

"The occasion that brings us together is an event of high significance. In fact, we realise to-day the advance that has been made since our youth. Twenty-five years ago it was the triumph of positivism that was looked for. Religion was supposed to have served its turn. Gradually it came to be perceived that the positivists had claimed the victory prematurely, and were arrogating to their entire system an honour that properly belonged only to that part of it which deals with science. At that time it was to science that men looked for a solution to the enigma of the painful earth. But science soon displayed its impotence to reveal the basis of things. We had to return to metaphysics, and we thus began to look with eagerness towards a thinker who had gauged the respective scopes of science, philosophy, and religion, and established that, far from being mutually destructive, these three functions are able to coexist in the soul.

"You are, moreover, a moralist, and in this capacity you have done great work. Our national misfortunes have given our minds a serious turn, and made us feel the necessity of an earnest view of life. You have done us good service by infusing new vigour into our thought, and you are now a witness of the profound change that has taken place in the prevalent view of life. Of this change a striking indication was recently given, when the death took place, not many weeks ago, of a man—M. Renan—whose mind, a shifting

mirror of contradictory ideas, held his contemporaries spell-bound beneath an irresistible charm. Ten years ago his supporters gloried in these contradictions, commending the master who had not been nature's dupe, but had answered the mystifier according to her mystifications. To-day they hold very different language; they declare that this man was an apostle of the moral ideal, that his irresponsible attitude was a mere literary artifice. They perceive clearly enough that what was formerly praised now begins to be blamed. This is a sign of the new order that prevails. To you, sir, the honour is due of having co-operated in this renovation of thought and feeling."

Here my account must be brought to a close. I repeat, in conclusion, that the reception accorded in Paris to such a man as M. Secretan is a sign of the times. In France, as elsewhere, the new generation desires a truth that is life-giving. They are beginning to turn their eyes, as yet uncertain but full of eagerness, towards the light of the gospel itself. But they have need of the guidance of such men as M. Secretan,—which is equivalent to saying that this teacher has need of disciples to carry on his great and worthy task. Notwithstanding his four-score years, he has not yet finished his work. For the present, he is still alive and active. But who is to take his place? Where are his successors? "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

Our Lord's View of the Sixth Commandment.

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Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρήθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις· Οὐ φονεύσεις· ὃς δ' ἂν φονεύσῃ, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει. Ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ὀργιζόμενος τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ εἰκὴ ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει· ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ τῷ ἀδελφῷ αὐτοῦ Ῥακά, ἔνοχος ἔσται τῷ συνεδρίῳ· ὃς δ' ἂν εἴπῃ Μωρὲ, ἔνοχος ἔσται εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός.

Authorised Version.—"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger

of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Revised Version.—"Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire."

The only important variation of this passage in the different MSS. is the insertion in some and the omission in others of the word *εἰκῆ*, *without cause*. The Revised Version omits it in the text, and attaches the following note: "Many ancient authorities insert *without cause*." The authorities are divided. The Alexandrian MS. and the Codex Ephraemi are imperfect, and do not contain the passage. The Codex Bezae, most of the cursive MSS., and the Syriac have the word; whilst it is omitted in the Sinaitic and Vatican MSS. and in the Vulgate. Alford, though with hesitation, retains the word in the text; whilst Tischendorf, Lachmann, Meyer, and Westcott and Hort reject it; Tregelles places it within brackets. Meyer deletes it, with the observation: "It is an inappropriate addition, resulting from bias, although of very ancient date." On the whole, the preponderance of external evidence is against its insertion; whilst the internal evidence is not in its favour. There was an evident motive for its insertion. The words of our Lord, expressed absolutely, might seem to imply that all anger was sinful, no cognisance being taken of virtuous anger; and accordingly the word *εἰκῆ* was inserted, perhaps first in the margin, for the purpose of limiting the words to unrighteous anger.

In the Authorised Version the words *οἱ ἐγγέθη τοῖς ἀρχαίοις* are translated: "It hath been said by them of old time." This translation is erroneous. It would require the insertion of the preposition *δὲ* or *ἐπὶ* to give it that meaning; when the persons spoken to are mentioned, they are invariably put in the dative. Besides the words are in contrast to *λέγω ὑμῖν*, "It hath been said to them of old time, but I say to you;" both words must be in the dative. The reading of the Revised Version is undoubtedly correct: "It hath been said to them of old time." It is also to be observed that the person who speaks, the subject of *ἐγγέθη*, is God: "It hath been said," namely, by God; so that there can be no contrast between Him who speaks to the ancients and the Lord who speaks to His disciples. It is a matter of dispute who are meant by *ἀρχαίοις*. The usual opinion is that the reference is to the promulgation of the law from Sinai, and that by *ἀρχαίοις* is meant Moses and the elders of Israel. But there is no reason for this limitation; by *ἀρχαίοις* may as well be meant those who lived previously to the times of Jesus and His disciples—their forefathers, "those of old time."

