected.   Something in the nature of religious emotion lifts
the individual above his earthly duties.   Hence, an extreme
emphasis upon the spiritual leads to a neglect of the common
duties and this neglect may very easily pass into immorality.
The parable of the Good Samaritan illustrates this very well.
The priest and the Levite were so deeply engaged in their relig-
ious duties that they overlooked the needy wounded man at their
feet.   And since the telling of the parable, many religiously
occupied persons have made the same mistake.   Not only is man
naturally apt to to this, but many religions command their
followers to place the observance of religious duties before the
moral duties of life.   It is not surprising, then, that many
people seem to think of their religion as having nothing to do
with the actual affairs of this life.   "Examples are never
wanting of those who 'believe and tremble' and yet boldly play
the devil's part in the business of life."   The objection to
this argument is that the religion of the priest and Levites
and of those who do evil while wearing the mask of sanctity is
not "pure religion breathing household laws," but rather that it
is the good Samaritan of the parable and of daily life, who is
truly showing the religious spirit.   Also, the very fact that
such publicity is given to the moral laxities of religious
officials shows that man expects morality to naturally accompany
religion.

Thirdly, it is argued that there are many instances
of religious practices causing great immorality.   One author

has said that in early times the more religious the people, the more conspicuous was the lack of morals. Illustrations to support this are not difficult to find. The Old Testament gives us many characters whose religious fervour seemed to have been no objection to murder, suicide, human sacrifice, pious fraud and other immoralities. David was a great saint, yet he committed adultery and caused the man to be murdered whom he had wronged. What could be more dreadful than the spectacle of the Israelites making their children pass through fire to their God Molech? Church history confirms this for its pages are filled with grim accounts of cruel persecutions. It would be difficult to equal the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. In our own day, Katherine Mayo's book, Slaves of the Gods, gives a vivid picture of the monstruous immoralities practiced by certain of the Indian religions in temple prostitution. These few examples are sufficient to show that religious emotion has tended to generate superstition and fanaticism and that these two have been effective in producing much human misery. When courses of action are consecrated, the sincere believer does not question their moral value. It is for this reason that religion can become such a powerful force for evil. It is with regret, then, that it is admitted that many of the cruelest, most unjust and most inhuman acts have sprung from a mistaken zeal for the glory of God.

Once again, it may be objected that those who advance these arguments forget that there are religions and religions.

1.
     Goreham: Ethics of the Great Religions.

A religion that does not express itself in conduct cannot be regarded as genuine. As Galloway has pointed out, "to say that immoral conduct may be a feature of a spiritual religion is a contradictio in adjecto."[1] The evils attributed to religious practices are due to the misapplication of the things of religion and therefore cannot be held against it. Such illustrations, as have been given above, only prove that savage religions produce savage views of morality and are therefore an argument for the connection of religion and ethics. Morality is inseparable from piety. Even a writer like Mill had to admit that such facts afford no arguments against religions, other than those involved in these immoralities. Any reasonable person to-day will admit that important religions are free from the great majority of these abuses. The only valid argument is that a certain amount of moral energy which could have been very profitably spent elsewhere had to be used to improve morally these forms of religion. Thus it will be seen that the arguments used against the dependence of morality on religious beliefs do not carry as much weight after as before analysis.

It is further argued that scepticism in religion does not necessarily lead to immorality. First, from the metaphysical point of view there is no reason to believe that unbelief should diminish the grandeur of the motive to be moral. If the moral ideal is fully impressed upon the mind, there should be very little room left for additional incentives. If men have the moral ideal constantly before them, is there any

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[1]. Philosophy of Religion, p. 196.

reason to fear that a lack of belief in immortality and in a personal God should cause men to desert the moral life? Surely the common sense of men would not permit such a mistake to be made. To take a more concrete example: should the Christian races acknowledge unbelief in the doctrine of the atonement, is that any reason why men should cease to be honest or women virtuous? The fact that other religions have reached a comparatively high level of morality without this doctrine seems a sufficient answer to the question. From the fact that man is able to be moral without this belief, it is concluded that all the other beliefs of religion may be dispersed with, without any evil consequence to the morals of man.

In history there is much to support this conclusion. Time after time, the motives of "mere" morality have proved sufficient to produce the required moral actions. The anti-slavery conflict has often been used as an illustration. Religious impulses may have entered in to a certain extent but it was largely due to the moral sentiments of the people that such a great victory for right was achieved. Thus great moral movements are possible without added motives from religion.

The struggle between good and evil in the individual man bears out this conclusion. A study of the lives of those who lived without religion reveals many instances of noble characters which do not seem to have suffered from the loss of a religious influence. In all ages, there have been men and women who were just, honourable, chaste and charitable, who were either strangers to the sphere of religious experience or

who had recoiled from it. In ancient times, the Stoics gave
no heed to religion, yet they lived an austere, virile, moral
life. In modern times there are many who spent their early
years under religious training but later became sceptical of
its teaching and broke away completely from its influence.
Their religious convictions became ruins but their moral sense
remained and they retained a lively sense of what was good and
pure and a disgust of what was low and evil. The biographies
of such persons as David Hume, George Eliot and Leslie Stephen
are illustrative of this.[1] In a lecture Mr. Stephen says that
in his youth he learned the Catechism and the Thirty-nine
Articles as taught by his church. When he began to think for
himself on these matters he could not agree with their teaching
and gradually he was led to give up all religious beliefs. Yet
he did not suffer morally for this lack of belief in the essen-
tials of religion. On the contrary, he became one of the great
ethical teachers of his time. Thus; it has to be admitted
that, in individuals at least, a lofty morality may survive
without any obvious religious support.

Has there been a religious influence which was not
always obvious? These persons, whose lives have been cited as
examples, lived a moral life in the midst of a religious com-
munity, or at least in an age that was profoundly influenced by
religion. A great deal of their success was due to this un-
conscious influence. The results of the religious habits of
centuries still moulded their conduct and the moral code that

1.
    Ethics and Religion, p. 248.

they conformed to was largely the result of religious teaching.
Surrounded by such influences it seems quite possible for a sense
of duty to be retained without the acknowledgment of religion
and even with a professed rejection of it. The only explanation
needed is that the influence of religion has not been detected.
It would be entirely different for a vigorous national morality
to survive without the support of religion. That is the proof
upon which the problem should really depend and historic evidence
does not seem to answer in the affirmative. The nearest ap-
proach to such a condition is that of the Greek state morality.
Illustrative examples will be given in the next chapter.

It may also be objected that such examples as have
been given above are not really examples of morality without
religion. Such persons have indeed given up the God of their
youth but other gods have taken his place. Some worship duty
and would sacrifice worldly possessions and even life for its
sake. Such a worship is really a religion and these persons
have perhaps unconsciously erected "an altar to the Unkown God."
Religion exists in other forms; even Mill is said to have had
at one time the religion of the love of a dead woman. Harrison's
parody of the agnostic's prayer - "O x^{nth}, love us, help us,
make us one with thee" is well known. Hence it is concluded that
many so-called sceptics really have a religion.

This discussion of the influence of scepticism in
religion on morality leads to the question of the value and va-
lidity of future rewards and future punishments as motives of
action. Some believe that mankind can be induced to do right

only through hope of future reward and fear of future punishment.
This seems a very extreme position and the lives of Socrates,
Aristotle and Spinoza, who did not believe in an immortality
with such attributes, and of men like Hume, Bentham and Haeckel,
who thought death ended all, is sufficient evidence to disprove
the statement.

Further, those who would divorce ethics from religion
doubt the validity of such motives.   If the good life must
depend on the motives of future rewards and future punishments,
it could not be called moral in the highest sense of the term -
at least it would be a very selfish morality.   Man would be
tempted to regard the performance of duties to others mainly as
a means to his own personal salvation.   It would be using im-
moral motives in the service of moral aims.   Some of the great
philosophers have doubted if it could be called morality at all.
Immanuel Kant says: "Could he be really honest, could he be
called virtuous, who would gladly give himself up to his favorite
vices if he feared no future punishment, and must one not rather
say that he indeed shuns the practice of evil, but nourishes in
his soul a vicious disposition; that he loves the advantage of
conduct seemingly virtuous, while he hates virtue itself."   That
has often been true in actual life - men and women have avoided
evil largely through fear of punishment - "the fear of Hell, the
hangman's whip" - but when the thought of punishment was removed
they had no other motives to keep them from vice.   Therefore,
to base morality upon future rewards and future punishments
would be far too weak a support - especially in this age when a

wave of scepticism in the postulates of religion is passing over

the masses of the people. Thus, it is concluded that the

dependence of ethics upon religion in this way produces a lower

standard of morality and makes it rest upon false foundations

whose fall may be very disastrous to ethics.

