HUMAN FREEDOM

AND

A PLEA FOR PHILOSOPHY:

TWO ESSAYS

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HUMAN FREEDOM.

All created life exists under two aspects, and includes in itself what may be denominated a two-fold form of being. In one view, it is something individual and single, the particular revelation as such, by which, in any given case, it makes itself known in the actual world. In another view, it is a general, universal force, which lies back of all such revelation, and communicates to this its true significance and power. In this form, it is an *idea;* not an abstraction or notion simply, fabricated by the understanding, to represent its own sense of a certain common character, belonging to a multitude of individual objects; but the inmost substantial nature of these objects themselves, which goes before them, in the order of existence, at least, if not in time, and finds its perpetual manifestation through their endlessly diversified forms. All life is at once ideal and actual, and in this respect, at once single and universal. It belongs to the very nature of the idea, (as a true subsistence and not a mere notion,) to be without parts and without limits. It includes in itself the possibility, indeed, of distinction and self-limitation; but this possibility made real, is nothing more nor less than the transition of the idea over into the sphere of actual life. In itself, it is boundless, universal, and always identical. It belongs to the very conception of the actual world, on the other hand, that it should exist by manifold distinction, and the resolution of the infinite and universal into the particular and finite. All life, we say then, is at one and the same time, as actual and ideal, individual also, and general; something strictly single, and yet something absolutely universal.

These two forms of existence are opposite, but not, of course, contradictory; their opposition involves on the contrary, the most intimate and necessary union. The ideal is not the actual, and the actual is not, as such, the ideal; separately considered, each is the full negation of what is affirmed in the other; and still they cannot be held for one moment asunder. The ideal can have no reality, except in the form of the actual; and the actual can have no truth, save as it is filled with the presence of the ideal. Each subsists only by inseparable union with its opposite; each is indispensable to the other, as the complement

of an existence, that could otherwise have no force. The bond which unites them, accordingly, is not mechanical and outward merely. The life in which they meet, is not to be regarded as, in any sense, two lives. The two forms of existence which it includes, are at the same time the power of a single fact, in whose constitution they are perfectly joined together, in an inward way. The ideal and the actual, the general and the particular, are both present in all life, not by juxtaposition or succession, but in such a way as to include each other at every point. The very same life is both general and particular, at the same time—the ideal in the actual, and the actual in the ideal; and each is what it is always, only by having in itself the presence of the other, as that which it is not.

Take, for instance, the life of a particular plant or tree. Immediately considered, it is something single, answerable to the outward phenomenal form under which it is exhibited to the senses. But it is, at the same time, more also than this. It becomes a particular plant or tree, in fact, only as it is felt to be the revelation of a life more comprehensive than its own, a life that appears in all plants and trees, and yet is not to be regarded as springing from them, or as measured by them, in any respect. The general vegetable life is not simply the sum of the actual vegetation that is going forward in the world. It is before this in order of being, and can never be fully represented by its growth; for in its nature it has no bounds, while this last is always necessarily finite, made up of a definite number of individual existences. Still it is nothing apart from these existences, which serve to unfold its presence and power; and which, in doing so, and only in doing so, come also to be what they are in truth. The life of each particular tree is thus at once the universal vegetable life, in which all trees stand, and the single manifestation to which this life has come in that particular case. Abstract from it the invisible, ideal, universal force or fact, which as a mere particular tree it is not, but which belongs to it only in common with other trees, and you reduce its existence at once to a sheer nullity: an object absolutely *single* in the world, could never be anything more than a spectral prodigy for the senses. So also, if it be attempted to sunder the particular from the general. Vegetable life can have no reality, save as it shows itself through particular plants and trees. The claims of the particular here, are just as valid and full, as the claims of the general. We have no right to push either aside, in order to make room for the other. The ideal or general cannot subsist without the actual or particular; and it is equally impossible for

this last to subsist without the first. They can subsist both, only in and by each other; and it is this mutual comprehension and inbeing of the two precisely, which gives life its proper realness and truth. The *real* is not the actual as such, nor the ideal as such, but the actual and ideal perfectly blended together, as the presence of the same fact.

The same order holds in the sphere of humanity. Every man comprehends in himself a life, which is at once both single and general, the life of his own person, separately considered, and the life at the same time of the race to which he belongs. He is *a man;* the universal conception of humanity enters into him, as it enters also into all other men: while he is, besides, *this* or *that* man, as distinguished from all others by his particular position in the human world. Here again, too, as before, the relation between the general and the particular or single, is not one of outward conjunction simply; as though the man were, in the first place, complete in and of himself, and were then brought to stand in certain connections with other men, previously complete in the same way. His completeness as an individual involves of itself his comprehension in a life more general than his own. The first can have no place apart from the second. The two forms of existence are not the same in themselves, but they are indissolubly joined together, as constituent elements of one and the same living fact, in the person of every man.

All this belongs to our constitution, considered simply as a part of the general system of nature. But man is more than nature, though organically one with it as the basis of his being. His life roots itself in this sphere, only to ascend by means of it into one that is higher. It becomes complete at last, in the form of self-conscious, self-active spirit. The general law of its existence, as regards the point here under consideration, remains the same; but with this vast difference, that what was mere blind necessity before, ruled by a force beyond itself, is now required to become the subject of free intelligence and will, in such way as to be its own law. It is as though the constitution of the world were made to wake within itself to a clear apprehension of its own nature, and had power at the same time to act forth its meaning by a purely spontaneous motion. Reason and will are concerned in the movement of the planet through its appointed orbit, in the growth of the plant, and in the activity of the animal; but in all these cases, they are exerted from abroad, and not from within the objects themselves. The planet obeys a law, which acts upon it irrespectively of all consent on its own

part. So in the case of the plant: it grows by a life which is comprehended in itself, but in the midst of all, it remains as dark as the stone that lies motionless by its side; its life is the power still of a foreign force, which it can neither apprehend nor control. The animal can feel, and is able also to move itself from place to place; yet in all this, the darkness of nature continues unsurmounted as before. The intelligence which rules the animal is not its own; and it cannot be said to have any inward possession whatever of the contents of its own life. This consummation of the world's meaning is reached at last, only in the mind of man, which becomes thus, for this very reason, the microcosm or mirror, that reflects back upon the whole inferior creation its true, intelligible image. Here life is no longer blind and unfree. The reason and will, by which it is actuated, are required to enter into it fully, and to become, by means of it, in such separate form, self-conscious and self-possessed. This is the idea of *personality*, as distinguished from the conception of a simply individual existence in the form of nature. Man finds his proper being at last, only in such life of the spirit.

Personality, however, in this case, does not supersede the idea of individual natural existence. On the contrary, it requires this as its necessary ground and support. The natural is the perpetual basis still of the intellectual and moral. The general character of life, therefore, in the view of it which is before us at this time, is not overthrown by this exaltation, as has been already intimated, but is only advanced by it into higher and more significant force. It still continues to revolve as before, between the two opposite poles, which we have found to enter into it from the start, and exhibits still to our contemplation the same dualistic aspect, resulting from the action of these forces, whose inseparable conjunction at the same time forms its only true and proper unity. It is still at once actual and ideal, singular and universal; only now the union of these two forms of existence is brought to be more perfect and intimate than before, by the intense spiritual fusion to which all is subjected in the great fact of consciousness.

Consciousness is itself emphatically the apprehension of the particular and single, in the presence of the universal. The two forms of life flow together, in every act of thought or will. Personality is, by its very conception, the power of a strictly universal life, revealing itself through an individual existence as its necessary medium. The universal is not simply in the individual here blindly, as in the case of the lower world, but knows

itself, also, and has possession of itself, in this form; so far, at least, as the man has come to be actually what he is required to be by his own constitution. The perfection of his nature is found just in this, that as an individual, inseparably linked in this respect to the world of nature, from whose bosom he springs, he shall yet recognize in himself the authority of reason, in its true universal character, and yield himself to it spontaneously as the proper form of his own being. Such clear recognition of the universal reason in himself, accompanied with such spontaneous assent to its authority, is that precisely, in the case of any human individual, which makes him to be at once rational and free. The person is necessarily individual; but in becoming personal, the individual life is itself made to transcend its own limits, and maintains its separate reality, only by merging itself completely in the universal life which it is called to represent.

Personality and moral freedom are, properly speaking, the same. By this last we are to understand simply, the normal form of our general human life itself. As such, it is nothing more nor less than the full combination of its opposite poles, in a free way. In the sphere of nature this union is necessary and inevitable; in the human spirit, it can be accomplished only by intelligent, spontaneous action, on the part of the spirit itself. The individual life in this form, with a full sense of its own individual nature, and with full power to cleave to this as a separate, independent interest, must yet, with clear consciousness and full choice, receive into itself the general life to which it of right belongs, so as to be filled with it and ruled by it at every point. Then we have a proper human existence.

Moral freedom then, the only liberty that is truly entitled to the name, includes in itself two elements or factors, which need to be rightly understood, first, in their separate character, and then in their relation to each other, in order that this idea itself may be rightly apprehended. It is the *single* will moving with self-conscious free activity in the orbit of the *general* will. The constituent powers by which it comes to exist, are the sense of self on the one hand, and the sense of a moral universe on the other, the sense of independence, and the sense of authority or law. It is the perfect union of the single and the universal, the subjective and the objective, joined together as mutually necessary, though opposite, polar forces in the clear consciousness of the spirit.

Let us direct our attention now, for a moment, separately to each of these great constituents of freedom.

Freedom supposes, in the first place, entire INDEPENDENCE on the part of its subject.

It can have no place accordingly, as we have already seen, in the sphere of mere nature. God is free in upholding and carrying forward the world, in this form, according to its appointed laws; but the world itself is not free. Its activity is for itself altogether blind and necessary, accompanied with no self-apprehension, and including in itself no self-motion. It is actuated throughout by a foreign force, with no possible alternative but to obey; while yet its obedience carries in itself no light or love, no intelligence or will. Nature is held in slavish bondage to its own law, as a power impressed upon it perpetually from abroad, and in no sense the product of its separate life. The earth rolls round the sun, the sap mounts upward in the tree, the dog pursues its game, with like subordination to a force by which they are continually mastered, without the least power to master in return. Animal impulse and instinct are no better here, than the plastic power that fashions the growth of the plant. There is individual existence in each case, included in the bosom of a general ideal life, and comprising action powerfully turned in upon itself; but there is no independence: the subject of the action hangs always, with helpless necessity, on the action itself, and is borne passively along upon the vast objective stream of the world's life, without concurrence or resistance of its own.