In our Lord's remarks here, and throughout the Sermon on the Mount, His design is certainly not to depreciate the law. On the contrary, He expressly declares that He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them; and that heaven and earth would sooner pass away than that one jot or one tittle should pass from the law, till all be fulfilled (Matt. v. 17, 18). Throughout the whole course of His ministry He asserts the inviolability of the moral law; and accuses the scribes of making the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions (Matt. xv. 6). The law of God is immutable as its great Author; its precepts are eternally binding. Nor does our Lord, as the Lawgiver of the New Testament, inculcate new laws over and above those contained in the Decalogue. As He does not diminish, so He does not add to the law of God. But He enlarges the sphere of its demands; He spiritualises it; He shows that it extends, not only to the outward actions of the life, but to the internal feelings of the heart. Our Lord declares that the prohibition of the sixth commandment does not refer to the act of killing, but to the disposition from which killing proceeds. And so also He rescues the law from the false interpretations of the Pharisees. They had added their glosses to the law; they had softened down its requirements by their traditions, and thus made void the law. The contrast is not between the two lawgivers, Moses and Christ, but between the law limited to mere external actions, as was done by the Pharisees, and the law spiritualised and thus fulfilled, as was done by Christ.

Hence, then, the morality here taught by Jesus Christ differs from that taught by the Pharisees in this, that it is pre-eminently spiritual. The Pharisees restricted the commands of the law to the outward actions, "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," and took no cognisance of the state of the heart from which these actions proceeded. They supposed that if the outward life was good, it did not matter what the state of the heart might be. And hence our Lord warns His disciples that except their righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, they shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven (Matt. v. 20). It is not external, but internal righteousness that is approved by God. And similar also appears, for the most part, to be the morality taught by the heathen philosophers, which was external propriety rather than inward purity, though there are certainly some noble examples to

the contrary. But Jesus Christ in His teaching refers chiefly to the internal disposition. He seeks not so much to purify the streams as the fountain from which these streams flow. Make the tree good, and the fruit shall be good also. And this is the only teaching of morality that will succeed. The heart is the fountain of life, and therefore it must be kept with all diligence. Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts and all manner of wickedness. Another characteristic in the teaching of Jesus Christ which naturally arises from the above, is that the morality which He inculcates relates to the future life. If morality referred only to this world, how we should conduct ourselves with reference to this life, then the external action would be the chief matter to attend to; but if this life be but a state of probation for another, then it is the disposition that is of primary importance. The morality of the Pharisees and of the heathen was of the earth, earthy; but the morality taught by Jesus Christ relates to the heavenly world; it describes the character of those who are the citizens and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. All the beatitudes pronounced by Christ refer to the rewards of the heavenly state.

But even in teaching and insisting on the spirituality of the law, in extending its domain to the thoughts of the heart, our Lord does not teach new precepts nor inculcate a new morality. He merely brings into greater prominence that which had been lost sight of. In their eagerness to appear righteous before men, and thus to gain their favour, the Pharisees had neglected and overlooked the cultivation of the internal disposition. But the moral law itself is spiritual; it embraces the state of the heart. No doubt this is not prominently brought forward in the Decalogue. At first sight it would appear that its commands were limited to the external action. "Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal." But the tenth commandment, "Thou shalt not covet," evidently refers to a mental feeling rather than to an external action. And even in this sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," not merely is the act taken into consideration, but the intention; it is murder as the effect of anger that is here forbidden. Killing in certain cases may not be culpable, as in the case of accidental killing; and in other cases it may even be a duty, as in the execution of criminals and in lawful war. It is the spirit and not the letter of the commandment that we must attend to.

Our Lord interprets the commandment by spiritualising it: "Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgement: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire." There are here three stages of guilt, the one rising above the other, and three corresponding degrees of punishment.