Once again it may be objected[1] that the best religions

are not taken into consideration by those who would reject relig-

ion. Nor is the function of religion in aiding ethics, that of

a schoolmaster or a policeman enforcing its laws through fear of

punishment. The higher religions pay very little head to future

rewards and punishments. To the true believer God is everything

while Paradise is nothing in itself. If the future life is a

necessary consequence of divine justice, he takes it as a matter

of course, but like the Saracen woman in Jainville's biography of

St. Louis he would prefer to "burn up Paradise and put out the

fires of Hell, so that man may do good for the love of God."

Thus it will be seen, that when the religious and moral nature

of the inward motive becomes the one thing esteemed, the ideas of

reward and punishment fade into the background. All that really

does concern man is to serve God here below. As the Hebrew

prophet expressed it, "What doth the Lord require of thee but

to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."[2]

It may also be added that although Kant condemned future rewards

and punishments as moral motives, other great ethical teachers

like Plato and Jesus did not condemn them, provided they did not

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1.
    The objections to these arguments will be more fully con-
      sidered in Chapter IV, under "Immortality."

2.
    Micah, 6:8.

become the chief end in view.

The lack of validity and instability of a morality based upon the will of God is another argument that is advanced in favour of an ethics independent of religion. If morality is founded upon the will of God, actions will be good or bad depending upon His will. Certain acts will be bad because they are forbidden by God. Men will not care why God prefers certain kinds of conduct; their chief worry will be to know what kind he prefers or in other words man's problem will be to make his will conform to God's will. This condition is similar to Hobbes' Leviathan in which morality depends upon obedience to the sovereign power; only this is more extreme in that man cannot escape from it. Can this really be called morality? What difference would there be between such morality and that in which a powerful tyrant commanded men to act, often against their will, by promising rich reward for obedience and dreadful punishment for disobedience? In such circumstances, man would be likely to give up in despair, believing that it was impossible to please his tyrant. Puzzled by the riddles of life he would say like Lear,

> 'As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods
> They kill us for their sport.' 1

No one would think of calling such obedience morality, yet many are willing to make the same mistake by founding morality on the will of God.

Further, morality based upon the will of God would be very unstable as scepticism of God's existence would lead to a corresponding scepticism in morality. Hume and Kant have shown

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1.
  King Lear, Act IV, Scene I.

that the existence of a personal God cannot be proved. (This
argument is not as strong as it seems for they have also admitted
that the non-existence of God is incapable of proof.) Then it
is asked,'What is to be regarded as the actual will of God?'
Conscience? Men's consciences answer similar problems in differ-
ent ways. The scriptures? Biblical scholars claim that they
include a great deal of what is not the will of God and omit
much that is. This and the fact that disputes over the revealed
will of God have caused much confusion and even bloodshed have
led many to believe that, if ethics is to exist in its highest
form, it must be independent of religion.

In fairness to religion it must be said that the
follower of the best religion believes in a God so perfect that
His will must always correspond with the highest morality possible.
If an act is good it must necessarily be His will and men are
encouraged rather than forbidden to perform such actions. "What-
soever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever
things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things
are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any
virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."[1]

It is also said, in favour of an ethics independent
of religion, that the religious obligation does not have all the
influence for which it is given credit and that ethics would be
better without it. Religion as a supplement to human laws, as
shrewd police force has very little effect. Many incidents
illustrate this. Duelling is forbidden according to the Ten

1.
    Philippians, 4:8.

Commandants of the Bible. Yet the practice was continued for many years in Christian countries by professing Christians and it was not until public opinion turned against the practice that it was abolished. It might be objected that it was a correct interpretation of the teachings of religion that changed public opinion. This objection, however, cannot be used against the following illustration. There is a verse in the Old Testament which says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."[1] For many centuries, this cruel practice was continued and it was only when public opinion turned against it that it was forbidden by law. The change in opinion this time was certainly not due to religious teaching but to enlightened reason. An excellent illustration may be found in the present age. The Christian religion forbids illicit sexual intercourse in both man and woman and it stands among the most wicked of sins. Public opinion condemns both but is far more emphatic in regards to women. What is the result? The religious obligation has a great deal more effect in regard to the sex in which it is backed by public opinion.

Of course, it has to be admitted that, in some cases and in some states of mind, the religious obligation does act with great power. The examples given above, however, show that it is generally given more credit than it deserves. It may also be added that those who wish to make ethics dependent on religion would not be very anxious to emphasize this aspect of the relationship. They would regard religion's function to be the

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[1].
Exodus, 22:18.

perfection of character, not the frightening of man into doing
right.

Another reason advanced for the independence of ethics
and religion is the fact that in their association in the past
religion has hindered the advance of morality in many ways.
Early religions have proved to be a conservative force in that
they have discouraged spontaneity and independence in moral
actions.   Indeed, it has been remarked that ethics has grown up
in spite of theology.   They have tended to emphasize ritual and
obedience to rules and thus retarded the growth of an inward
morality.   Even in a country like Greece, religion lagged far
behind morality and offered a stubborn resistance to its progress.
Then, the intellectual forms in which religious beliefs are stated,
because of their assumption to be final, have impeded the for-
mation of better and larger conceptions of truth.   Doubtful
doctrine has always been a burden to the religious-ethical person
and the energy spent in defending useless intellectual positions
would have been a tremendous influence for good in the world.

Even in the individual, the religious feeling has often
been a hindrance to moral progress.   Men and women have been
immersed in feelings which are out of touch with real life - in
the expectation of the millenium, in a brooding consciousness
of sin and in the fear of Hell.   Religion has weakened man's
sense of self-reliance so that he has failed to put forth his
best efforts in the struggle against evil.   Especially has this
been true of fatalistic religions which have encouraged the
belief that the evil came from God.   Thomas Hardy in one of his

novels says, "As Tess's own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: 'It was to be.' There lay the pity of it."[1] Then religion has caused men to form degraded views of human nature, to mutilate their bodies, condemn human happiness, and neglect their social duties in the search for individual sanctity. There is no better example than that of the so-called saints of the middle ages spending their lives in caves and imposing terrible cruelties on themselves to curb their natural desires. Is it any wonder then that those who are struggling to better the morality of mankind wish to make ethics independent of religion?

The ethical church is one of the organizations of those who would make ethics independent of religion and it would not do to end this chapter without saying a few words about it. As has been already mentioned in the introduction, many men in the late nineteenth century became alarmed at the increasing immorality, corruption and unrest of the masses of the people and felt that something should be done to put new life into the ethical forces of society. The religious churches had ceased to influence a certain class of people - and their number seemed to be increasing. Was this group of people to be allowed to drift as far as their moral natures were concerned? What was to be done to check this new danger to mankind and to promote truth, justice and the capacity for self-sacrifice among these people? How were the children to be led into the moral life and fortified against the temptations of life? At least, some

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1.
Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p.90.

organization was needed. Although the leading moralists wished to keep ethics independent of religion, they realized that the church had always been a worthy institution. They felt that in the interests of those who were outside the religious churches, it would be to the benefit of morality to found ethical churches where moral and social training apart from any religious creed would be given.

And so these ethical churches began to be founded in the larger cities. Addresses were given strongly resembling the traditional sermon, and practical work in school and guild also began. Many churches procured settled lecturers and so provided for a regular congregation. The lecturer acted the part of the ministers of religious churches, consecrating marriages, officiating at funerals, consoling the suffering, advising the troubled and helping to restore the fallen to the moral paths of life. On the belief that the good life is possible to all without a previous acceptance of any creed, the ethical churches opened their doors to all who wished to advance the ends of morality.

It was further felt that many young men felt a call to be moral helpers to humanity in the calling of the ministry but that they are prevented by intellectual difficulties in regard to the doctrines of the various churches. These persons are admirably suited for the vocation of the ethical preacher. Here they would be pledged to nothing except to promote with all their power right living among mankind and in this vocation they would fulfil their natural life-work.

It must be understood that the leaders of the ethical churches are not altogether hostile to the existing religions. They have realized that the religious churches are working towards the advancement of morality and they do not wish to oppose them. Many of them may believe that morality is alone fit to be a religion but the other religions exist and must be co-operated within the best interests of morality. It is because of co-operation that they expect success, for the ethical churches are a meeting-place for all creeds and races - Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, Jews, Buddhists, Mohammedans, freethinkers, agnostics - all are welcome. In such an organization it is hoped that the ethical leaders may present a united front to the evils which threaten the life of society.