It is only in the sphere of self-conscious spirit, then, that individual indepencence becomes possible. Hence it involves two things, the light of intelligence and the power of choice. Both of these, in their very nature, refer to an individual centre, or *self*, from which their activity is made to radiate, and towards which, again, it is found continually to return. All knowledge begins and stands perpetually in the consciousness of self; and every act of the will may be denominated, at the same time, an act of self-apprehension.

It belongs to the conception of individual life universally, that it should be in itself a centre of the manifold activities by which it makes itself known. In the sphere of nature, this relation holds in the form only of a blind plastic law, or at least in the form of an equally blind instinct. In the sphere of consciousness, which is above nature, it is no longer blind, but clear. The subject is not simply an individual centre, but knows and seeks itself under this character. In such form first, it attains to what we call subjective independence.

By means of intelligence, the individual self emerges out of the night of nature into the clear vision of its own existence, and is thus prepared to embrace itself as a separate living centre. It is no longer an object merely as before, acted upon from

abroad, but is constituted a *subject*, in the strict sense of this term, having possession of itself, and capable of self-action.

Mere intelligence, however, is not of itself independence. If a planet were endowed with the power of perceiving its own existence, without the least ability to modify it in the way of self-control, it is plain that it would be just as little idependent as it is in its present state. Consciousness in absolute subjection to nature, would be, indeed, a species of bondage, that might be said to be even worse than that of nature itself. And so if the intelligence were ruled and actuated, not by nature, but by some other intelligence in the like irresistible way, the result would be the same. No matter what the actuating force might be, if it were even the Divine will itself, which were thus introduced into the conscious life of the individual, so as to carry this along with overwhelming necessity in its own direction, the subject thus wrought upon from abroad, without the power of self-impulse, could not be regarded as having the least independence. The case calls for something more than mere intelligence. To this must be joined also the power of choice.

The supposition, indeed, which has just been made, is in its own nature impossible. Reason and will necessarily involve each other; and the light of intelligence, therefore, can never be sundered in fact, (but only hypothetically,) from the motion of choice. Self-consciousness is itself always self-action.

Individual independence, we say, requires the power of choice; that the self-conscious subject shall not be moved simply from abroad, but have the capacity of moving itself, as though it were the original fountain of its own action. If the will be itself bound by a force which is foreign from its own nature, the man in whom it dwells cannot be free. It lies in the very conception of freedom, that the subject of it should have power to choose his own action, and that this power should involve the possibility of his making a different choice from that which he is led to make in fact. He acts from himself, and for himself, and not in obedience merely to an extraneous power, whether in the sphere of nature, or in the sphere of spirit. The action springs truly and fully out of his own conscious purpose and design, and is strictly the product of that separate living nature which he calls himself.

This is what Kant makes so much account of, in his philosophy, as the *autonomy* of the will. The idea is one of vast importance, notwithstanding the great abuse which has been made of it in his school. The will, in its very nature, must be autonomic in order that it may be free; that is, it must be a law to

itself, in such sense that its activity shall be purely and strictly its own in opposition to the thought of everything like compulsion exerted upon it from abroad. It is a world within itself, no less magnificent than that with which it is surrounded in the external universe; and it may not be invaded by any form of power, that is not comprehended from the beginning in its own constitution. All such power, proceeding from earth, or hell, or heaven, must be counted *heteronomic*, and contradictory to its nature. The will can endure no heteronomy. It must be autonomic, subjectively independent, the fountain of its own activity, wherever it is found in its true and proper exercise.

This then is the first grand constituent of Moral Freedom. The idea implies universally the presence of an individual will, which, *as such*, is perfectly unbound from all heteronomic extraneous restraints, and carries in itself the principle of its own action, in the way of law and impulse to itself. There can be no liberty where there is no subjective independence.

But such autonomic will is not of itself at once, as some appear to think, the *whole* conception of freedom. This requires another constituent factor, no less essential than the first; the presence, namely, of an objective universal LAW, by which the individual will is of right bound, and without obedience to which it can never be true to its own nature.

Self-consciousness is itself the power of a life that is general and universal, as well as individual. All life we have already seen to be the union of these two forms of existence in fact; though in the sphere of nature, of course, the fact prevails only in an outward and blind way. With the light of intelligence, however, including in itself the force of self-apprehension and self-action, it must itself enter into the life of the subject under the same character. That is, the union of the general and individual must hold in the form of consciousness itself; so that the subject of this, in coming to know himself properly as an individual being, shall have at the same time the apprehension of a life more comprehensive than his own, and, indeed, truly universal, in the bosom of which his own is carried as the necessary condition of its existence. It is the complete sense of this, theoretically and practically felt, that gives us the fact of personality; which is just the consciousness of an individual life, in the form of reason and will, as the universal truth of the world's life. Reason cannot be something merely particular or private. It is universal in its very nature. It is so theoretically, and it is so, also, of course, practically. In entering the sphere of thought and will, then, as distingushed

from that of mere nature, man comes into conscious union with a life which is more than his own, and which exists independently altogether of his particular knowledge or choice. He does not create it in any sense, but is simply received into it as a sea of existence already at hand, and altogether objective to himself as a separate single subject; while he knows it to be in truth, at the same time, the only proper form of his individual life itself subjectively considered. If this were not the case, there could be no room, in his case, for the idea either of intelligence or freedom. A purely particular or single intelligence would be as blind as the stork, which knoweth, we are told, her appointed times in the heaven; and a purrly particular or single will, in like manner, would be as little free as the wind,which is said to blow where it listeth, or as a wave of the sea driven of the same wind, and tossed hither and thither without object or rule.— Reason and will, to be truly subjective, must be apprehended always as truly objective, also, and universal. This necessity lies, as we have said, in the very idea of consciousness itself,and is the foundation of all personal life in the case of men.

But the idea now of such universal reason and will, is itself the conception of law, in its deepest and most comprehensive sense. This is nothing more nor less than this boundless objective authority or necessity, in which the individual life of the human subject is required to enter freely that it may be complete.

The *law*, in this character, is of course an idea, not an abstraction. It has in itself, accordingly, the two grand attributes of an idea, universality and necessity.

Its universality is not simply this, that it represents collectively all individual wills, or objects of will. On the contrary, it excludes every sort of distinction and comparison. No individual will, as such, can enter into the constitution of the law. It is absolute, and one within itself, merely revealing its presence through the single wills into which it enters, without deriving from them at all its being and force.

So, again, its necessity is not simply this, that the world cannot be preserved in prosperity and order without it, or that the world itself may have been pleased to agree in establishing its authority as sacred. It is a necessity which is altogether unconditional, and which rests eternally and unchangeably in the nature of the law itself.

As thus universal and necessary, the being of the law is infinitely real. It is not simply the thought or conception of what is right, not a name merely or mental abstraction representing a

certain order of life which men are required to observe; but it is the very forms of truth and right themselves, the absolutely independent power by which they exist in the world. As in the sphere of nature, the law is in no respect the product of the forces which are comprehended in nature itself, but forms rather the inmost life of its entire constitution, which could not consist at all if it were not held together by this bond; so here in the sphere of free intelligence also, it is by no other power that the order of life, as thus intelligent and free, can be upheld for a single hour. The world, in its moral no less than in its physical constitution, lives, moves and has its being, only in the presence of the law, as a real existence in no sense dependent upon it for its character. Not indeed as though it might be supposed to exist, with its own separate entity, in no connection with the actual world whatever. As the ideal life of nature, it cannot be sundered from the actual manifestation in which this consists; and as the absolute truth and right of the moral universe, it cannot subsist except through the consciousness of the thinking and willing subjects of which this universe is composed. Abstracted from all subjective intelligence, its objective reality is reduced to a nullity. It is only in the form of reason and will, which have no being apart from self-consciousness, that the law can have any true subsistence whatever. It supposes an intelligible and intelligent universe. But still it is no creature of the universe, no mere image abstracted from its actual constitution. In the order of being, though not of time, it is older than the universe. Without reason and will there could be no law, and yet all reason and will stand in it from the very start, and can enter into no living subject whatever except from its presence, as their ulterior objective source and ground.

Concretely real in this way, and not simply an abstraction, the law has its seat primarily, as Hooker expresses it, in the bosom of God. Not so, however, as if God might be supposed, in the exercise of any private arbitrary will of his own, to have devised and ordained it as a proper scheme after which to fashion the order of the universe. The universality of the law excludes, as we have already seen, the idea of all merely private or particular will, even though it were conceived to be in this form the will of God himself. God's will, however, is not private or particular, but absolute; subjective indeed, in such sense as is required by the nature of personality, but objective and universal at the same time; these two forms of existence, subjective and objective, being with Him absolutely commensurate and identical. God is not the author of the law, as something

standing out of himself and beyond himself; he does not *make* it, as a man might frame an instrument to serve some purpose which he has, under another form, in his own mind. Still less, of course, may the law be said, in any sense, to make *Him*, as though it were a power before Him in authority, determining the manner of his existence. It has its being only in God and from God; not however as something different from the Divine mind itself. It is the necessary form of God's infinitely wise and holy will, as exercised in the creation and support of the actual universe, considered both as nature and spirit.

Thus resident primarily in the Divine will, and identical with it throughout, the law at the same time, in its objective character, passes over into the actual order of the world, and reveals itself here also as a power to be acknowledged and obeyed, under the most real and concrete form. In the sphere of nature the universal and singular are brought together, not directly and immediately, but through the medium of the particular, constituting what we denominate the species or kind, as distinguished from the genus. Thus the tree is not what it is, by receiving into itself at once the universal vegetable life; but only as this life has previously undergone a distinction within itself, by which it may be recognized as vegetation under this or that specific form; it can become a tree, only as it puts on at the same time the type of some particular tree, locust, for instance, or ash, or elm, so as to be known accordingly in this character and no other. And just so in the sphere of the moral world, where the law has to do with intelligence and will. As universal or ideal, it is not carried over at once into the consciousness of each individual subject in an original and independent way; but the case requires necessarily that it should, in the first place, resolve itself into certain particular orders or forms of authority, through which intermediately its presence may afterwards thus actualize itself in full for the single will. As no single man is the human race, but only a part of it, having the truth of his being in the organic relations by which he is comprehended, through the family and state, in the whole; so the law, which is an objective rule and measure for the whole, and only for the parts as comprehended in this, and not as sundered from it, can never come near to any man in the way of an absolutely singular and exclusive revelation. It can reach him really, only by passing *through* the organic system, in which alone it takes cognizance at all of his existence. Under such view, it has an actual concrete being in the world itself, and is wrought objectively into the very constitution of its rational and moral life, as imbodied

in the form of human society and made to reveal itself continually in the process of human history.