The first stage of guilt is *anger*: "Every one who is angry with his brother." We have seen that the word *εἰκῆ*, *without a cause*, is to be omitted. But it is evident from the context that it is unrighteous anger that is here forbidden — anger which is either excessive in its nature, implacable in its duration, cherished in the heart, and leading to revenge. The words are not to be taken absolutely: we must read into them. It is evident, not only that all anger is not sinful, but that there is a virtuous anger, the want of which is sinful. It is said of our Lord Himself that on a certain occasion He looked round with anger (*μετ' ὀργῆς*), being grieved for the hardness of their hearts (Mark iii. 5); and His denunciations of the Pharisees are but the expressions of virtuous indignation. "Be ye angry and sin not," says St. Paul (Eph. iv. 26), evidently implying that a man may be angry without sinning. But even in these instances the anger is rather directed against actions than against persons. The anger, then, here condemned by our Lord is unrighteous anger — malignity; and the word *εἰκῆ*, *without a cause*, though a gloss, is correct. St. John in his Epistle expresses the same truth when he says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer" (1 John iii. 15). But the question naturally arises: Is there no difference in point of culpability in the sight of God between the feeling of unrighteous anger and the act of killing? Both are said to be obnoxious to the same punishment — *ἔνοχος τῇ κρίσει*. If a man hates his brother, so that he desires his death, and is only prevented killing him from want of opportunity, or from the fear of the punishment inflicted on murder by human laws, there would seem, in point of moral culpability, to be no great difference between the feeling of anger and the act of killing. But, on the other hand, our Lord goes on to affirm that the outbursts of anger in abusive words is a higher

stage of guilt than the feeling of anger, and therefore it would seem to follow that much more heinous is the expression of anger in action—the actual taking away of human life.

The second stage of guilt is *anger expressing itself in abusive terms*: “Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca.” Here anger is regarded as no longer confined to the heart, but breaking forth in abusive language. The word Raca is Hebrew, or more properly Aramaic, the language then spoken in Judæa. Different derivations have been assigned to it. The most common, and as appears the most correct, is to derive it from the Hebrew רִיק, or רִיקָה, with the Aramaic ending רִיקָה. According to this derivation it signifies “empty,” “vain,” “foolish,” equivalent to the Greek κενός. Thus St. James says, “Wilt thou know, O vain man” (Jas. ii. 20). It is a term of reproach, but of a somewhat mild form, almost equivalent to the word which follows, “Thou fool.” Lightfoot has shown, by a number of passages from Rabbinical writers, that it was a common form of reproach among the Jews, probably in the time of our Lord. Here also the words must be interpreted according to the spirit. We are here taught that the slightest deviation from what is right—the idle word spoken, the reproach given, though it may be mildly expressed—if done from a spirit of malignity is sinful. “Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Matt. xii. 36). But, on the other hand, if there is no feeling of anger in our heart, we are not forbidden to pronounce judgment on the actions of our fellow-men, that, for example, such an action is foolish. The expression is coloured by, and is either sinful or innocent according to, the disposition from which it proceeds.

The third stage of guilt is *the expression of anger in still more abusive terms*: “Whosoever shall say, Thou fool:” ὁς δ' ἂν ἐλάτῃ Μωρῆ. This is evidently an abusive term of greater intensity than Raca, as there is a gradation of guilt. It is doubtful whether Μωρῆ is a Hebrew (Aramaic) or a Greek term. The word Raca being an Aramaic expression, it would seem to follow that Moreh is also Aramaic, and in this case should be left untranslated. As a Hebrew word כּוֹרֵה denotes a rebel, and was the very term employed by Moses when addressing the Israelites, “Hear now, ye rebels, הַמְרִים” (Num. xx. 10), and which was the cause of

his exclusion from the Promised Land. As a Greek word Μωρῆ denotes “fool,” and is so rendered in our versions. Thus the foolish virgins are called Μωραῖ. According to this meaning, there would appear to be little difference between it and Raca. But whilst Raca refers chiefly to mental incapacity—fool in the sense of stupid; Moreh, as is evident from the context, is used in a moral sense—fool in the sense of wicked. The term is thus employed in the Book of Proverbs; there a fool and a wicked man are used as synonymous terms. It is equivalent to the Hebrew נְבִל. “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. xiv. 1). Hence Moreh, whether the word be Hebrew or Greek, denotes here a wicked man; it is a stronger word of abuse than Raca affecting the moral character; equivalent to miscreant, as Principal Campbell renders it. But here also we must attend to the spirit of the words. We are not prevented from expressing our disapprobation of the actions of wicked men. Our Lord’s denunciations of the Pharisees teach us the contrary. He addresses them as “fools and blind,” μωραὶ καὶ τυφλοί. The condemnatory words which we use must not, however, proceed from wrathful hearts; they must not be the expressions of unrighteous anger.

As there are three degrees of guilt, so there are three corresponding degrees of punishment—the judgment, the council, and the fire of hell.