The leaders of this movement are ambitious for the future. They expect a day when swords will be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks and when the existing religious churches will all be changed into ethical churches. There will still be organ and song, but the hymns will be purely human and moral. Prayers will still be offered, but they will be of the type of Pope's Universal Prayer. Men will no longer sacrifice to a supernatural Diety, but will appeal to their fellow beings to live the nobler life. Such is the ideal of these enthusiasts.

CHAPTER III

ETHICS AS DEPENDENT ON RELIGION

(a) Parallel origin and development of ethics and religion.

(b) Ethics implies as its ground - religion.

(c) Scepticism in religion and periods of immorality.

(d) The position of Jesus, the greatest ethical teacher.

CHAPTER III

ETHICS AS DEPENDENT ON RELIGION

(a)   An account of the social origin of ethics favoring an ethics independent of religion has already been given.   An account favoring the dependence of ethics on religion will be given here.

It is admitted that the beginnings of morality lie in the social customs of the primitive races.   But it is the very sentiments of piety and obligation in man, that socially led to the beginnings of manners and morality, that are also the foundation of religion and worship.   The motives of the religious and ethical action are related in such a way throughout their development that we cannot think of them as separable in their origins.   In primitive times, they were so intertwined that religion was the organizing principle of society and the force that gave it its unity and character.   Mackenzie says, "The idea of tribal unity generally embodies itself in the image of a tribal God; and the religious band tends to become more and more important in giving unity to the system."[1]   By his very nature, man was both ethical and religious at this stage.   The same feeling of weakness and insecurity, which led the earliest humans to bind together and place themselves under their strongest leader, also prompted them to endeavour to win the sympathy

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1.
    Manual of Ethics.

and protection of the gods by sacrifice and worship. The feeling of awe and reverence, which men felt when they realized the supernatural power of the gods, caused them to ally themselves with those spirits and to forget their own will in carrying out the wishes of these higher powers. This corresponded to and aided the development of co-operation and a brotherly feeling between primitive men.

Further, the early social customs - especially those in connection with death, burial, birth, marriage, dress, medicine, seed-time and harvest - were originally of a religious character. They began as primitive acts of worship in which man tried to bring his life in contact with that of the deity. Men were performing such religious actions before they acquired a sense of right and wrong. Ethics only began when they became critical and reflective about their conduct. Hence early morality grew out of religion.

Religion was the force behind early morality. The customs were enforced by sanctions too dreadful to be despised for to disobey the customs was to offend the gods, and even to this day custom owes its obligatory character to its early religious basis. The influence of religion in this respect will be better realized when it is remembered that the early laws, civil government, civil duties, in fact, all matters of importance rested on a religious foundation. The close relation between customs and religions in Greece and Rome is illustrated by the fact that these nations in extending their empires never attempted to evangelize the people of their new provinces for they

associated their religion too closely with their own national
customs; and even in the present century, the social system of
India is a good example of the power that primitive religion can
have over custom.

It is not planned to give a history of the development
of religion. But the interdependence of ethics and religion will
be better illustrated by glimpses of certain stages of that de-
velopment. In the early development, there is an utter confusion
between the ethical and religious elements and they developed
along parallel lines. It indeed has to be admitted, as has al-
ready been mentioned in the preceding chapter, that the conceptions
of the gods held by the Greeks were inferior to the ethics of that
time. This is an individual case and may have been caused by
conditions peculiar to the Greek state. The moral ideas of the
time may have been antagonistic to the old religious ideas of
the myths but not to the existing religious ideas. It is absurd
to compare ethics and religion at different stages of their de-
velopment. Yet many of those who have concluded that religion
has nothing to do with the origin and development of morality,
have made this mistake. When this is remembered, it will be
seen that the development of the moral ideas has usually been
parallel to the development of religion. Even in such instances,
however, the fact that religious conceptions contained both posi-
tive elements of virtue and negative elements of vice is only a
strong proof of the value set upon morality. It shows the
struggle of conflicting powers and the ideal of virtue growing
stronger by contrast. So, in spite of such illustrations it is

claimed that in the earliest stage of the ethical consciousness religion is also present; and certainly as ethical thought develops and the thought arises of an ideal moral order of the universe, it finds expression within the circle of ideas that constitute the religious ideal.

In the worship of ancestors - a form of early religion - the ethical ideas are closely related to religion. The departed spirits are idealized into two classes - one of good spirits and the other of evil demons - and consequently play an important part in the moral life of the people. The early ancestor-worship of China is an excellent example. Its constant reference to high models of virtuous living and its constant loyalty to these spirits had a great moral influence. Ancestor-worship as the religious basis of Roman civilization helped to produce the moral strength and persistance of the Romans.

Another form of early religion, hero-worship, has contributed much to ethics. The conception of the gods as models of human conduct gains in strength when the spiritual figures are humanized. These hero-gods share in human interests, fight with the soldiers, become the patrons of cities, etc. As the religion develops,the place of the hero-god is taken by a personality of exceptional moral interest. The four greatest religions of the world - Confucianism, Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedism - have all developed a moral personality as the centre of religious thought. Gradually, there grew up the idea that the gods had founded the moral order of the universe and that they maintained it through reward and punishment. As religion developed still

further, the crude conceptions of reward and punishment changed
to a more symbolic interpretation with the emphasis upon the
inward nature of the ethical motives.

According to this brief account, ethics is closely
related to and dependent on religion in its origin and develop-
ment. In both the development is from external acts to the
inner character of reflective principles. The position taken
here is not altogether opposed to the account of the social
origin of ethics given in the previous chapter for many of its
statements have been admitted. On the whole, it seems the more
truthful, and therefore it is concluded that from a study of
origin and development ethics is dependent on religion. Where
religion is joined with immoral practices it will be found that
it is a degraded form of religion and not that of the best minds
of the period. Nor does the argument of morality existing with-
out religion carry much weight. Rashdall says, "Where travellers
or anthropologists have attempted to point out the existence of
a people without a religion, the attempt is generally based
either upon insufficient information or upon a too narrow concep-
tion of what religion is."[1]

(b)   The study of the origin and development of ethics is
not the only argument for an ethics dependent on religion. This
conclusion may also be reached by an examination of the essence
of ethics and the things that it implies.

Rationally, ethics depends upon religion. If man
believes in a moral law, he must also believe that it is possible

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1.
     Theory of Good and Evil, Vol. II, p. 251.

for the world to conform to such a law.   To believe that, is
to believe that the world is not the result of blind and indif-
ferent fate.   In other words, man must believe in virtue if he
is to become and to remain virtuous.   He must believe that it
can exist in this world, (i. e.) he must believe that this world
is obedient to the principle of good.   As some one has said,
the "ought to be" of morality must be based upon a deeper "is."
Such a conception of a moral world order leads to a belief in a
moral world governor.   When this postulate has been made, man's
life is justified because he is a part of the moral world order.
Thus it is seen that the ideals of ethics imply as their ground
a power or principle which is the God of religion.

At first, this conclusion may not seem necessary.   But
when the problem is thought out logically, it will be found to
be true.   If man doubts the existence of the moral governor, he
must cease to believe in the moral order of the universe.   If
man believes that there is no Supreme Power to take an interest
in the lives and actions of men, if he feels that the "Powers
that be" are either in sympathy with evil or are heedless of
what happens on this earth, he will find it very difficult to
live the moral life.   If he recognizes nothing but disorder in
the affairs of this world, if he has no hope of it being set
right, he cannot logically believe in the good.   If the events
of this universe are to him only "sound and fury signifying
nothing" virtue will also seem an illusion to him.   If something
be not gained for the cause of the good in the universe by his
success in attaining virtue, why should he endeavour "to strive,

to seek, to find and not to yield?" If this world is not good,
and was not created for the end of the good, what need human
beings, poor insignificant parts of the world, care for the
good. Such will be the reasoning of man if he is led to believe
that the good is impossible to reach. The concepts of devotion,
duty, and obligation will no longer have any meaning to him.
He will lose his sense of his high task and destiny; he will
no longer believe himself to be the "paragon of animals." A
loss of faith in this respect would be fatal to morality. There-
fore, if ethics is to exist, the moral life must be possible.
If it is to be possible, there must be a moral order. This im-
plies that there is an overruling power or principle for good.
This is the power that Wordsworth addresses in his "Ode to Duty:"

"Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong   /strong."
And the most ancient Heavens, through Thee are fresh and

This is religion's God, for the essence of religion is belief in
the goodness of the Supreme Deity.