Such, we say, is the conception in general of the law, which is the other grand factor or constituent of Moral Freedom; the first having exhibited itself to us before in the necessary independence or autonomy of the individual subject. It remains now to consider *how* these two great forces are joined together in its constitution.

Separately considered, they seem to oppose and overthrow each other. If the will be absolutely autonomic and independent in its subjective character, how can it be absolutely bound at the same time by a force that comes from beyond itself, the purely objective authority of law? And if it be thus bound, placed under necessity, comprehended in a power which is broader than itself, and older than itself, how can it be said to be in any proper sense its own law, and the fountain of its own action?

It is clear that no merely mechanical union here can escape the power of this contradiction. If we suppose the single will to be, in the first place, something complete by itself, and then think of the law as existing in the same separate way, each including in itself the claims which belong to it, as they have now been described, the two conceptions must necessarily contradict each other, and cannot be brought in such form to any true reconciliation. If the subject feel himself in mere juxtaposition with the law, having it over against his consciousness as a form of existence different from his own, it will not be possible for him to assert his own independence, without resenting and resisting the pretensions of the law at the same time, as a heteronomic, foreign force. Nor will it be possible for the law, in the same circumstances, to acknowledge or respect the independence of the human subject. It must necessarily assume the tone of command, arraying against him the majesty of its own everlasting nature, and with the weight of its terrible categoric imperative, *Thou shalt*, crushing his liberty completely to the earth. In such a relation, there is no room for the idea of moral freedom. It is slavish in its very nature. The liberty which the subject may still pretend to assert for himself, becomes necessarily licentiousness and sin; while, on the other hand, any obedience he may seem to yield to the law, as being thus forced and external, can have no reality or worth in the view of the law itself.

Such is the relation which holds in fact between human consciousness and the law in a state of sin. The two forms of existence are still incapable of being absolutely sundered; but they

are bound together only in an outward, unfree way. The law cannot relax its right to rule the sinner's will; but it stands over him merely in the attitude of despotic commination. The sinner, too, can never emancipate himself entirely from the sense of the law, for that were to lose his hold upon himself at the same time; but he has it over against him only as an objective might, in whose favor he is required to renounce the separate self, which he has come to regard as his true and proper life. Hence continual rebellion only, and continual guilt. The law, in such circumstances, has no power to bring light or freedon, strength or peace, into the soul. It is necessarily the ministration only of sin and death. Emphatically it works wrath.

In distinction from all such merely outward and mechanical conjunction of the two opposing forces, liberty and authority, from which can proceed at best only a powerless, unfree morality, the true idea of human freedom, we say now, requires their internal *organic* union as constituent elements of one and the same life. The opposition of the two forces, in this case, remains in its full strength; each is left in the possession of its separate independent character; neither is permitted to exclude or overwhelm the other; but the opposition is simply that which belongs to the contrary poles of the magnet, which fly asunder only that they may, at the same moment, be drawn together with the greater force, and whose union, as it is the result, is also the indispensable condition always of the separation out of which it grows. Such polar distinction enters, in fact, into the very idea of concrete existence. Where there is no distinction, there can be no concretion, but only meaningless and powerless abstraction, or, at best, the ideal possibility of an existence which has not yet become real. Distinction, however, involves opposition, or the setting of one thing over against another, Only where this has taken place, then, is there any room for the union that all proper reality implies. But such union shows the two sides thus sundered, to be at the same time necessary to each other. The opposition is polar only, and as such conservative and not destructional. All organized, concrete existence, physical or spiritual, will be found to carry in itself a polarity of this kind.

We may be assisted to a right apprehension of the point in hand, by referring again to the constitution of life, as we have already found it to hold in the sphere of mere nature. The ideal and the actual, a universal generic nature on the one hand, and a particular single existence on the other, enter jointly into the constitution of every plant that springs from the bosom of

the earth. These two forces, at the same time, are in their own character truly different and distinct. Their distinction takes the form of actual, direct opposition. What the one *is*, the other *is not*. Each is in itself the negation in full of the other. And yet they are here brought perfectly together, in the constitution of the same life; not by mechanical juxtaposition, but in the way of mutual interpenetration and interfusion, so that each is made to grow into the other, and by such concrescence only, comes to be at last what it is found to be in fact. The two sides of the plant's life still continue to be distinct, and their opposition to each other is by no means abolished in such sense as to be taken wholly out of the way, it still exists, but it exists as something comprehended in a higher action, which is, at the same time, the perfect union and reconciliation of the forces from which it springs. The opposition is polar. The union is organic.

Bring all this into the sphere of consciousness, so that the union in question shall be, not blind and unavoidable, but the movement of clear, spontaneous intelligence, acting from itself and for itself, and we have the conception of Moral Freedom. The existence here is not a mere object, wrought upon by an action strange to itself, but a subject which has come to be possessed of its activity as the very form of its own being. It is as though the planet, moving in its appointed orbit, were made to awake within itself to the clear knowledge of its own nature, with full power at the same time to pursue any course through the heavens that to itself might seem best; while it should still continue true notwithstanding, as before, to the path prescribed for it, no less *bound* by objective law but bound always only by its own consent. Should such a rational planet, in the exercise of its liberty, strike off from its orbit, affecting to play the part of some wandering comet, it must in the same moment, become unfree; as much so, at least, as when carried forward in its true course by the force of mere blind natural law. Only the power of choice making it possible for it to become a comet, but yet spontaneously embracing the true planetary motion in fact, identified thus with the sense of law, could constitute it the subject of freedom. Neither as bound simply, nor as simply unbond, would the planet be free; but only as bound and unbound, at the same time, and in the same continuous action; the two forms of existence joined together as the power of a single fact, in the sphere of consciousness; the law coming to its proper expression only in the independence of the subject, and the independence of the subject having no reality, save under the form of obedience to the law.

What may thus be imagined in the case of a planet, to illustrate the conception in hand, is the very constitution of man in his normal state. He is formed for freedom, and becomes complete only in this character, by the possibility he carries in himself of such a living, conscious free union, as has now been mentioned, of the great polar forces of the world's life. He has a will of his own, and he is at the same time under a law which is not himself; he is conscious of both, as making realities in his existence; and, to crown, all he is capable of so acknowledging both, that they shall actually grow into each other as the same consciousness. The union of the two powers, in such case, is not mechanical, but organic and real; as truly so as the flowing together of the ideal and actual, in the constitution of a plant or tree; only with the difference, that what is blindly necessary there, has become here the self-comprehending activity of the living nature itself. This is Freedom. In no other form can it exist for men at all. It is the action of the individual will, moving of its own accord and apart from all compulsion, in the orbit of the law, with clear sense of its authority, and clear private election in its favor, at the same time. This implies, of course, that the will is of the same nature with the law. They are thus related, in fact, as we have already seen. In obeying the law, the will obeys in reality its own true constitution; as much so as fire does, for instance, in exhibiting the properties which show it to *be* fire, and not water. So, in breaking away from the law, it necessarily becomes false to itself, to the same extent. Thus all apparent contradiction is resolved in the idea of freedom as now described. Authority involves necessity, while liberty is the very opposite; and still both are here inseparably joined together, in such way, indeed, that neither can exist at all, in its true form, without the other. Freedom, in order that it may be free, *must* be bound. But in this case it is self-bound; not arbitrarily, however, to a rule of its own invention, which would be again to be unfree, but in obedience to the law, as the necessary form of its own existence. The will of the subject is ruled by a force that comes from beyond itself, and yet it is strictly autonomic at the same time; even as the rose blooms forth always its proper single life, though it is only as filled with the general law of vegetation that it has power to bloom at all. The law so enters the subject, as to become within him a continually self-originated obligation; while his private will is so comprehended in the law, as to find in it no foreign constraint whatever.

Such is the proper theory of human freedom, whether consid-

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ered as religious or as simply political. It is formed by the union of liberty and authority, so joined together that neither is allowed to exclude or oppress the other; the two constituting thus the force of a single life. Where this inward organic conjunction of the elements now named is wanting, one of them either excluding the other altogether, or at best enduring its presence only in an outward way, the whole idea must be to the same extent necessarily overthrown. It matters not, in such case, which of the two factors may thus prevail at the cost of its opposite, the result will be the same. In the one direction, we shall have authority turned into despotism; in the other, liberty converted into licentiousness; both alike fatal to all true freedom. To be wholly bound, and to be wholly unbound, come here to the same thing in the end. Either state is to be deprecated as slavery.

The world has a continual tendency to fall over, either to one or the other of these extremes. Thus we have, on one side, authority coupled with blind obedience, and on the other a spirit of insurrection against all legitimate rule, making up to a great extent the history of human life.