The punishments here referred to are divine judgments; the words represent three degrees of divine vengeance against sin. This is evident from the fact that the feeling of anger cannot possibly form a matter of judgment before a human tribunal; God only knows the heart. Although a man may cherish the most diabolical hatred, yet so long as he retains it in his heart, and gives no expression to it either by word or action, it cannot form a matter of prosecution against him by any human tribunal. At the same time, the terms employed, κρίσις, συνέδριον, and γέεννα, at least the two first, have reference to human tribunals, as they are derived from Jewish courts. But they are here taken in a figurative sense, referring to the judgment of God. Our Lord’s language here, as it often is, is parabolic; the words employed are analogical representations of divine punishments.

Each of these three kinds of punishment is attached to the three kinds of guilt, and as there is a gradation of guilt, so there is also a gradation of

punishment. (1) He who was angry with his brother was obnoxious to the *judgment* (*ἐνοχος τῆ κρίσει*). *Κρίσις* was the local court of the Jews, found in every city of Palestine. Before the Romans deprived the Jews of the power of inflicting death, it had the power of life and death. The punishment of death which was inflicted by it was death by the sword. (2) He who shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be obnoxious to the *council* (*ἐνοχος τῷ συνέδριῳ*). The council or sanhedrin, *συνέδριον*, was the supreme council of the Jews, composed of seventy members, which had its seat in Jerusalem. It inflicted the punishment of death by stoning. (3) He who shall say to his brother, Moreh (Thou fool), shall be liable to the *fire of hell* (*ἐνοχος εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός*). The word *γέεννα* is Hebrew, *גֵּהֶנְנִים*, and denotes the valley of Hinnom. It was a narrow valley skirting Jerusalem on the south. How it obtained its name is unknown, Hinnom being probably the name of some unknown person, to whom the valley once belonged. It is also called in the Old Testament Topheth (2 Kings xxiii. 10). It was regarded by the Jews as cursed, because it was here that the idolatrous Israelites burned their children in sacrifice to the Syrian god, Molech. It is called the Gehenna of fire, not because fires were kept up constantly in the valley to consume the refuse that was thrown into it, but on account of the human sacrifices by fire which were offered up. The later Jews used the name of this valley to denote the place of future punishment, and in this sense it is used in the Synoptical Gospels. The word does not occur in the Gospel of John, nor in any other part of the New Testament, except once in the Epistle of James (Jas. iii. 6). It does not appear that *γέεννα* denoted any punishment inflicted by a Jewish tribunal; death by burning was a very unusual Jewish mode of punishment. In the gospel the word is reserved for the punishment of the wicked in a future world.

Such are the three degrees of punishment attached to the three degrees of guilt. As Light-foot observes, "After this manner, therefore, our Saviour suits a different punishment to different

sins by a most just parity and a very equal compensation; to unjust anger, the just anger and judgment of God; to public reproach, a public trial; and hell fire to the censure that adjudgeth another thither." All these punishments, analogically expressed by representation of human tribunals, are punishments inflicted by God. But the question arises, Is death the punishment represented in all these cases? Some assert that it is so. Thus Alford observes, "The most important thing to keep in mind is, that there is no distinction of *kind* between those punishments, only of *degree*. In the thing compared, the *κρίσις* inflicted death by the sword, the *συνέδριον* death by stoning, and the disgrace of the *γέεννα τοῦ πυρός* followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same—*death*. So also in the subject of the similitude all the punishments are spiritual; all result in eternal death." This, however, is not necessarily the case, for although the punishments are divine judgments, yet God often punishes in this life; and a distinction and gradation in the kind of punishment, such as in analogical reference to human punishment,—fines, imprisonment, death,—would better illustrate the different degrees of culpability. *Κρίσις* and *συνέδριον* may be representations of temporal punishments, whilst *γέεννα* may denote that which is eternal. But whatever view we take, whether we consider the punishments inflicted as temporary or eternal, the words evidently suggest that there will be different degrees of punishment in a future world. All will not be equally punished; some will be beaten with many stripes, and others with few (Luke xii. 47, 48). The scale of divine justice will be exact to a hair-breadth; each one will receive the due rewards of his deeds. A future state is indeed enveloped in impenetrable obscurity; we cannot see behind the veil; much has been revealed, but more has been concealed; it is life and not death that is the land of darkness, for in the world beyond the grave the veil will be uplifted, and there will be disclosures of momentous realities: it is *now* that we see through a glass darkly; it is *then* that we shall see face to face.