The same conclusion may be reached by showing that
ethics in the search for an ideal unity leads up to religion.
The duties and obligations of man in this world are exceedingly
diverse and conflicting and it is not likely that they will become
simpler. The great variety and opposition and even contradiction
among the ethical theories is proof enough that no one system of
ethics contains the ultimate ideal implied in it. All these
aspects of the moral life demand something higher than themselves,
some one end to which they may be related. That this ultimate
ideal is needed for a high morality is shown by the fact that it
is always in the man of high character that this ideal is best

expressed. If this ideal unity cannot be found, if man is conintually torn between various ends, life will lose much of its meaning for him. A quest for this unity ends in religion - in its conception of the moral order as resting on God. It is true that it does not give a perfect solution but it gives one that should be sufficient for finite man. The relation between man and God gives unity to the relation between man and man. A faith in the things of religion removes the contradictions from, and gives harmony to the moral life. Thus, once again, it is seen, that, from the rational viewpoint, ethics leads up to something beyond itself, to what might be called "meta-ethics", (viz.) religion. It was this thought that one ethical writer emphasized[1] when he said, "It is a moral duty not to be moral." A moral man ought to be carried into a higher form of morality (i.e.) religion, the crown and flower of morality.

This conclusion is in agreement with the findings of the great philosophers. Aristotle believed that the rational realization of the moral life implies religion. Speaking of the contemplative as the highest form of the ethical life, he says, "Such a life as this, however, will be higher than the human level; not in virtue of his humanity will a man achieve it, but in virtue of something within him that is divine."[2]

Kant, also, regarding the problem from an impartial viewpoint came to the above conclusion. He says, "It must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this

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[1]. F. H. Bradley: Appearance and Reality, p. 436.

[2]. Nicomachean Ethics, 10, VII, 8.

effect; in other words it must postulate the existence of God as the necessary condition of the summum bonum."[1]   Such statements from the masters of ancient and modern philosophy should be very convincing.

It might well be added here that it is not desired to give the impression that all mankind must believe in religion before ethics can exist.   This would be to confuse the validity of the religious basis with our knowledge of its validity.   Many people have lived the moral life without giving a thought to this problem.   This is because most men practice morality long before they seek its grounds anywhere.   Once the ideals of ethics are embodied in concrete rules and laws it seems quite possible for men to conform to them without any thought to religion.   But mankind will not go very long without wishing to justify the interpretation of the moral law.   It is at such a point that religion is necessary.   Apart from it or from religious influence man could not construct the moral code in a manner satisfying to his various needs.   Thus the fundamental rational basis of ethics is in the spiritual order of the universe.

(c)   A study of the effects of scepticism leads to a similar conclusion.   Some have asked why scepticism in religion should have evil results.   An explanation is not difficult to find. Let a man doubt the laws of nature, (e.g.) the laws of health, and he will be the worse for it.   The loss of faith in human love frequently has a hardening, degrading, desolating effect on man. May it not be expected, then, that a loss of faith in God, the one,

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1.
    Kant's Theory of Ethics - Abbot, Book II, chap. II, p.5.

who is "existent behind all laws," will also have an evil effect.
To one who has lost this faith, ethics will become just the
opinion of his fellow men about conduct.   In any circumstances,
man finds it difficult to grasp the moral law unless it is in
objective form.   The best objective form is that in which the
moral law is the will of a spiritual being to whom man feels
responsible.   When man loses his faith in this and has to trans-
fer it to an abstract system, his conduct will suffer.

The facts of life bear out this result.   The unrest of
the present age is a good example of the influence of this scepti-
cism; many have lost their faith in religion and with it the cer-
tainty that their lives are significant.   Although they have not
broken entirely from their ethical duties, they are at least
indifferent and as a result their contribution to life has been
only a shadow of what it might have been.   There are even ex-
amples of some to whom life seemed worthless and in despair they
ended their lives.   Examples of great immorality as the result
of religious scepticism are not lacking.   The biographies of
criminals give many illustrations of religious persons, who lost
their religious faith, then their faith in morality and as a con-
sequence they plunged into a life of vice.   Their names may not
be so well known as the names of Hume and others whose lives have
been cited on the other side of the argument, but it is because
they did so little for humanity, not because they are few in
numbers.   The argument using the lives of Hume, Benthan, etc.,
as examples of moral men who were sceptics in religion is not an
impregnable one.   These men lived in religious communities and

were influenced by religion although they had discarded it.
Perhaps if all mankind had lost faith in religion, their moral
foundations would have been shattered too.

The results of widespread scepticism in religion are
enlightening in this point.[1]   Thucydides describes the moral
anarchy and moral agnosticism of the Sophists as due to the fall
of the religion of Greece. Polybius blames the loss of religious
faith in the Roman Empire for her period of greatest immorality.
The agnosticism of the age of Machiavelli followed the decline
of the Catholic faith.   The scepticism in religion as taught in
the philosophy of Nietzsche to the Germans led to their disregard
of ethical obligations and the resulting horrors of the Great War.
Some may object that the immorality in these instances was not
wholly the result of religious scepticism but fair-minded people
will admit that it was a large factor in the cause.

It is also true that periods of faith, stability and
progress in religion have been associated with similar movements
in ethics.   Man never combines a religious faith with an ethical
scepticism.   On the contrary, the former gives strength to the
moral powers of man.   Periods of religious enthusiasm, (e.g.)
Reformation period, have always produced strong, active, noble-
minded men and women.   Illustrations like these covering whole
nations and ages should certainly carry more weight than mere
instances of individuals living the moral life without religion.

(d)   Jesus, the greatest ethical teacher of all times,
believed that ethics is dependent on religion.   His teaching has

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[1].
        See "The Ethical Problem" by Dr. Paul Carus, p. 189 for
            these references.

influenced mankind more than any other system of ethics. It is felt, therefore, that a short exposition of his position should be given. His contribution to the problem will be considered under three divisions, (1) His method, (2) His teaching, (3) His life.

Jesus was the Founder of a new religion and He believed that He was the revelation of God to men. His great work was a religious one, (viz.) that of reconciling mankind to God. Yet for all this, He did not devote Himself completely to religious ends. He found time for things that were entirely out of the field of religion in the narrow sense of the term. He did not hesitate to spend time and labour in the interests of ethics. Does this not prove that He thought of ethics and religion as intimately connected? If morality had no connection with religion, Jesus would have failed in His Father's business by spending time and energy in the uplifting of morals and by placing another interest besides that of morality before the people. His means of continuing His influence after death also shows this connection. The intimate relation between custom and religion has already been observed. Jesus knew this and embodied it in His method. What became the supreme religious act of the Christian church was a social observance - a supper which corresponded to the domestic meal.

This conclusion is supported by the actual teachings of Jesus. His ideal is the Kingdom of God - perfect obedience towards God embodied in perfect duty towards man. He believed that the duty towards man should be determined by the relation

to God.   There are many of His sayings that imply the ideal
relation between ethics and religion.   His answer to the lawyer[1]
is a good example of the nature and extent of the relationship.
The lawyer asked, "Which is the great commandment in the law?"
This is the answer, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all
thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This
is the first and great commandment.   And the second is like
unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."   The lawyer
had only asked for one commandment.   Therefore the fact that
Jesus gave both indicates that He regarded ethics and religion
as interdependently connected.   The order in which He gave them
indicates His opinion of their relative importance.   The first
is the more important; it is the great commandment and as such
the basis of the second.

Lest the truth of the last part of this conclusion be
doubted, another example will be given, (viz.) the answer of
Jesus to the rich young man.[2]   The latter has asked, "What good
thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"   In reply,
Jesus enumerated certain commandments - those of the Decalogue
that may be called the ethical ones because of their definite
reference to morality.   The youth has kept these commandments
as well as could be expected but he is still dissatisfied.   First,
Jesus advises him to sell his goods and to give to the poor. The
second injunction contains the significant portion, "Come, and
follow me."   The young man was lacking spiritually and because
of this he was not perfect.   Mere morality was inadequate for

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1.
    Matthew XXII, 34-40.
2.
    Matthew XIX, 16.

him when it was not based on religion. This teaching is in
accord with what was stated earlier in this chapter about the
rational basis of ethics. The young man living in a religious
country was able apparently to live a moral life without the
actual support of religion. But the time came when he dis-
covered that there was still something lacking. In his search
for this something, he was really looking for the foundation of
morality. He came to Jesus and was directed to religion as
the basis of all morality.