Our own age leans especially toward the extreme of exalting individual liberty at the expense of just authority. Time has been, when the whole civilization of the world showed an opposite character. It was necessary indeed, in the nature of the case, that the process of our modern culture, the fruit of Christianity, and the only culture that may be regarded as worthy of the name, should commence in this way. Its foundations were to be laid deep, in the first place, in the sense of law and a corresponding spirit of obedience to its authority. Long ages of discipline were required for this purpose, in the course of which it was hardly possible that wrong should not be done to the idea of freedom, by an undue depression of its opposite element, the liberty of the individual subject. The discipline became, in fact, as we all know, tyrannical and oppressive just in this way, by refusing to recognize the rights of those who were subjected to it, as the time of their minority came to an end, and made it proper that these rights should be brought into full and free exercise. Instead of making it their business to train their subjects for personal independence, the true design of all sound government, both Church and State pursued the policy only of repressing every aspiration in this direction, and sought to hold the world in perpetual vassalage to mere power on their own side; as though a parent, long accustomed to rule his children with absolute control, should, at last, insist on extending over their full adult life itself the same kind of rule, without any regard what-

ever to the wants and capabilities of their advanced state. The relation between authority and obedience became, in this manner, mechanical and altogether external. Free authority and obedience fell asunder, as though each belonged to a different sphere from the other. The authority claimed to be of divine force for itself, under a fixed outward form; while the merit of obedience was supposed to lie in its blind, uninquiring subjection to the will thus imposed upon it from abroad. In one word, the claims of the subjective were overwhelmed, and well nigh crushed by the towering pretensions of the objective. No wonder that this extreme should at length become insupportably onerous to the ripening consciousness of the Christian world. It opened the way gradually for a powerful reaction towards the opposite side. This gave birth finally, when the fullness of time had come, to the great fact of the Reformation; which may be regarded as a solemn *Declaration of Independence*, on the part of the human mind, against the tyranny by which it had been wronged for centuries, in the name of religion and law. A grand epoch certainly, in the history of the world's life, whose consequences must continue to fill the earth to the end of time. These belong of course, not simply to the Church in a separate view, but to every sphere, whether of thought or action, that is comprehended in our common human existence. Art, science, government, and social life, all have been affected by the change. A new stadium is in progress, for the universal life of the world; having for its object now the full assertion of what may be styled the subjective pole of freedom, in opposition to the long historical process that went before, in favor of its opposite side. Protestantism is the fountain thus of all modern liberty, religious and political alike. Its tendency has been, from the beginning, to break the chains of authority as previously established, and to engage the human mind to a bold vindication of its own rights in opposition to all blind obedience of whatever kind. Nor is it to be imagined at all, that the new position which has been reached in this way, can ever be surrendered again, in favor of the order which prevailed before. The period of blind submission to the sense of the objective, whether in Church or State, when priest and king were held to be superior by divine right, to the divine constitution itself by which they were created, we may well trust, has forever passed away. But it does not follow at once from this, that the past was all wrong, or that the present is all right. A just consideration of history would lead us rather to suppose, that the new direction it has taken, may itself be liable to abuse, in a way answerable to the wrong which ex-

isted before on the opposite side; which would not imply certainly, that we must fall back again to the things we have happily left behind, but only that we should so far right our course, as to steer clear of the rocks that threaten us from either side, and so press forward to the true and proper destiny of our race. That the principle of individual liberty has been, in fact, thus carried to an extreme, at least in some cases, in the progress of the Protestant era, is acknowledged on all sides; and it needs no very profound or extensive observation, to see that our own age in particular is peculiarly exposed to danger just in this direction. It leans constitutionally towards an undue assertion of the prerogatives of the individual life, over against the idea of authority as something absolute and universal.

False liberty, in this form, does not consist, of course, in the open rejection of the law in itself considered. On the contrary, it usually affects to make great account of the law; but it is always only in a mechanical and outward way. The law is not viewed as a necessary constituent of freedom itself, but simply as an outward rule and measure of its supposed rights. The subject starts with his own independence as an interest full and complete in its separate character, and obeys the law accordingly in his way, not by entering it as a life beyond himself, but by requiring it to come first into subjection to his own private will. He has no conception of freedom as the union of liberty and authority. It is for him, at last, the exercise only of separate personal independence on his own part. By the right of private judgment, he means to assert the right of thinking for himself, regardless of the thoughts of all other men; and so also in the case of private will. He does not deny, indeed, that truth and right are universal in their nature, and as such not to be created or controlled by his particular mind. But the authority which belongs to them in this view, remains for him always more or less a mere abstraction. It does not come near to him under a concrete form, in the actual constitution of the world with which he is surrounded. He is without reverence accordingly for the powers by which it is properly represented. He sees nothing divine in history. The Church is to him the mere aggregation of a certain amount of private thinking on the subject of religion. The State is taken to be the creature only of its own members, standing by their permission, and liable of right to be taken down by them, or changed into a new form, at their own good pleasure.

All this involves, of course, an immense error; though it is one which it must ever be difficult to bring home clearly to the

consciousness of the popular mind. Liberty without law is licentiousness, whether in the sphere of thought or will; and law, to be real, must be the sense of a general concrete authority, actually comprehended in the constitution of the living world to which we belong. Where this may be wanting, it is not possible that there can be any true religious or political freedom. The exaltation of private independence, the rights of the individual as they are called, at the cost of all proper objective authority, is just as fatal here as the exaltation of authority at the cost of individual rights. There is a vast amount of cant and falsehood abroad on this subject, which it is important we should understand, and against which we have need to stand continually upon our guard.

With any right conception of the nature of freedom as now explained, it will not be possible for us, on the other hand, to fall in with the views of those who would persuade us that the only remedy for the evils of a licentious individualism, is to be found in casting ourselves once more blindly into the arms of mere outward authority. This were to fall backward to the period which preceded the Reformation, when we should seek rather to make our own period the means of advancing to one that may be superior to both. It is well to see and admit the difficulties of the present; but we are bound to remember also the difficulties of the past, that we may look for salvation only in the form of a brighter and more glorious future. It deserves to be continually borne in mind that mere authority is as little to be trusted for securing the right order of the world, as mere liberty. They are the opposite poles of freedom, and neither can be true to its constitution, except as this is made to include both in a perfectly inward and free way. The evils incident to private judgment are not to be corrected by referring us to an infallible public judgment, ecclesiastical or political, that may do our thinking for us in every case, and then make it over to us in a merely outward way, without any activity on our own part. And just as little of course are the irregularities of private will to be reformed, by handing us over to the rule of a foreign public will, as the measure of all right and wrong for our conscience. It is not in this way, that Christianity especially proposes to make us free. The imagination of a mechanical system of notions and rules brought near to the mind from abroad, to be accepted by it in a blind way, on the ground of authority conceived to be divine, is wholly aside from the true character of the gospel. Christianity is indeed a law; but it is at the same time the "law of liberty," comprehending in itself

the true normal mould of our general human life, into which it must be cast in every case, in order that it may be complete; but into which it can be cast, for this purpose, only by its own consent and choice. In truth, no government can be rational and good in the case of men, that does not aim at making them able to govern themselves. The only proper use of government is to educate its subjects for freedom, if they have not yet come to be capable of its exercise; and if this be not proposed, the government becomes to the same extent tyrannical. He is an unfaithful parent who seeks to hold his children in perpetual dependence upon his own judgment, and in perpetual vassalage to his own will, instead of training them as quickly as possible to think and act for themselves. So neither the State nor the Church can have any right to bind the understanding and will of their subjects in slavish obedience to mere authority. The case demands a different relation between the two interests with which it is concerned. Though the authority should be never so benevolent and wise, and the subject of it never so well satisfied to be ruled by it in this way, the result would still be slavery and not freedom. No man can fulfil his true moral destiny, by a simply blind and passive obedience to law. His obedience, to be complete, must be intelligent and spontaneous. In other words, the law must enter into him and become incorporated with his life. The remedy, then, for subjective license, is not such an exhibition simply of outward authority as may supersede the necessity of private judgment altogether. Even an *infallible* authority in this form would not be desirable; for the Divine will itself, if it were made merely to overwhelm the human as a foreign force, must lead to bondage only, and not to freedom.

The case requires, then, such an understanding of the true nature of freedom, as may serve to secure its constitution on both sides. Mere theory, indeed, will not be sufficient, here or elsewhere, to preserve life in its right form; but it is, at least, a most important auxiliary to this object. It is much to know clearly, and still more, steadily to keep in mind, that liberty and law, the activity of private will and the restraining force of authority, are alike indispensable to a right condition of human life; that they are required to enter into it always as polar forces, which organically complete each other; and that the exaltation of either interest at the cost of its opposite, must prove alike fatal to true moral order. It is much to know that the idea of freedom can never be reached by simply opposing one of these powers to the other on either side, as though to insist upon authority

were necessarily to wrong liberty; or as though to press the claims of this last, required a rejection of the no less rightful pretensions of the first. That is at all times a very shallow philosophy, though it be unfortunately very common, which can see contradiction only in the polarity now mentioned, and is urged accordingly to affirm and deny with regard to it, in such a way as to exclude the possibility of any reconciliation between the tendencies thus opposed. No authority can be moral that does not seek liberty as its end; and no liberty can be free that is not filled with the sense of authority as the proper contents of its own life.

That it may be difficult to bring this theory of freedom into practice, is readily admitted; but this forms no proper argument against the truth and value of the theory itself. The difficulty lies in the nature of the subject to which it belongs. Still, however, there is no other way in which it is possible for the end to be secured that is here in view. Man must be at once independent and bound, self-governed, and yet obedient to authority, in order that he may at all fulfil his own destiny, in distinction from the system of mere nature with which he is surrounded. For this he is to be educated and formed, under the influences which are comprehended in human society for the purpose. He comes not to moral freedom at once, but is required to rise to it by regular development, out of the life of nature in which his existence starts, and in which it continues always to have its root. In our present circumstances, moreover, the process is greatly embarrassed and obstructed by a false law of sin, which is found too plainly seated in our constitution. It becomes accordingly a most complicated problem, to bring our common human life, in this view, into its proper form; a problem, whose solution in fact runs through the history of the world's entire social constitution, from the beginning of time to its end. The family, the State, and the Church, are all comprehended alike in the service of this great design. They surround the human subject with the force of law from the cradle to the grave, and from the rudeness of savage life onward through all stages of subsequent social refinement; but it is only that he may be educated for the full use finally of his own proper personal independence, in being set free from all bondage, whether objective or subjective, by the clear spontaneous union of his private will with the law to which it is necessarily bound.

It lies in the very conception of this vast educational process, including as it does not only all stages of the single life from infancy to old age, but all stages also of the general ethical life

in the progress of nations, that the two great compound forces by which the problem of freedom is in the course of being solved, should sustain to each other, in their legitimate action, a constantly fluctuating relation; the pressure of authority being necessarily greater, and the sense of independence less, in reverse proportion to the actual development of the true idea of freedom in the subject. Here, of course, a wide field is thrown open for the exercise of political and ethical science, in determining the claims of duty and right, as related to each other in any given stadium of morality. On this, however, we are not called now to enter. It may be sufficient to conclude with the general rule, drawn from the whole subject, that no one can be true ethically to his own position, whether as a child or as a man, high or low, rich or poor, in power or out of power, who, in the use of his liberty, whatever it may be, is not ruled at the same time by a sentiment of *reverence* for the idea of an objective authority extended over him in some form, in the actual social organization to which he belongs. To be without reverence for authority, is to have always to the same extent the spirit of a slave. In no other element is it possible to think what is true, or to act what is right.

A PLEA FOR PHILOSOPHY.