Lastly, the life of Jesus is in agreement with His
teaching. Love of God and love of mankind are its two domi-
nating interests. His whole life is characterized by His zeal
to be about His Father's business. Yet, on the other hand, no
one can say that he neglected to love His neighbour as Himself.
His life was a life of self-sacrifice in the fullest sense of
the term. He had the power and wisdom of a king, yet He pre-
ferred to remain in humility as the servant of men. Not even
His enemies could bring a moral accusation against Him. He
lived this life as a human amid all the temptations of this
world yet He seemed to men to be the ethical perfection of God
embodied in an ideally perfect manhood. Thus, His life con-
firms the argument. He was eminently religious - the incar-
nation of God on earth - and because His morality had such a
basis, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"
and "unspotted from the world."

CHAPTER IV

ETHICS AS DEPENDENT ON RELIGION (cont'd)

(a) Religion gives ethics (1) the highest sactions
(2) the highest motives
(3) the best guarantee of the reality of morality.

(b) Ethics needs the help of religion to form a satisfying conception of the ultimate Good.

(c) Ethics needs the religious obligation.

(d) The idea of God.

(e) Immortality.

(f) The discord in man's life without religion.

(g) Religious ideas and ethical ideas.

ETHICS AS DEPENDENT ON RELIGION (cont'd)

The position developed in the previous chapter based ethics directly on religion. To many, this seems an extreme point of view for it seems possible that ethics may have a certain value and obligation without religion. Whether such an ethics would be of high standard is another question. According to such a view ethics is dependent on religion for its full development. This is the position that will be considered in this chapter.

(a)   (1) That the highest sanctions of ethics can only come from religion is one of the arguments in favour of this position. It would be well at the outset to make a distinction between the ground and the sanction of ethics. The former was discussed in the preceding chapter. It has to do with the basis of right, the nature or foundation of the science. On the other hand, the sanctions of ethics are not the basis of the good but the ratification, countenance or support given to moral action. There may be many sanctions and some of them may be more important than others. They may be quite different from and even in opposition to the ground of ethics. No one, surely, will deny the value of sanctions to ethics. The moral law is not likely to be enforced simply because it is the moral law. For the great mass of mankind, there must be more than a mere statement of it.

If a man believes in the existence and goodness of God, and that God ratifies and gives support to his moral actions, the religious sanction must play an important part in his life. The conception of God is the highest ideal that man can know. It is of an all-powerful Being who watches over the whole universe for all time. All other beings are finite but He alone is infinite. Hence the religious must be the highest and most powerful sanction for ethics.

However, it is not the only sanction and this is a good thing for ethics. It depends upon man's acceptance of the existence of God and the other statements of religion and many are too sceptical about religion to find a sanction there for morality. Therefore, they must seek sanctions other than religious. Any power in favour of morality may become a sanction. Looking over the different ethical theories, one finds such sanction as public opinion, law, sentiment, etc. They have all been of importance to ethics and must not be ignored. But their origin is human and therefore they cannot be regarded as infallible. It is the infallibility of the religious sanction that makes it the highest sanction to the religious person. In this age of moral unrest, there is a great need for the highest sanctions and hence ethics should be dependent on religion. But for those whose intellectual beliefs render the religious sanction useless, the other sanctions must take an important place.

(2) The motives of ethics are so closely related to the ethical sanctions that many writers have identified them. To avoid confusion, it is better to keep them distinct and in

this chapter, the term motive will be understood to mean the inducement or stimulus that moves one to action.

For the same reason that the religious sanctions are highest, the motives that come from religion are also the best. Martineau says:[1] "It remains only to vindicate the supreme place of Reverence towards goodness, which when adequately interpreted proves to be identical with devotion to God." Augustine was aware that the love of God is the noblest spring of action when he said, "Love God and do as you please." It is not difficult to understand why this motive should be the highest. The influence of our most intimate friends teaches us that the personal influence is the strongest of all motives. Hence, the love and reverence for a personal Being who is conceived of as essentially and perfectly good becomes the highest motive for morality.

There are higher and lower motives even in religion. The higher kind, which is best characterized by the love of God has been described above. The lower motives are best illustrated by the fear of punishment - hell-fire, outer darkness, wailing, gnashing of teeth, etc. - and the hope of reward for its own sake. It has to be admitted that such motives only appeal to the lower nature of man and cannot be instrumental in building up a high morality. In the present age, they do not have very much influence on the better class of people - it has been only in periods of superstition that they were powerful. However, there are usually some in every age, for whom they are useful as motives to overcome the brutish and selfish passions.

1.
    Types of Ethical Theory, Vol. II, Book I, chap. VI, 9.

The motives for morality gain an immense impetus when
they have religion on their side.   Man in living the higher life
becomes a fellow-worker with God and he begins to realize that all
things work together for one good.   He has "hitched his wagon
to a star" and in following this lead, he will reach worthy ends.
For the fact that the religious motive applies to a realm beyond
the world enriches the motive infinitely.   As Robert Browning
has said:

> "Ah, but a man's reach must exceed his grasp
> Or what's a Heaven for?"[1]

History shows that this influence has not been over-
estimated.   Those, who have received their ethical motives from
religious sources, invariably win in the struggle of life over
those who did not have such motives.   William James, although
unbiassed toward religion says: "Every sort of moral energy and
endurance, of courage and capacity for handling life's evils is
set free in those who have religious faith.   For this reason
the strenuous type of character will on the battlefield of human
history always outrun the easy-going type and religion will
drive irreligion to the wall."[2]

Some believe that there are certain types of evil
against which the ethical motives are powerless without the
religious motives.   Ethics by its very nature is unable to cope
with the whirlwind of passion and the "red fool fury" of lust
and hate.   It is far too cold and abstract to excite the

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[1].
    Andrea Del Sarto.

[2].
    International Journal of Ethics, Vol I, p. 353.

the enthusiasm necessary to overcome such vice. All other powers but one have failed to produce the necessary motives. That power is religion. "The white heat of religious enthusiasm has proved stronger than the red heat of selfish desire."[1]

(3) The best guarantee of the reality of the moral life is given by religion. It is true that men may be brought to realize the inescapable natural sanctions of conduct by other means than religion. The ever-expanding truths of science have ably demonstrated that vice contains within itself a terrible punishment. Other methods have led to a similar conclusion. Now, although the utility of these methods may be admitted, it still remains true that the teachings of religion are the most convincing in respect to the reality of the moral life. The permanent character of the moral order is far more likely to be a fact to the person with a supreme faith in God than to the non-believer. As William James says, "A world with A God in it to say the last word, may indeed burn up or freeze, but we think of him as still mindful of the old ideals and sure to bring them elsewhere to fruition; so that where he is, tragedy is only provisional and partial and shipwreck and dissolution not the absolute final things."[2] Where could a firmer founda-for morality be discovered than in such a faith!

In history, this position is supported by the facts of experience. The belief that,[3]

small;
"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly
  Though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all'

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1. Internation Journal of Ethics, Vol. IV, p. 328 (F. Harrison)
2. Pragmatism, p. 106.
3. Longfellow: Poetic Aphorisms.

has had a tremendous influence upon mankind. The Greek and
Hebrew poets especially emphasized these truths and the great
influence of tragedy in all literature has largely been due to
the fact that it confirmed such convictions. However, this
topic has been more fully discussed in the preceding chapter
where religion as the implication of ethics was dealt with.

(b)   This leads to the next topic - the ultimate Good
cannot be stated in a finally satisfying form without religion.
First, a few words on the place of the ideal in ethics.

Practice always precedes theory and custom and law
had distinguished between right and wrong ways of acting before
man began to think about the meaning of goodness. But the time
came in the development of his nature when he felt the need of
some worthy aim - some end which he should endeavour to realize.
What this end would be, depended on his conception of the meaning
and destiny of life. The Greek thinkers were the earliestto face
this problem seriously and in the teleological systems of Plato
and Aristotle, there is the first instance of the ideal. Since
that time, it has always held an important place in ethical
theories. In idealistic ethics, the goods and values of life are
arranged in an ordered system of means and ends all related to the
ideal end which is the ultimate Good. This ultimate end gives
unity and coherence to what was before diversity and plurality.
As the ideal expands, it becomes not only the good of the indivi-
dual but the good of all humanity and of the whole universe.
Needless to say, a high ideal always brings out the best in man
in his endeavour to reach the highest good.

The difficulties and inconsistencies of the moral ideal
are sufficient evidence that it cannot be conceived of as complete
in the science of ethics, but rather that it must look to relig-
ion for the final solution. The ultimate Good cannot be valid
unless it has a firm foundation in reality. It will soon lose
its power if this fact is doubted. Hence it must depend on
religion to give the best assurance of this reality (as has been
shown in the preceding section). Then, the progress towards
this ideal is never completely realized. "A man's reach" con-
tinually "exceeds his grasp." This is an aspect of the ideal
that is most essential to the very existence of ethics for an
ideal capable of being completely reached on this earth would
make morality a static mundane science that would have very little
meaning for man. It is this unattainable aspect of the ideal
that makes ethics incomplete without religion. The ideals of
ethics can only be attained in the spiritual realms of religion
for the latter contains within itself the necessary conditions
for the existence of those values which men have learned to recog-
nize. Man's search for the absolute good means that he is trying
to realize what is in conformity with the unchangeable nature of
God. Such an ideal brings out the best that is in man. "Belief
in the moral ideal attains its maximum momentum when it is identi-
fied with the love of a Person."[1] When man is searching for such
an ideal there is no danger that he will make a wrong choice, that
like Milton's Satan he will say "Evil, be thou my good." Ethics
then is not final for in its development towards its ideal it

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1.
Rashdall: Theory of Good and Evil, Vol II, p. 268.

goes beyond itself and reaches its goal only in religion.   It
is but the temporal aspect of the religious life.   When this
deeper unity is not ignored, the incompleteness of ethics with-
out religion will be better realized.

(c)   It will now be necessary to discuss the source of the
obligation of the moral law.   Unless man is obliged to obey the
moral law it will be of little or no consequence to him.   It
would be possible to have the best sanctions and motives, an
excellent guarantee of the reality of morality, and a complete
statement of the ultimate good, yet, if the obligation was lack-
ing, it would all be of no avail.   On what, then, is the obliga-
tion based?   Whence comes the authority of the 'ought' in ethics?

There are two ways in which the term 'obligation' may
be used - the inner and the external meaning.   The latter will
be considered first.   Obligation, considered as an external
authority cannot arise within man considered as a self or unit.
This has been plainly proved by James Martineau.   He says, "It
takes two to establish an obligation...... he is the person that
bears the obligation;   and cannot also be the person whose
presence imposes it: it is impossible to be at once the upper
and nether millstone."[1]   Otherwise men's personality would contain
two distinct selves and this would be an impossibility.

The obligation cannot be based upon an abstract law or
set of laws or upon ideas of pleasure, value, or self-realization.
It must begin in the mind of some free being who is able to enforce
it.   It is this thought that is expressed in the statement, "Over

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[1].
    Types of Ethical Theory, Vol. II, p. 107-8.

a free and living being nothing short of a free and living being can have higher authority." The obligation of the moral law must then be based either upon human beings or upon the Deity. The authority of a moral law resting upon human beings would be far weaker than that depending on the supreme spiritual Being. This is very true in this age, which owes its distinct character to the development of the principle of equality among human beings. Therefore it is concluded that the full consciousness of the obligation in ethics can best be given by religion. This is corroborated by the facts of life for throughout the ages the great majority of noble-minded persons have kept before them the consciousness of having to live under their "great taskmaster's eye."

It is also true that in a certain sense the obligation of the moral law comes from within the individual. This is the second meaning. Man must accept the eternal authority. Unless he does so, he will only act in certain ways because external force prevents him from doing otherwise and such obedience would not be morality in the best sense of the term. Without consent there is no legitimate authority. T. H. Green has emphasized this in his Prolegomena to Ethics. He says, "It is the very essence of moral duty to be imposed by a man upon himself."[1] This, however, does not imply the absence of external obligation; nor are the two necessarily contradictory. Man can be self-legislative and yet re-enact what another has decreed. Indeed, the very fact that the obligation is regarded as self-imposed

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[1] Book IV, chap II, 324, p. 354.

rationally, recognizes the source of the obligation as a supreme rational being, who gives other rational beings the opportunity to adopt it. Morality is not the less autonomous because the individual listens to the "Stern Daughter of the voice of God." Kant did not hesitate to connect the two meanings of obligation in this manner. He says, "Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the often and more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within."[1] Subjection to a supreme authority does not impair freedom provided there is a free choice in accepting the authority. This is why it can be said that "God's law is perfect freedom."

(d) As has been already suggested, the consciousness of the obligation based upon religion is in reality a consciousness of God. This idea of God takes a prominent place in many ethical systems and in most cases it is regarded as one of the postulates necessary for a complete realization of the ethical ideal. It has already been mentioned that Kant could not leave God out of his ethical theory. He says, "Since it is our duty to strive for the realization of the common good, it is not only our right, but it is a necessity arising from the duty, that we should believe in the possibility of the sovereign good, which is only possible on condition of God's existence."[2] Kant was able to show that God's existence could not be proved logically but he never doubted that God did exist or at least that he ought to exist for the sake of morality.

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1. Critique of Practical Reason (Abbot's Translation) p.260.
2. Critique of Practical Reason, I, II, Chap. II, 5.

There are many illustrations of this consciousness of God making morality possible in practice. The great dramatists and novelists in their descriptions and analyses of life's problems often suggest this. In King John, Shakespeare makes Cardinal Pandulph say "It is religion that doth make vows kept."[1] Thomas Hardy gives an excellent example in his novel, 'Tess of the D'Uvervilles.' Tess has been pleading for an ethical religion free from dogma. Alec D'Uverville answers her in these words: "O no! I'm a different sort of fellow from that! If there's nobody to say, 'Do this, and it will be a good thing for you after you are dead; do that, and it will be a bad thing for you,' I can't warm up. Hang it, I am not going to feel responsible for my deeds and passions if there's nobody to be responsible to; and if I were you, my dear, I wouldn't either!"[2] In actual life there are many who regard the matter in very much the same manner, and who often wish that they could be sure there is 'nobody' to whom they are responsible. Like Macbeth, if they could be certain that their evil

"Might be the be-all and the end-all here"
they would not hesitate to "jump the life to come." No doubt, everyone does not have such a vivid sense of the prospect of reward and punishment when he is conscious of God, as Hardy has depicted above; it may be a feeling of love, reverence, or admiration that accompanies his idea of obligation. But it does seem certain that the great majority of people wish to feel

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1.
~   Act III, Scene I.
2.
     Page 427 (Macmillan edition)

responsible to SOMEBODY for their deeds and passions.

Then, the idea of God widens the scope of the obligation. If the latter were based on the power of finite man, people would only be conscious of the obligation at certain times. But the consciousness of an omniscient and omnipresent God, such as Francis Thompson pictures in 'The Hound of Heaven,' helps man to be careful about the smallest detail in his duty at all periods of his life. Longfellow has expressed in his poem 'The Builders.'

> "In the elder days of Art,
>   Builders wrought with greatest care
> Each minute and unseen part;
>   For the gods see everywhere."

Such caution as the poet describes in these lines is seldom found without a deep consciousness of an overwatching Deity. When it is only mere mortal man that is regarded as the authority, it is not difficult for the evil-doer to convince himself that

> "because no man sees,
> Such things will remain unseen."

These are the reasons why it is concluded that the obligation required in ethics can best be given by religion.

(e)   Immortality is a postulate of morality according to Kant. He argued that the "Thou Shalt" implies "Thou Canst" and an infinite "Thou Shalt" implies an infinite ability to accomplish it and this implies an infinite time. The latter implies religion for morality is of time but religion includes eternity. The work of man as a moral being is never done; therefore he must be an immortal and religious being. He has a second argument: if man is true to his highest self, he will live as if he

was immortal and in living this life, which is really the life
of eternal beings, he will become immortal.

Throughout the ages, the best and greatest men have
felt the incompleteness of the moral life without immortality..
If man was a mere creature of animal desire finding satisfaction
in this life, there would be no incongruity in the shortness of
this life.   But man feels called to a great task which he is
never able to complete.

> "So many worlds, so much to do,   1
> So little done, such things to be,"

The scholar seeks after truth, catches glimpses here and there
and after long days of labour begins to feel that he is on the
outskirts of a vast realm and then this life ends.   The would-be
saint seeking holiness spends years of discipline in doing good
deeds and begins to be on the threshold of his goal when he dis-
covers that he can go no further.   This is true of all who have
had the vision of infinite perfection - they never fully. reached
it.   Is life, then to be incomplete?   Surely, if morality is the
nature of the universe there is a future world which is the
compliment of this.

The philosophical poets have always been interested in
the problem.   Robert Browning in 'A Grammarian's Funeral' says:

> "What's time? leave now for dogs and apes!
> Man has forever
> . . . .
>
> Was it not great? did he not throw himself on God
>   (He loves the burthen) -
> God's task to make the heavenly period
>   Perfect the earthen."