Some will have it, that all philosophy is vain; and that the time bestowed upon it, in our colleges and elsewhere, is only wasted, or worse than wasted in the pursuit of a phantom that can never be reached, while it leads us away continually from the proper use of life. What men need in this world, we are told, is not speculation, but an active apprehension of the living realities with which they are immediately surrounded, and the proper practical use of these for the ends of their own existence. The world is a fact, broadly and palpably spread out before our senses; and our life is a fact, which we are required to turn to right account, by making the best of it for ourselves and others, in the circumstances in which we may happen to be placed. Why, then, should we occupy ourselves with things that lie wholly beyond the sphere of our actual existence, and that can only serve to disqualify us for understanding and using the world as it is? The sense of the world is sufficiently clear of itself for such as are disposed to take things just as they are, without troubling their heads about what they are pleased to call its inward spiritual constitution and design. We have had ample experiment besides of the vanity of philosophy, in the past history of its own achievements. The world has been philosophizing since the days of Pythagoras at least, and from a still earlier date, and yet to what has it come in the end? Has its philosophy made it any wiser or better? Has it accomplished any solid gain whatever for the human race? Is the world improved in any respect by the long exploded systems of Greece, by the profound lucubrations of the schoolmen in the middle ages, or by the vast upheavings of thought which have had place since the days of Immanuel Kant, in the modern metaphysics of Germany? Is it not, in fact, a history of contradictions and confusions, from begining to end—one system continually surmounting another, only to be as certainly overwhelmed after the same fashion, in its turn? It will be time enough to challenge our respect for philosophy, when phylosophy shall have come to some proper understanding, in the first place, of her own mind and meaning. When she shall have become once mistress of herself—a house no longer divided against itself, the very cavern of Æolus where all pent up minds are struggling perpetually in fierce conflict—it will be time enough to think of proclaiming her mistress of the

world. Till then, let her be remanded to her proper dwelling place in the clouds, the land of far-off shadows and dreams. The world has too much serious business on hand, to be interrupted by her pretensions, and may reasonably say, in the language of Nehemiah to Sanballat and Geshem the Arabian of old: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down; why should the work cease, whilst I leave it and come down to you?"

All this is very comfortable doctrine, of course, for those who have no disposition and not much power, possibly, to think for themselves, while they have just as little wish or will to be bound by the thinking of others. Agrarianism, indeed, we may call it, of the most truly democratic order; for is it not something more to level thus the aristocracy of mind, than it is to bring down simply the aristocracy of birth or fortune? Is it not a species of self-exaltation, particularly soothing to the sense we commonly have of our own importance, to be able in this way to compare ourselves so favorably with what has generally been counted the highest order of the world's intellect, and the true nobility of its life? The man who can say of all philosophy, It is mere wind, must needs feel himself in this respect somewhat superior to the great minds which, in different ages, have counted it worthy of their attention and study. It is much, surely, for any one to have the thought clearly present in his own consciousness: "Pythagoras was a fool, Plato was a fool, Aristotle was a fool; all the old Greek philosophers were fools; the seraphic, irrefragable doctors of the school divinity, Thomas Aquinas, Bonaventura, Duns Scotus, the whole of them together, were fools; and the same character belongs most eminently to the modern German thinkers, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and all who think it worth while to waste any time upon their speculations; but *I am wise;* for I have sense enough to know that all philosophy is nonsense, and that the less the world is troubled with it the better. *My* life is more rational, and likely to be of far more account at last, than theirs." This, we say, is comfortable; and it is not much wonder, perhaps, that philosophy should be in bad credit with so many persons, when so fair a premium in this way is made to rest on unthinking ignorance and sloth.

And then, the case becomes still worse, of course, when the prejudice of religion comes in, as it is always ready to do, in favor of the same conclusion. It is bad enough, we are told, that philosophy should pretend to interfere with the actual world, in its common life, abstracting men's minds from its practical realities, and amusing them with its own theoretic dreams; but

when the evil is made to reach over, in the same form, to the sphere of religion and faith, it is something still more difficult to be endured. And is there not in fact an original, necessary opposition between revelation and philosophy; Is not faith the simple contrary of speculation? Is it not written, "Let no man *spoil* you through philosophy;" plainly implying that we should have nothing to do with it, in the business of Christianity? And is not the history of the church from the begining full of instruction and warning, in the same direction? Have not all corruptions and heresies sprung from philosophy, undertaking to rule and set aside the simple doctrine of God's word? Witness the flood of Gnostic speculations in the second century; the subsequent errors of Origen and his school; the scholastic subtleties of the Aristotelian theology, at a still later period; and above all, the rationalistic, pantheistic systems, to which the modern German philosophy has given birth. Philosophy and infidelity are found to have, in all ages, a close inward affinity for each other. The first may be considered the elder sister, if not in fact the proper natural mother of the second. That state of the church accordingly is to be accounted the most prosperous, in which religion is as little as possible the subject of speculation; and the man who meddles least with the contents of his faith, in the way of inward thought and reflection, is likely to show himself the best Christian, and make his way most successfully to heaven.

But now, in opposition to all such popular cant,—that can hardly be said for the most part to understand its own meaning,—it is at once an ample reply to say, that philosophy belongs to the very constitution of our life, and cannot be expelled from it therefore without the greatest violence and wrong. For what is it at last, more or less than the endeavor to know ourselves and the world, and the form in which, at any given time, this knowledge reflects itself in our consciousness? And can it be a question at all, whether it be proper and right for us to seek the knowledge of ourselves in this way? It lies in the idea of humanity itself, that it should comprehend within itself such a mode of existence, just as it necesarily includes also the life of art or the law of social, or political organization. The question whether philosophy is to be tolerated and approved, is precisely like the question whether we should approve and tolerate government or art. These are all so many several spheres only of our human existence itself, which are necessary to make it true and complete, and which cannot be sundered from it, without overthrowing, at the same time, its essential constitution. It is not by any arbitrary option or will of ours, that they come to have

the right of being comprehended in the organic structure of the world; their right is as old as the world itself, and must stand as long as man and nature shall be found to endure. If any number of men, for instance, in vast world-convention assembled, should pretend to sit in judgment on the right and title of the fine arts, music, sculpture, poetry and the rest, to retain their place in the world, and at last proceed in form to legislate them out of it, as useless, fantastic, and injurious to religion; to what would such legislation amount in the end, more than to expose the impotence and folly of the congress from which it might spring? The fine arts might say to such a convention: "What have we to do with *thee*, vain wretched apparition of an hour! Is the nature of man to be thus made or unmade, at thy puny pleasure? *Our* authority is broader, and deeper, and far more ancient than thine." And can it be any more reasonable, I would ask, to think of legislating philosophy out of the world or out of the church, in any similar way? Philosophy is no subject for human arbitrament and legislation, in such magisterial form. The question of its being tolerated and allowed, is not just like the question whether we shall have, or not, a tariff or a national bank. It asks no permission of ours, to exercise its appointed functions in the vast world-process of man's history; it has exercised them through all ages thus far, and it will continue to exercise them, no doubt, to the end of time, in virtue of its own indefeasible right to be comprehended in this process, as an original necessary part of its constitution.

Philosophy is the form, simply, in which all Science is required at last to become complete. It is not, as sometimes supposed, one among the sciences only, in the way in which this may be said of geography for instance, or chemistry, or mathematics; it is emphatically the science of science itself—the form in which science comes to master *its* own nature, in the way of conscious self-apprehension and self-possession. It belongs to the very conception of knowledge, that however distributed into manifold departments and spheres, it should nevertheless be at the last the power of a single universal life. All science is organic, and falls back finally upon the unity of self-consciousness as its centre and ground. This is, however, only to say that it comes to its true general end in the form of philosophy, which is for this very reason the mistress and mother of all sound knowledge in every other view. What can be more irrational, then, and absurd, than to cry out against philosophy as something unprofitable and vain? It were just as reasonable surely to cry out against science in any of its subordinate departments; as some, indeed, most consistent

in their fanaticism, have at times pretended to do, in blind homage to a life of sense, or in the service, possibly, of a blind religion. All science has its chaotic disorders and revolutions, its sources of danger and its liabilities to corruption and abuse. But what then? Must we cease to think and inquire, in order that we may become truly wise? Shall we extinguish the torch of knowledge, that we may have power in the dark to fancy ourselves secure from harm? To do so were only to commit violent wrong upon our human nature itself. Man was made for science; he needs it, not as a means simply to something else, but as a constituent, we may say, in the substance of his own being. But his relation to science, in this view, is his relation at the same time to philosophy; for, as we have just seen science can have no reality, except as it includes in itself a reference at least to philosophy, as that in which alone it can become complete. Man then is formed for philosophy, as truly as he is formed for science; and if we did but consider it properly, we should see and feel that to undervalue and despise the first, is as little rational as it is to undervalue and despise the second. Philosophy is not a factitious interest, artificially and arbitrarily associated with our life, which we may retain or put away from us altogether at our own pleasure; it is the perfection of our intelligence itself, the necessary summit of self-consciousness, towards which all the lines of knowledge struggle from the start, and in which only they are made to reach at last their ultimate and full sense.

What has now been said, does not imply of course that all men are called to be philosophers, and to exercise the functions of philosophy on their own account. When we say of art, that it forms an original constituent sphere of our general human life, we do not mean certainly that every individual is required to be a painter, or musician, or poet, or all of these together, in order that he may fulfil his proper destiny in the world. *Non omnia possumus omnes;* the life of the world is something far more comprehensive and profound than the life of any one man, or any ten thousand men, included in its course. Humanity has its measure in the whole, and not in the separate parts of which the whole is composed. The perfection of the individual does not consist in his being all that the general idea of human life requires, but in this, that he shall truly fill his own place in an organism, which is complete for the purposes that belong to it as a whole. In this sense we say, that art is a necessary constituent of humanity, though few comparatively may be fitted as organs to exercise the functions for which it calls: these functions belong to the organic constitution of our life, as a whole,

and for the use of the whole; and where they are not acknowledged or fulfilled, the life itself must be regarded as, to the same extent, mutilated and shorn of its true sense. So in the case before us. Science and philosophy are not necessary for all men, individually and separately taken; but they *are* necessary at all times to Man as an organic whole. The great fact of humanity, the process of the world's life, cannot go forward at all without their presence. It may be enough for the mass of men perhaps to be borne along by the spirit of the age to which they belong, without any clear insight into its constitution and course; but this is not enough for the age itself. Through organs proper for the purpose, it ought to come if possible to a clear understanding of its own spirit and will, so as to be self-conscious and not blind. As we have already said, however, this self-consciousness is philosophy; and towards it at least all human life must continually struggle, so far as it is vigorous and sound. Nay, a bad life must rest in some consciousness too, often, to be sure, very dark, of its own meaning and tendency; and so far this also will have its philosophy. Philosophy and life, in fact, whether men consider it or not, go ever hand in hand together.