1.
    Tennyson: 'In Memoriam', LXXII.

Alfred Tennyson, mourning for his friend says:

> "My own dim life should teach me this,
> That life shall live for evermore,
> Else earth is darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is;" 1

Some have said that the postulate of immortality implies a low selfish conception of morality. Eternal life is offered as a reward to the moral person. G. Von Gizycki says, "The religious virtue which craves a reward, and accordingly which looks upon conscientiousness as a burden that a man might hope to throw away after his death, is degraded and unworthy.[2]" This seems a very unfair attitude. No one who has lived a high moral life would even think of discarding conscientiousness after death. Immortality must not be denounced as immoral because it may be regarded as a reward. In the Phaedo, Plato does not hesitate to commend it for this very reason: "But then, O my friends", he said,"if the soul is really immortal, what care should be taken of her, not only in respect of the time which is called life, but of eternity! And the danger of neglecting her from this point of view does indeed appear to be awful. If death had only been the end of all, the wicked would have had a good bargain in dying for they would have been happily quit not only of their body, but of their own evil together with their souls......... Wherefore, Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do that we may obtain virtue and wisdom in this life. Fair is the prize, and the hope great![3]"

1.
  Ibid, XXXIV.
2.
  Ethics and Religion, p.169.
3.
  Dialogues of Plato, Vol. II, p. 255 & 262 (Jowett)

The same conclusion can be derived from observing the methods used in the education of children. Children are offered reward for right conduct and are threatened with punishment if they do wrong. Their moral education would be neglected if this was not done. Yet, the children who behave rightly because of these incentives, have other motives as well and their actions cannot be regarded as selfish. The relation of adult beings to the hope of reward and fear of punishment in immortality is very similar. The rewards and punishments are not the ground for morality but they are useful in procuring it.

The question of immortality is but another aspect of the reality of morality. When man has faith in another life, he does not despair at the incompleteness of his work. Apparent failure may be turned into a great victory.

> "Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
> Man never is, but always to be blessed." 1

Such a belief gives man new moral energy. Indeed, it is hardly possible for him to give his whole energy to his duties without the belief that he is contributing to something more lasting than his own earthly existence. As Rashdall has pointed out, "the comparison of religions indicates that the ethical results from a religion which confirms immortality are better than those in which death is made the final conclusion." [2] For the very things that otherwise would spell defeat for man become stepping-stones in the development of the moral life. Weakness, pain and death, may even be regarded in this light. It is the same sentiment that

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1.
    Pope: Essay on Man.

2.
    Theory of Good and Evil, Vol II, p. 255.

Paul expressed when he said, "For me to die is gain."[2]

No attempt has been made to state any particular form of immortality. Some, like George Eliot, have been content to hope for a kind of corporate immortality. She says:

> "O_ may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence." [1]

Others will be satisfied with nothing short of personal immortality. The dispute over their relative merits is not essential to this problem but it does seem true that the latter conception has a greater influence on the morals of the masses.

(f)   It is said that as the condition of mankind improves the need for immortality will not be as great. Those who have lived a life of happiness are not so anxious for another world to complete this one. It is those who have not had this enjoyment that long for immortality, for it is hard to die without having lived. This leads to the next topic - the need of religion to solve the discord and suffering in man's life.

Man, by his very nature, has to deal with suffering, sorrow, hardship, disillusionment, discontent, and sin, in his effort to live the moral life. It is because he is a rational being that this is true. "If man's animal desires were the beginning and end of his nature, there would be in him no element of unrest; or at least, rest and peace, the rest of satisfied desire, the peace of browsing cattle would be within easy reach. But that which makes him a spiritual being makes him also a

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1.
    'O: May I Join The Choir Invisible'
2.
    Philippians 1:21.

restless being."[1]   There is always an inner antagonism between the natural impulse and the rational consciousness.   All human beings feel this want of harmony in their lives.   The youth listening to his higher impulses forms great ambitions; yet his lower nature has such a grip on him that he falls far short of his mark.   The striving saint catches a glimpse of holiness yet he has to confess: "the good that I would,I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."[2]   Now, the important thing to note is that it has been the best and greatest men that have felt this discord.   "Man's unhappiness comes of his greatness," says Carlyle.   It is because there is something infinite in him that he cannot be satisfied with the finite.   The man, who is living only a little better than the animals is often satisfied with animal pleasures; it is only in his better moments that he hates his condition.   It is only in beginning to live the higher life that he realizes the bondage of his lower impulses.   Therefore, as the condition of mankind improves, the consciousness of discord will be greater than it was before.   As man becomes more certain that he is the "paragon of animals" and is "only a little lower than the angels," he will be all the more dissatisfied with his subjection to his lower self.   This has been true of all great men.   They have been pleased to do the good that they have done; but they regard it as very little compared with what they might have accomplished.

Not only does man's better nature have to oppose his

1.
  Caird: Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion.
2.
  Romans, 7:19.

lower, but there are outside forces which have to be fought against in the effort to live the good life. "The sea of troubles often seems to be overwhelming: the wicked flourish, the righteous are oppressed. All ages have expressed this cry of discouragement with the struggle against evil. It is not likely, then, that man (of himself) will ever be free from this discontent. So long as the earthly life is full of suffering, so long as rational beings confess sin, weakness, and imperfection, they will be conscious of the lack of harmony in life's structure.

When man condemns himself of imperfection he has an ideal of perfection - a being of absolute righteousness and goodness. Ethics can only be a partial solution to the discord in man's being because it can only be an approximation to the infinite ideal. To reach the complete solution, man is carried beyond the sphere of morality into the sphere of religion. It is in the latter that the contradiction between the ideal and the actual vanishes. Man, in surrendering his finite will to the infinite, terminates the struggle between his lower and higher natures. He is able to say: "It is no longer I that live, but God liveth in me." He receives consolation for the apparent defeats of life in the consciousness that he is a part of the divine spirit that animates the whole moral order. He is able

> "To trace the rainbow through the rain
> And feel the promise is not vain
> That man shall tearless be."

Arthur Hugh Clough has written some excellent verses on this subject. He is describing the people who believe in God and it is interesting to note that they are all ones that have felt the

limitations and discords of life:

> "But country folk who live beneath
>   The shadow of the steeple;
> The parson and the parson's wife,
>   And mostly married people;
>
> Youths green and happy in first love,
>   So thankful for illusion;
> And men caught out in what the world
>   Calls guilt, in first confusion;
>
> And almost everyone when age,
>   Disease, or sorrows strike him,
> Inclines to think there is a God
>   Or something very like Him."

All these have found it necessary to seek the solution to life's
problems in religion. It is a very inclusive list; indeed there
are very few people, if any, of whom at some time or other of
their life, the last two lines are untrue. This is why it is
concluded that ethics needs religion to completely solve the dis-
cord in life.

(g)   The influence of religious ideas upon the formation of
ethical ideas is very important. Ideas are living things and
when implanted in the right soil do not fail to bring forth other
ideas. The influence of religious ideas in making Christian
ethics the heroic ethics that it is, and in producing an ethical
individualism that has had a most important part in the shaping
of the modern era, cannot be disputed.

Looking more closely at this relationship, it will be
found that one of the chief reasons for this influence is the
fact that religion puts the ideals of ethics into concrete terms.
Spinoza taught that in forming a clear and distinct idea of his
passions, man overcame them. This is the reason that drama has

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1.
    Dipsychus, Part I: Scene V.

always had such power for it dramatizes man's actions and puts
them in a universal form.   Recent psychology, too, has emphasized
the position that there is a great ethical response in human beings
to works of art.   There will, then, always be a need for an emotion-
al and imaginative expression of the experiences of life.

A poetry of life such as this is given by religion;
ever since its earliest beginnings it has been translating ethical
judgments into works of art.   To the average person, the characters,
about which he is taught in religion, become to him the players in
a great drama.   There is a moral and spiritual warfare going on
in each of them.   It is his own experience that they are acting,
only it is in a universal form.   Sages, heroes, saints, martyrs,
prophets, apostles, warriors, pilgrims, fishermen, tax-gathers,
thieves, traitors, fallen angels, demons, etc., all appear upon the
stage.   The hymns, too, are important in this respect.   In them,
are embodied the ideals of the worthy men of the past.   It would
be difficult to estimate their influence for generation after
generation has re-echoed their stirring melodies.   In children the
influence of religious ideas upon moral development is more apparent
than anywhere else.   Most children try to live over again in their
own lives the religious stories that they know.   These are only
a few of the ways that religious ideas mould ethical ideas, but
they suffice to show that ethics would lack a great deal should
the religious influence be removed.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION AND PROSPECT FOR THE FUTURE

(a)   The position of contemporary philosophers.

(b)   Ethics and religion in Russia.

(c)   Prospect of future relationship.

CHAPTER V

CONTEMPORARY SITUATION AND PROSPECT FOR THE FUTURE

(a)   Contemporary philosophers have been no more success-
ful than their predecessors in reaching a definite conclusion
as to the relation between ethics and religion.   In this chap-
ter, the position of two or three contemporary philosophers
will be indicated and a brief survey of the prospect for the
future will be given.

John Dewey, often regarded as the greatest living
philosopher in America, favours a social morality.   A few
quotations will indicate his attitude.   In 'Human Nature and
Conduct,' he says: "These two facts, that moral judgment and
moral responsibility are the work wrought in us by the social
environment, signify that all morality is social."[1]   The prag-
matic explanation of morality is continually emphasized in his
writings.   Right, to him, depends upon the demands that are im-
pressed upon him by his fellow beings and which he must obey if
he would live.   Religion is entirely left out of his ethical
system for it has deteriorated so that it is of no benefit to
morality. "Religion," he says, "has lost itself in cults, dogmas
and myths.   Consequently the office of religion as a sense of
community and one's place in it has been lost."[2]

In 'Human Nature and its Remaking,' Hocking also criti-
cizes religion but he acknowledges that it plays an important

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1.
     Page 316.
2.
      Page 330.

part in the lives of many. He says, "But religion has set its good in opposition to all other goods; it has turned its back upon the world in which the power of the gods themselves is manifested. It has renounced the world, and it has testified to the literalness of its intention by the most thorough-going asceticism. In its separation from art and from society, relig-ion is the hostile critic of both, competing with them for the centering of human affections. Despite all this some human beings have found in religion, as others in art, a career ani-mated by a passion able to displace all others."[1]

On the other side of the Atlantic, S. Alexander in his book, 'Space, Time and Deity', is even more favourable to relig-ion than Hocking. In the discussion of religion and conduct he says: "Since all human interests are interwoven, it is no wonder if religion reinforces morality, and if the men of experience and insight are perhaps in the right who say that but for the sanc-tions of religion men would be even less virtuous than they are. And in its turn, the consciousness of right-doing may become it-self religious and that of wrong-doing take on the colour of sin-fulness, and further than that, however much we may strive to do good and the more we do so, the more acute and lively may become the sense of our failing, not in the eyes of men, but of the being in front of us, towards whom our brute instinct impels us."[2]

Thus, it will be seen that contemporary philosophers have so far failed to reach a definite conclusion. The study

[1] 'Human Nature and its Remaking', p. 352.

[2] 'Space, Time and Deity', p. 408.

of social ethics in recent years helped to develop the belief
that ethics is independent of religion; but on the other hand
there seems to have been a revival lately of the position that
there is an intimate relation between ethics and religion. And
so the dispute continues and in all probability it will continue
for it seems to be rooted in the fundamental questions that
philosophers have been discussing since the beginning of knowl-
edge.

(b)   An event of great interest to all who give this prob-
lem their serious thought is now taking place in Russia. The
Soviet government has undertaken to drive all orthodox religion
out of the country and has encouraged the destruction of churches
and other places of worship. Religious teaching, especially to
the young, and religious services have been discouraged
kind of communistic religion is taking the place of the orthodox
religion and to many this seems no substitute at all. The
result of this lack of religion upon the morality of the Russian
people will not be fully realized for a number of years as the
conduct of those, who have been accustomed to religion since
their childhood days, will still be guided by habits formed
while under its influence. It will be only when the children,
who begin life without religious influences, reach maturity that
the experiment of morality without religion on a nation-wide
scale will be given a fair test.

Even in its present stage, however, many persons
anxious for the well being of humanity look upon the action of
the Soviet government with great alarm and believe that something

should be done to restore religious freedom to these people.
If religion is to be denied the Russian people during the next
few decades, they regard the situation as constituting a menace
to the whole world - not only to those living now but to gener-
ations yet unborn. The philosophy of Nietzsche with its con-
demnation of Christian morality helped to bring evil upon the
world in the Great War and this new attempt to destroy religion
is viewed with even greater alarm. At any rate, it is an event
whose effect on morality will be closely watched by all interest-
ed in the relation between ethics and religion.

(c) What will be the future relation between ethics and
religion? Those, who believe that the two were separate in
their origin and in their development, are firmly convinced that
there will be little likelihood of any closer relationship. If
there is a change at all, it will be a widening of the breach
between the two. Most of those, who regarded ethics as depend-
ent on religion in the past, believe that there will be no change
in their relationship. There are some, however, who admit that
ethics in its infancy has been fostered by religion but believe
that it will outgrow this stage; that the time will come when
it will be able to stand on its own feet, when it will break away
from its parent and become an independent science. They do not
belittle the influence of religion in the past but regard it as
a "temporary scaffolding which may indeed for a time have served
a useful purpose but which at last may be removed without loss
or danger to the edifice."[1] They have come to the conclusion

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1.
     International Journal of Ethics, 1896, p. 188, E. Ritchie.

that the time is ripe for this change; indeed during the last few decades many have regarded the matter in this light and the task of removing the religious props has gone on apace.

A brief account will be given of the things, which this group expects, will contribute to the independence of ethics. With the advance of scientific knowledge and the further development of reason, it is said that man can be moral purely from ethical motives. Scientific research has been of great benefit to ethics in the past. In many cases, it has proved convincingly that vice contains its own punishment. If it has performed this task in the days of its youth, far greater results can be expected in the days to come for there is no doubt that there will be great discoveries in science:

> "As we surpass our father's skill,
>   Our sons will shame our own;
> A thousand things are hidden still,
>   And not a hundred known."   1

With the dawn of this new era, virtue and vice will be seen in their true light. Virtue will truly be knowledge. No longer will man's ignorance conceal from him the natural effects of evil. It will be universally recognized that "as a man soweth so also shall he reap." Religion will not be needed to emphasize such truths and if there is to be any basis for morality, it will be a scientific rather than a religious one.

Other things will assist in this enlightenment as to the true nature of morality. Man's rational powers will be more highly developed and he will be able to make better use of his

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1.
   Tennyson: Progress.

knowledge.   Life will be no longer a mystery to him for he will
see it "steadily and see it whole."   The results of centuries
of human experience as revealed in biography, history and litera-
ture will be made known to all mankind.   The strong will help
the weak to overcome their evil passions;   they truly will be
ethical teachers.   Ideals will still be required;   but there
are many non-religious ideals available.   Many have discovered
new ideals in the promotion of social good, in patriotism, in
scientific research, in the faithful discharge of heavy duties
and in the warmth of intense and elevating personal affections.

Such a vision, as has been described above, seems too
idealistic ever to be realized.   Man, no doubt, will evolve and
it will be easier for him to live the good life for its own sake.
Some strong souls, in that future era, may be able to reach a
high standard of morality without the help of religion.   But it
does not seem likely that those who are working in the best
interests of ethics will remove the inducements for right living
that religion gives to ethics from those 'weaker brethren' who
will require all their moral energy to fight the battle with evil
in their attempt to reach the good.

CONCLUSION

In this study of the relation between ethics and religion certain reasons for their independence have been indicated. The origin of ethics as social, the effect of religious faith and scepticism on conduct, the small influence of religious obligation and motives on morality, and the many ways in which conservative religion has hindered the advance of ethics, all seem to prove that ethics would be better if it were independent of religion.

This conclusion has been refuted by other arguments in favour of an ethics dependent on religion. The arguments for an ethics independent of religion contain much that is true but the reasons why ethics is dependent on religion are more numerous and of greater strength. The social origin and development of ethics has been shown to be closely related to the origin and development of religion. Religion has been revealed as the metaphysical basis of morality. It has been shown that scepticism in religion, especially on a nation-wide scale, is conducive to immorality. In addition to this, religion has been shown to be a great source of help to ethics. It confirms the postulates that ethics must make; it gives the best sanctions, motives, and ideals, the best guarantee of the stability of the moral life, and unity to the many conflicting elements in ethica; it expands the field of ethics enabling "man to see beyond the smoke of his own chimneys;" it lends dignity and deepens the content of the moral ideal and the sense of obligation; it arouses enthusiasm,

giving power to the motives of a science that is apt to become
a hard chill discharge of duty; it lifts men out of weakness
and links them with the great powers of the universe; it pro-
vides never-dying hope for those who otherwise would be dis-
heartened by the overwhelming forces of evil. These are the
reasons why it is concluded that ethics was, is, and will be
dependent on religion.

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