It is perfectly ridiculous, therefore, to think or speak of the world as having power to accomplish its history without philosophy; as much so, as though we should dream that society might exist without government. It would be indeed something most strange and unaccountable, that the human mind should have shown such an inveterate propensity through all ages to speculate in this way, in spite of all discouragement and seemingly bad success, if there had been no reason for it other than its own vagrant curiosity or lawless self-will. The world has never been without its philosophy, as far back as we find it exhibiting any signs whatever of a moral or intellectual life. Christianity wrought no change in it, with regard to this point. Many in modern times have charged the early Church with unfaithfulness to her Master, in permitting the great truths of the Gospel to become a subject of school speculation; as though it might have been possible to have handed them down as mere traditional articles of faith, without their being made to enter thus, with new informing power, into the actual thinking of the world as well as into its actual life. And yet is not the thinking of the world, at all times, inseparably identified with its life; or rather, is it not the very soul through which this itself lives, the central stream that carries all forward in its own direction? If Christianity were to be something more than a religion of blind

mechanical tradition; if it should at all make good its claim to be the absolute truth of the world, the eternal consummation of humanity itself; it *must* introduce itself into the actual process of the world's history as it stood, so as to fulfil and not destroy the original sense of it, in all its complicated parts. We might as well ask, that it should not meddle with the sphere of politics, as that it should abjure all interest in philosophy. The early Church soon found herself compelled to speculate. It was part of her mission in the world, to regenerate its intelligence and reason. And so in all periods since, we find philosophy closely interwoven with the activity of the church under other forms, and refusing to part with its authority for the human mind, so far as this can be said to have made any historical progress at all. The Reformers, in the sixteenth century, imagined at first, indeed, that their cause required its entire banishment from the territory of religion; but they were soon compelled themselves to have recourse again to its aid; and in the end, the old order of things in this direction was fully established throughout the Protestant world.

How vain, in view of all this, to quarrel with philosophy, as though it were an interest false and pernicious in its own nature. We might, with as much reason, quarrel with the waters of the Susquehannah, for making their way towards the sea. The world must think; would not be true to itself, if it ceased to think; and it is not possible that it should be thus actively intelligent, without moving at the same time in the channel of some philosophical system, that may represent more or less clearly the unity of its general life.

It will follow, moreover, from this view of the necessary relation in which philosophy stands to the life of the world, that it is not so entirely without rule and method in its course, as is taken for granted by the wholesale objection we are now considering. If it form an original and essential part of man's constitution, it must have a history, comprehended in the general flow of human history as a whole. But history implies organic unity and progress. It is just the opposite of chaos. Such onward movement, exhibiting the present always as at once the birth of the past and the womb of the future, belongs to the very conception of humanity; as much so as it does also, that it should exist by resolution into a vast system of nations, families and individuals. Distribution in time, and distribution in space, are alike necessary, to represent the one vast, magnificent fact, through which the idea of man is made real. To be human, then, is to be at the same time historical, in the sense here explained. If we

should say that the world is not bound together by the force of a common life, at any given time, but is made up of nations and men confusedly thrown into one mass in an outward and mechanical way; it would not be a greater wrong to our nature than it is made to suffer, when this life is not apprehended as a continuous process also, always different and yet always the same, extending perpetually from one generation over to another. In fact, the two conceptions cannot be held asunder. There is no alternative here between *cosmos* and chaos. To be organic at all, the world must be historical; and its history must show itself especially in the progressive development of humanity, as a whole, towards its appointed end. This we might seem justified to assume, as a postulate of religion as well as reason; since in no other view can we concieve of the world as carrying in itself a divine sense and meaning, so as to be the mirror truly of an idea in the mind of God. God is not the author of confusion, either in nature or history. He upholds and rules the world by plan; and this plan takes hold of the end from the beginning, bearing all life steadily forward as a process in its own service. In this way, every sphere of our general human existence comes to its proper evolution only in the form of history; and so we should expect to find it pre-eminently in the case of philosophy, representing, as this does, the inmost consciousness of the race itself from age to age. The idea of an absolutely stationary philosophy, mechanically at hand as something ripe and done, for the use of the world through all time, is an absurd contradiction. How could it then represent the world's *life*, in its ever-flowing actual form? Change and revolution here are not at once contradiction and confusion. May they not be but the necessary action of history itself, as it forces its way onward continually from one stage of thought and life to another? For this process, it should be remembered, is not by uniform movement, in the same direction and under the same character. It goes by stadia or eras; not unlike those great world-cycles which geologists undertake to describe in the primitive formation of the earth, only compressed into much narrower dimensions. Each period has, of course, its own history, including the rise and decline again of its particular life, and the breaking up of its whole constitution finally, to make room for a new spiritual organization; and all this must necessarily be attended with some show of chaotic confusion, to the view, at least, of the superficial thinker; while it is still possible that the whole may be, notwithstanding, in obedience throughout to the same great law of development and progress.

Such an onward movement is found to characterize in fact the course of human thought, as it may be traced from its cradle in the ancient Oriental world, down to the present time. Philosophy has its own history, capable of being studied and understood, like the history of any other sphere of human life. This may be so dark still indeed as to leave room, at many points, for uncertainty, and controversy, and doubt. All history is open more or less to the same difficulty; but still its general sense, and the force at least of its great leading epochs, are sufficiently clear. It is only the unphilosophical and uninquiring, who pronounce the record of the world's life in this form, a farrago of unmeaning, disconnected opinions and dreams. In proportion as any man can be engaged to direct his own attention to the subject, in the way of earnest thought, he will feel the deep unreasonableness of this presumption. The history of mind he will see to be something more than chaos, "without form and void." Alas for us indeed, if that were all the world here offered to our faith! Order in its outward material structure, only to make room for an interminable soul-chaos within!

It would go far at once to break the force of much of the prejudice that is entertained against philosophy, if only this idea of a historical development in the case of our world-life generally, as its necessary and proper form, were fairly familiar to our minds. We should then understand, that the very same life, in passing upwards through different stages, may be expected to show itself, under different phases or aspects without yet falling for this reason into any self-contradiction; and in this way we would be rescued from the narrow bigotry of measuring all past ages by our own, while at the same time we might be prepared to estimate intelligently the actual advantages of our position, in its advanced relation to the past. As the self-consciousness of the individual has different contents in childhood and riper age, and must necessarily migrate through a succession of forms in order that it may become complete; so we say of philosophy, which may be denominated the self-consciousness of the world as a whole, that it too can assert its proper reality only by living itself, from age to age, upwards into new and higher forms, till the process shall become complete in the full completion of humanity itself—the glorious, all-harmonious millennium of creation. It does not follow, then, that a system of philosophy has been nugatory and null in its own time, because it has come to be exploded, as we say, and superseded by some following system. We have no right to declare the wisdom of Plato and Aristotle vain, and just as little to deride the speculations of the medieval school-

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men as learned nonsense, merely because their authority has long since passed away. The Greek philosophy comprehended both truth and power for the use of the world, in its own time. It entered largely into the growth and education of the human spirit. And in this way it still continues to live also, in the organic progress of human thought. The acquisitions of the past in this form are not lost by the downfall of the systems in which they may have seemed originally to inhere; they are simply translated into the constitution of other systems, and so carried forward in the vast intellectual process to which these belong. In a deep sense we may say of all history, that it is thus a perpetual metempsychosis of the worlds's life, by which it is always new and yet always the same.

We may easily see, now, how little room there is for the fashionably vulgar imagination, that philosophy has little or nothing to do with the realities of actual life. There is indeed a latitude of meaning sometimes allowed to the term, especially in England and our own country, by which it is supposed to be saved from this reproach in part; though only in such a way as to fall more clearly under the power of it beyond the bounds of such exception. In the sense to which we refer, philosophy is taken to be a scientific insight simply into the nature and force of things empirically considered, as we find ourselves surrounded by them in the actual world. In this way we may have a philosophy of mind, by a sort of spiritual anatomical dissection, and then a philosophy of nature also as something altogether different; and however it may be with the first, it can easily be shown that this last is capable of being turned to many important practical uses. Witness only the wonders that are now wrought by steam, and the brilliant, though silent, action of the electro-megnetic telegraph. Philosophy in *such* shape means something, and has a value that can be made tangible to the world's common sense. It is the glory of our own age, too, in particular, that it is made to carry its salutary power into every nook and corner of our common material existence. We have a philosophy of farming, a philosophy of manufactures, and a philosophy of trade. We make our shoes and bake our bread philosophically. We talk, with equal ease, of the philosophy of the heavens and the philosophy of a plum pudding. We can go still farther, and admit also the practical use of philosophy, as occupied with the laws of our own reason and will, in the same Baconian style—provided always the process be not pushed too far. The science of mind, as handled by Locke, may help us possibly to think correctly; while the science of ethics, as unfolded in the same way

by Paley, may serve to assist us occasionally in distinguishing between right and wrong. But here the concession is required to stop. For philosophy, as the science of *ideas*, or as it is sometimes called, the science of the absolute, which is after all the only proper sense of the term, our common system of thinking is apt to entertain no respect whatever, in the general view now noticed. It is regarded as unprofitable metaphysics, of some service possibly for dialectic practice in the schools, but of no conceivable use besides in our ordinary mundane experience. For does it not in fact profess to go *beyond* the bounds of this experience; showing itself thus to be *transcendental*, as we say, and more fit to be referred to the visionary moon, than to this solid material earth we now inhabit? Is it not, by its own confession, the science of ideas and not the science of *facts*? It is in reference to such philosophy especially, that the question has been triumphantly asked: What has it done to improve the actual life of the world, from the days of Plato down to the present hour? Has it ever manufactured, not a steamboat, not so much as a *pin* only, in the service of the world's comfort? Has it descended at all into contact with the real wants of man? Has it added one luxury to his table, or coined a single dollar of new wealth for his pocket?

The whole force of this plausible representation, we say, is broken by the view we have now taken of the true nature of philosophy, and its necessary relation to the onward historical explication of the great mystery of humanity. The "chief end of man," after all, in this world, is not to create railroads, and telegraphs, and great Lowell establishments, for his own comfort; to seize the reins of nature in a merely outward way, and force her chariot wheels to move subservient to his simply physical accommodation. All this is right, indeed, in its place, and we mean not to undervalue or condemn the march of improvement in such outward form. Man is appointed to be the tamer and subduer of nature, and it is reasonable and fit that this should be brought to serve him, with absolute and universal submission. It is the proper prerogative of Mind, its grand moral vocation, we may say, in the world, thus to assert and proclaim its supremacy over Matter; as it is the true glory of this last, again, to be ruled and filled by the self-conscious presence of the first. But this lordship, to be true and right, must be moral as well as physical, inward no less than outward; it must be the supremacy of man over nature *as man*, and not simply as the potent magician of science, at whose bidding the spirits of the vasty deep stand ready, in shape of steam, tempest and

lightning, to execute his pleasnre. The only true mastery over the world at last, is that by which man is brought at the same time to master himself, in the clear apprehension and spontaneous election of goodness and truth in their absolute form. This is something more than agricultural chemistry, or the rattling machinery of cotton factories and rolling mills. It is by the power of the spiritual at last, that the full sense of the world, whether as spirit or nature, is to be evolved, and the full triumph of humanity, as sung in the eighth psalm, carried out to its grand consummation. The chief end of man is, not to know and rule the world simply as it stands beyond his particular person, but to know and rule it in the form of reason and will, as the inmost constitution of his own life. As in the case of his person separately considered, the skillful use of his bodily organs for mere bodily ends is in itself no argument of either strength or freedom, but can become of account only as such active power may be itself comprehended in the higher activity of the soul, moving always in obedience to its own law; so here, also, it is nothing less than the same moral self-consciousness and self-government, that can impart either dignity or value to any dominion we may be brought to exercise over external nature, by virtue of our mere intelligence under any other form. But now this inward supremacy of mind over matter, constituting thus the self-consciousness of the world itself through the medium of the human spirit, is something which lifts us at once into the sphere of philosophy. It is emphatically at last the power of the ideal as compared with the power of the actual, the ascendency of the absolute, (universal reason and universal will,) over the force of all that is simply empirical and particular.

Philosophy, we say then, is supremely practical. It takes hold of life, not indeed upon its immediate surface, but in the very foundations of the great deep of which it consists. Away with the heresy, dishonorable to man and God alike, that this world is ruled supremely by material forces, or simply sensuous interests of any kind. In the face of Heaven, we proclaim it false! Of all forms of power that enter into its constitution, there is none to compare with that which belongs to mind, in the form of the Idea. This is more than tempest, lightning and steam; more than whirlwind, cataract and fire; more than the noise of many waters, or the tumult of the people surging and roaring with passion. Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord, shall the great purposes of this world be ultimately carried. There is nothing under heaven so omnipo-

tent among men, as the presence of an Idea, in its true conception, representing, as it does always in fact, the inmost and deepest consciousness of the world itself. Amid all the thundering noise that marks the progress of history, it is only here at last we communicate with its soul, and are made to understand the true motive power which actuates its wheels. Men may talk as they please about their mechanics, and politics, and tactics—the world is governed, when all is done, by the power of Ideas; and the deepest thinkers, though far out of sight, it may be in the solitude of the closet, are still ever in the end, by divine right, the royal oligarchy, that preside over its affairs, and conduct them forward towards their proper end. No great revolution has ever yet occurred, that took not its birth first from the womb of an Idea. No department of our life can be advanced towards perfection, save through the presence of the same force. And shall we say, then, that philosophy, the science of the Idea, whose very province it is to bring the world to a consciousness of its own life in this form, is not practical? Can we understand ourselves, or possess our own nature fully, in any respect, without its aid? No general activity, whether in the form of thought or will, can deserve to be regarded as at all complete, that is not controlled by the light of philosophy, if not directly, at least in an indirect and circuitous way.

Such being the case, we may not admit, of course, that philosophy is necessarily unfriendly to religion. We have seen already, that it has entered largely into the history of Christianity from the beginning; though efforts have been made from time to time, with more zeal than clear knowledge, to sunder the church entirely from its connection. All such efforts have proved to be of no account thus far, and will continue to be of no account always, just because philosophy is a necessary condition of our general human life; and to renounce the one in this absolute way, were to renounce the other also to the same extent. If Christianity be truly divine, and at the same time truly human, it must so adjust itself to the actual constitution of man in its previous form, or rather so take this up into its own constitution in the way of natural consummation, that nothing belonging to it of right shall be destroyed, but the whole on the contrary show itself, under a higher form, more perfect than before. No wrong to the Gospel can well be more egregious, than that by which its power is limited and restrained to a part only of the general organism of the world's life; while other spheres, clearly included in this from the beginning, are violently thrust out from the range of its action, as hopelessly profane, and incapable of

sanctification. It is a libel on Christ, to say that his religion has nothing to do with politics, or the fine arts, or the sciences, or common social life. It *must* unite itself with all these, inwardly and profoundly, so as to transfigure them fully into its own image, before it shall have accomplished its mission in the world. For how else should it deserve to be acknowledged the universal truth of man's life? And so it is something monstrous also in the same way, to affirm of Christianity, that it has nothing to do with philosophy. Is ignorance then, after all, the mother of devotion; or must the inmost walks of consciousness be barred against the approach of religion, in order to preserve this sound and pure? Christianity claims to be the proper rightful magistracy of man's entire nature, the power to which all belongs, and by which all requires to be occupied and ruled. It must enter then into the thinking of the world, as well as into its willing and working; and it cannot actualize itself in full, except as it is brought to reign thus, with proper symmetrical development, throughout its whole life.

To say that Christianity should have no fellowship with philosophy, comes simply to this in the end, that the contents of faith are not formed to become ever the contents of knowledge; that religion is necessarily something blind in its own nature, incapable of being reflected in the consciousness of its subject under an intelligible form; that it is to be received and held, from first to last, in the way of mechanical outward tradition, on the ground, simply, of the foreign authority by which it comes authenticated to our confidence and trust. But is not religion the inmost life of our human being itself; and must not the precept, *Know thyself*, extend to it always as the necessary issue, in which alone the knowledge for which it calls can become complete? Strange that any should hold it man's privilege and calling, by the indefeasible right of his intelligence itself, to penetrate the interior sense of the world around him in the way of knowledge, and yet count it little better than profane for him to think of penetrating the interior sense of his own nature, as unfolded to his consciousness in the Christian revelation. Is it not the prerogative of intellect, to be self-intelligent? and is it possible then for Christianity to be the absolute truth of humanity, the inmost substance of its very life, without including in itself, at the same time, a capacity at least for being made transparent to its own vision in this way? It lies in its very conception, that it should form thus, when complete, the *self-consciousness* of the world, in its deepest and most comprehensive sense.

This is not to make Christianity dependent on philosophy in

any way, for its existence. No process of thinking, on the part of men, could ever originate or discover religion in this form; just as little as it might be supposed to originate or discover the constitution of the natural earth and heavens. Christ, and the new creation revealed through him, are not a *thought* simply, but a fact, such as philosophy has no power either to make or unmake. But this is only to say, that philosophy has no power to make or unmake the world's life in any view. The province of philosophy is not to create truth in any case, but only to make truth clear to itself in the reflected consciousness of its subject. It is truth itself in the form of self-knowledge; and in this view, there is no reason surely why Christianity should treat it as false and profane, but every reason on the contrary that it should be made welcome to the Christian sphere, as its rightful sanctuary and home.

But we are pointed to actual history in proof of its pernicious power in the view now noticed. It has been from the beginning, we are told, the fruitful mother of heresies and corruptions in the church. And has it not ever shown a sort of native affinity with atheism and infidelity? Has it not, more or less, openly proclaimed itself the enemy of Christ, from the days of Ammonius Saccas and Origen down to the days of Immanuel Kant, and from the epoch of the Critical Philosophy onward again, with rapid development, to the culmination of this modern movement in the pantheism of Hegel?

This only shows, we may reply, that philosophy is not of itself Christianity, and still further, that Christianity has not yet fully mastered the inward life of the world. But this is nothing more than we find abundantly made evident to us, in the manifestation of the world's life also under other forms. Art, science, government, all have exhibited, in the progress of Christian history thus far, a more or less unfriendly relation to the Christian consciousness, refusing to acknowledge and accept it as the only proper form of their own being. But what then? Shall we abjure all art, science and politics, for this reason, as necessarily unholy and profane? Or shall we say that their whole past history has been false and without value, as not springing directly from Christ? And why then should we entertain any such judgment in regard to philosophy, which at last is but the consciousness which enters into all these, and makes them to be what they are in fact? It comes simply to this, when all is done, that philosophy is not of itself Christianity, and that it must necessarily fall into an infidel position, if it assume to be in its own separate nature sufficient for the ultimate purposes of man's life, as comprehended in Christianity, and in

Christianity alone. But although philosophy be not thus the actual power of the divine fact itself, it may be said to constitute, nevertheless, the interior fundamental form of the world's life, on which the power in question is required to make itself felt—the posture of humanity at any given time, in its relation to the great regenerative process by which it is thus to be transformed finally into the full image of God. In this view, philosophy is a great fact too—nothing more nor less, indeed, than the self consciousness always of the world itself, at such stage of its historical devolopment as it may have reached at the time; and as such a fact, it *must* be respected by Christianity, in order that this may at all take hold on the vast world-process to which it belongs, in a real way. That is, Christianity, to conquer fully the world's life, must become philosophical, by endeavoring continually to work itself into the consciousness of the world as it stands, for the purpose of thus helping it forward into a form that may be found fully commensurate at last with its own divine contents. The ultimate problem, of course, is the full reconciliation of the two powers here brought into view, in such way that neither shall be allowed to do violence to the other, but both come finally to harmonious union, as form and substance in the actualization of all that is comprehended in the idea of humanity. But it lies in this conception itself, that they should continually seek each other in the resolution also of this problem, and be more or less interwoven through all the process by which it is to be accomplished. Christianity must enter the *mind* of the world as it is, to secure any permanent power in its life.—Philosophy, it deserves to be well remembered and earnestly laid to heart, is the only medium by which the new creation in Christ Jesus can come into triumphant contact with the actual universal life of man, as it stands, in the form either of art, or science, or political organization. An unphilosophical Christianity may be sufficient to save a multitude of individual souls for heaven, but it can never *conquer the world.*

Admitting, too, that philosophy has its dangers for Christianity as well as for life generally, it must be kept in mind that the want of Philosophy is always something more full of peril still. Religion cannot be made so practical as to stand in no relation whatever to intelligence and thought. It must ever rest in a theory of some kind that will be found to rule and condition its influence upon the world. If this theory be not philosophically sound, it will be philosophically unsound and false; and as a medium of communication with the world's life, it will to the same extent be a barrier to the proper power of the Gospel, as

appointed for its salvation. We have, indeed, a widely extended school, if we may so use the term, who affect to hold Christianity (greatly differing at the same, time to be sure, about its true form) directly from Christ and the Bible, without the help of any theory whatever, as the medium of its apprehension. But it needs no very deep philosophy certainly—though the case itself shows that it calls for *some*—to perceive the utter vanity, nay, profound absurdity, of every such pretension. The greatest slaves of theory, commonly, are just those who profess to have none; only their theory includes in itself no life, but resolves itself at last into the power of blind, tyrannical, tradition. If we need to be cautioned against philosophy, we need still more perhaps at this time, at least here in America, to be cautioned against the tendency that seeks to bring all philosophy among us into discredit, and which would exclude its authority, only the more effectually to bind the yoke of its own ceremonialism upon our necks.

However it may be with the rest of the world, it is clear indeed that what is wanted among ourselves, to bring our life generally into right form, is not less philosophy than we have at present, but, if it were possible, a great deal more. There is a sad disproportion, in our general American life, between outward activity and inward consciousness; which implies, however, so far as it prevails, a want of full self-possession and self-control, in the case of our outward activity itself; a want that is extensively felt already throughout the social system to which it belongs, and that may be expected to work itself out sooner or later, if not met with proper seasonable remedy, into the most disastrous, if not absolutely fatal, practical results. We need earnest, profound THOUGHT, born and cradled in the inmost philosophical consciousness of the age, by which to understand the problem we are called to solve as a nation, and so to turn our action to right account. Action of course, is all important for the proper use of life; it belongs to our nature, not simply to mirror in itself the sense of the surrounding world, but to mould this also into its own image and it is only under this form, that it can ever possibly show itself complete. Philosophy without action, is always something helpless, and liable to disease, as we see exemplified on a large scale in the history of speculation among the modern Germans. But then, action without philosophy will be found just as little worthy to be trusted also, in the end, for the great purposes of human life. No imagination can well be more false, than to suppose that our American practical talent is sufficient of itself to accomplish all that is comprehended properly in our vocation as a people. Power, to be efficient for moral

ends, must be accompanied with light. The force of mind, sundered from the inward illustration that should of right go with it always, is made to resemble, more or less, the force of mere nature, and becomes of the same order with the strength of the whirlwind or mountain torrent. It may carry all before it for a time, but the action, at last, is neither rational nor free. We need not only the energy of will, which now distinguishes us above all the nations of the earth, but the clear insight of speculative reason, also, to clothe our will with its full right to be thus energetic and strong. Let our national spirit be brought to know and possess itself fully in a free way, so that the action of the nation, in all the spheres of its life, may be filled and ruled with the soul of a true self-consciousness, in the form of philosophy, and we shall then be prepared to fulfill indeed the high destiny that seems to be assigned to us on the part of Heaven. Such a union of action and speculation, joined with the vast resources of our outward life, and the mighty scope thrown open to us by the genius of our political institutions, might be expected to carry us, in due time, far beyond all the world has yet been permitted to reach, in the way of moral progress, under any other form. May we not say, indeed, that this is the very problem of problems, which our new-born America is called at this time to solve, for the universal benefit of men in all time to come?

At present, as already remarked, we are manifestly suffering through the want of speculation, and not from its excess. Action is allowed too often to overwhelm or crowd out thought. There reigns among us, indeed, a wide-spread prejudice against philosophy, in its true and proper character, which makes it difficult to secure any earnest attention to its claims in any quarter. In the mean time, besides, to make the case still worse, a false empirical scheme of thought, (since all action must have *some* spiritual bottom on which to rest in this way,) claiming to be philosophy itself, though only its wretched caricature, in fact, has come to underlie our activity on all sides, and is now ready to resist all deeper thinking, as an invasion upon its own rights. The general character of this bastard philosophy is, that it affects to measure all things, both on earth and in heaven, by the categories of the common abstract understanding, as it stands related simply to the world of time and sense. These categories, however, being in themselves the forms or types only of things in this outward world, and representing therefore the conditions merely of existence in space and time—something relative always and finite by the very nature of the case—become necessarily one-

sided and false, the moment we attempt to carry their authority beyond these limits, and to apply them to the truths of the pure reason. This has been triumphantly shown by Kant, in his immortal work on the subject; whose argument thus far, at least, can never be nullified by the skeptical use to which it was turned in his own hands, but only makes it necessary to surmount this skepticism by pressing forward to still higher ground. It should be understood, and borne in mind always, that the skepticism of Kant is not something from which we escape by falling back simply on the sensuous philosophy, once for all demolished by his gigantic criticism. As against *this*, his argument and the bad use he makes of it, are alike legitimate and sound. With the premises of Locke, it is not possible successfully to withstand the reasoning of David Hume; and the reasoning of David Hume, brought to understand itself, and pushed out to its proper universal form, conducts us over with like necessity to the critical Idealism of Immanuel Kant. If our knowledge can have no other ground on which to rest, than that which is offered to us in the forms of the sensible world, as apprehended through categories of thought, simply answerable to their outward and finite nature, it ought to be clear, surely, that it cannot reach, with any true force, and *as knowledge*, to objects that lie beyond this sphere. The system of Locke pretended to do so, indeed, building its faith in the absolute and infinite upon deductions from the simply relative and finite. This pretension, false from the beginning, Kant has fairly and forever overturned, leaving the world, so far as *that* philosophy could help it, without any sure hold upon a single truth beyond the range of its present experience. And yet it is just this false and helpless system of thinking that still insists, too generally among ourselves, on its right to rule our whole life, and that is ready, alas! on all sides, to stigmatize as transcendental nonsense, if not something still worse, every attempt that is made to go beyond itself in the way of earnest and profound speculation.

The whole tendency of this philosophy is towards materialism and infidelity; as we may see abundantly exemplified by its past history in other parts of the world, particularly in France. It may be associated, it is true, with an opposite system; as commonly in this country, where it claims the spiritual and supernatural, indeed, as peculiarly its own province. But so far as such connection goes, it is outward only and traditional, not inward and real. The philosophy itself has no power to reach the spiritual and supernatural, and in pretending to do so, only drags it, in fact, downward into its own sphere, so that it is in

the end truly neither one nor the other. It reasons from time to eternity with vast dexterity and ease; establishing, by strict Baconian comparison and induction, the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the truth of revelation; but it is all in such a way as turns eternity itself into time, and forces the whole invisible world to become a mere abstraction from the world of sense. The empirical understanding affects to become transcendent, (as Kant calls it,) and may please itself with the imagination of having actually grasped in this way the truth which lies beyond its own horizon; but it is the illusion of one who dreams himself to be awake, and, behold, he is asleep: the object grasped, when all is done, belongs to the sphere of sense, and not to the sphere of spirit. This philosophy makes no room at all for *ideas*, in the proper sense of the term; its ideas are all intellectual abstractions merely, that as such carry in themselves no necessary or universal force. How is it possible, that such a system should have depth or strength; that it should penetrate the interior sense of life, in any quarter; or that it should communicate true spiritual earnestness to the general character and conduct of men, in any direction? All the higher interests of our nature must necessarily be made to suffer, wherever it prevails.

The bad power of this system is widely exemplified among us, in our reigning indifference to philosophy itself, and our want of faith generally in the objects with which it is of right concerned. Speculation and action are very commonly regarded as opposite spheres, only outwardly related to each other; in which view, the first must ever be shorn of all earnest independent interest, on its own account. It is either held to be of no force for actual life at all—the unprofitable metaphysical pugilism, merely, of the schools, by which the world can never be made wiser or better—or else, to save it from such reproach, it is forced to quit the skies wholly, and become the mere shadowy echo of experience and "common sense," as it is called, in the service of directly material ends. It is pursued accordingly either as a pastime only, or as a restricted trade. Few have any faith in philosophy as the original and rightful mistress of life. Few have any firm, solid belief in the reality of ideas, as anything more than the generalizations of sense, or the wisely calculated results of common utilitarian experience. He is counted too generally to be the best philosopher, whose thinking is found to move most fully in the orbit of the common understanding, while it shows itself at the same time most skillful in discerning the relation between means and end, and is crowned at last with the

largest percentage, in the way of practical benefit and profit. The bearing of all this on our national life, is sufficiently plain in every direction. Our literature and science, our economics and politics, nay, our very ethics and divinity, are all made to suffer in the same way. They are not properly scientific.

The defect is particularly obvious and worthy of notice, in our general system of education. Whatever advantage this may possess in other respects, it is characterized almost universally by a sad want of true philosophical spirit. The idea of a separate department or faculty of philosophy, as necessary to complete the conception of a university education, is almost gone from our minds. The prejudice of tradition is indeed too strong, to allow its total banishment from our colleges, in an open and formal way. Every institution feels itself bound to include in its course of studies something which it is pleased to dignify with the title of philosophy in the shape particularly of metaphysics and ethics, as a sort of crowning distinction in honor of the Senior year. But the crown, alas! is not what it ought to be, the keystone of the academic arch, that binds and supports the whole; it is at best an outside ornament simply, of most light and airy structure, set loosely on its summit, of which, in a short time, no trace whatever is to be found. We may safely say, that the way in which philosophy is taught and studied in our colleges generally, is suited only to bring it into discredit. It stands in no organic connection with the course as a whole; it is handled in the most mechanical and external way, as a thing of simple memory and report; and to complete the misery, it is acknowledged only in a form which subverts its whole sense, by substituting for it a poor parody that is wholly unworthy of its name. In its own nature the most earnest of interests, it is thus metamorphosed into the most frivolous and trivial. We need not wonder, that in such circumstances, it should appear shorn of all strength. We need not wonder, that the interest of liberal study generally, deprived in this way of its proper *soul*, should be made to suffer at every point. An earnest philosophy is indispensable to an earnest education, as through this again it is indispensable to all real earnestness in life.